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Does network building improve sales performance? The stabilizing role of job embeddedness

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to combine the concepts of network building (NB) and job embeddedness (JE; both on-the-job and off-the-job embeddedness (ON and OFF)) and examines how to improve sales performance (SP) by effectively stabilizing the sales force.

Design/methodology/approach – Sales practices were examined to establish the measures of overall sales performance. A factor analysis was conducted to extract two performance dimensions: customer relationship performance (CRP) and product selling performance (PSP). Structural equation modeling was employed to test the hypothesized model by analyzing survey data collected from 445 salespeople who work for the top five insurance firms in Taiwan.

Findings – The results show that the NB of salespeople has a direct positive effect on ON and OFF; JE plays a critical role in mediating the relationship between NB and SP; and NB contributes directly only to CRP. However, it does not have a positive effect on PSP until JE is introduced as a mediator to generate CRP.

Practical implications – In developing the NB of salespeople, managers should be provided with clear indicators about on-the-job and off-the-job embeddedness for manpower stability. Moreover, in addition to seeking product sales, managers should direct salespeople to embed in sales work by providing performance measures involving customer relationship.

Originality/value – This study highlights the need for a viable and integrated model of sales performance. The results indicate that the career achievement of field service employees relies primarily on whether they could effectively build social relationships. Theoretically, this investigation introduces NB into the JE theory, clarifies the relationship among NB, JE, and SP, and proposes a superior mechanism (CRP) for improving sales performance in the financial and insurance industries. Moreover, this study provides additional support for the relationship between ON and OFF.

Keywords Resource, Social embeddedness, Insurance salesperson, Sales management, Sales efficiency

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Insurance sales managers devote considerable time and effort to cultivating their salespeople's capability for building social relations (with their colleagues or customers) to improve sales performance. This raises the important question of why salespeople would leave their jobs. It is posited here that a key reason is that these social relationships are ineffective in reality. Salesperson turnover is a major cause for concern among contemporary financial institutions because selecting and training



skilled salespeople is expensive. A survey by the International Life Insurance Marketing Research Association showed that the salesperson turnover in the USA was 32 and 29 percent in 2010 and 2011, respectively (Honan, 2011). In Asia, the average turnover rate of insurance salespeople in 2009 was 27 percent (Goodenow, 2009). Salesperson turnover is a key problem that needs to be explored further because of its adverse effects on business outcomes (Kacmar *et al.*, 2006; Morrow and McElroy, 2007). A higher turnover rate can make it difficult for firms to increase their market share continuously and to create a positive sales culture. Further, low stability in salesperson employment can lead to the loss of loyal customers and their referral benefits, as well as impede service consistency (Trevor and Nyberg, 2008).

Labor turnover, especially in a sales environment, has yet to be effectively managed. It has become crucial for managers to determine how to focus on the stability of their salespeople while capitalizing on their social skills. According to the prior literature on job embeddedness (JE) (e.g. Mitchell *et al.*, 2001), employees are positively motivated to do their job by two critical social relations: job-related and off-job-related relationships. These relationships contribute to the employee's organizational attachment. Not only do insurance salespeople use their social skills to cooperate with other salespeople for sharing knowledge but also to connect with potential customers, thereby potentially increasing performance.

JE plays an important role in determining effective sales performance since it simultaneously offers a direction for the development of social skills and for the stabilization of connections to build resource-abundant relationships. Thus, we argue that JE plays a crucial role in the relationship between building social networks and improving sales performance. Most of the prior studies (e.g. Mitchell *et al.*, 2001; Lee *et al.*, 2004; Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2008; Cheng, 2014) examine the direct effect of JE on job outcomes (such as turnover and performance). Unlike these prior studies, we propose a mediating model using a multiple mediator method to examine the potential influence of social relations in the sales context.

1.2 Research objectives

JE refers to the attachment of employees to the various components of their jobs (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001; Lee *et al.*, 2004). It has been discussed extensively in the context of employees' social relations, including the relationships that an employee builds with various people while performing different activities within the organization or community (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001; Holtom *et al.*, 2006). The JE construct is typically defined based on three dimensions: link, fit, and sacrifice. Link is the extent of the ties that an employee has with other people or activities; fit refers to the extent to which an employee perceives an organization or environment to be compatible or comfortable for work; and sacrifice represents the resources that an employee relinquishes if he/she leaves his/her organization or community (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001; Mallol *et al.*, 2007). This literature has documented how employees' perceptions of links with colleagues, job activities, personal-organization fit, and potential sacrifices associated with changes in current employment (Ng and Feldman, 2010), lead to an aggregated influence that reduces the likelihood of an employee leaving a job (Lee *et al.*, 2004). Both on-the-job as well as off-the-job embedded (OFF) relations would increase the economic and psychological benefits for an employee, which can create strong incentives to increase work effort (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001; Lee *et al.*, 2004).

The primary motivations for this study are twofold. First, since the prior research on the relationship between OFF and overall job performance has never been conclusive

(Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2008; Sekiguchi *et al.*, 2008), this study aims to fill the gap in the literature by clarifying the inconsistent results. In the context of insurance sales and services, OFF refers to the social relations that salespeople build in the community; thus, the interpersonal contacts outside their offices may be a crucial source of potential customers and performance improvement. Few studies have investigated the related effects from the perspective of a person's multiple social relations (Moran, 2005). We suggest that the on-the-job as well as OFF of salespeople explain stability, which is key for continuing in the job with possible improvements in performance.

Further, in China, *quanxi* and relational networks in and out of work for career achievement are very important (Taifel and Turner, 1979). Hofstede (1980) and House *et al.* (2004) emphasized that individualistic and collectivistic cultures are likely to have quite different work cultures. While JE has been examined in non-Western environments (e.g. Mallol *et al.*, 2007; Ramesh and Gelfand, 2010), few studies have examined it in the context of China. Indeed, given that Chinese people frequently link their identification process with the organization or community, JE is likely to be an even more significant issue compared to more individualistic cultures (Gong *et al.*, 2011). Thus, this study will also contribute to the application of JE theory in the Chinese context.

The second motivation is that few studies examine the antecedent of JE except Allen's (2006) work on the socialization tactics of financial service employees. However, the findings of this prior study indicate that socialization tactics have an insignificant effect on OFF, which does not further mediate its relationship with turnover. Given the theoretical rationale for the assumption of a significant relationship between socialization, JE and turnover, this is tested in the context of the insurance industry. Effective sales performance in the insurance industry requires that managers improve their salespeople's social skills and socialization is vital in network building (NB) (Chao *et al.*, 1994). NB refers to the act of developing and positioning relationships with people to facilitate activities (Ferris *et al.*, 2005; Thompson, 2005). Prior research indicates that an employee network will foster overall job performance (Wolff and Moser, 2009). However, we do not use network structure (such as centrality or density) to forecast performance due to the complexity involved in measuring each salesperson's off-the-job relations.

Rather, the objective of this study is to examine whether the NB of salespeople will directly promote JE and sales performance, and whether JE mediates the influence of network-building ability on sales performance. We contribute to the JE theory by integrating NB in the insurance sector to examine the relationship between JE and sales performance, as well as the mediating effect of JE on this indistinct relationship. We also contribute to refinement of ON and OFF as two crucial mediators in the hypothesized model.

The structure of the paper is as follows. The first section briefly outlines the related theories and, based on this review, the hypotheses are posited. The following section discusses the methodology and data sources, the variables and their measures, and the empirical framework employed. The final section describes the empirical analyses and offers concluding remarks.

2. Literature review

Mitchell *et al.* (2001) provided initial empirical support for the finding that JE explains significant levels of variance in employee turnover behavior, which was also reported in subsequent studies (Crossley *et al.*, 2007; Clinton *et al.*, 2012). Employees become tied to their organization or community through various types of links, investments, and

affective or cognitive appraisals that create a net of restraining forces (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001). Understanding JE provides valuable insight on employees' work attitudes, including their decision to continue in the present job and their work effort levels (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001; Lee *et al.*, 2004; Wijayanto and Kismono, 2004; Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2008).

In the context of life insurance salespeople, on-the-job embeddedness (ON) refers to the interpersonal links that salespeople develop by interacting with colleagues at work (e.g. by attending staff meetings, participating in training activities, or sharing sales experiences), the balance between organizational culture and sales work, and the benefits that might have to be sacrificed upon leaving their current sales job. OFF refers to the social links that salespeople develop within their neighborhood or community (e.g. by attending church activities and using nearby facilities or other services), the good coordination and compatibility in their living environment (e.g. good relationships with neighbors), and the loss they might feel if they were to leave that community.

2.1 NB and JE

NB is a critical component of the skill/ability involved in organizational socialization (Chao *et al.*, 1994). People with high NB are adept at developing and interacting with diverse interpersonal networks (Ferris *et al.*, 2005); thus, such individuals tend to commit themselves aggressively to the organization's activities (Evans *et al.*, 1995). The higher this ability, the more likely people are to invest in relationships that may lead to many social connections or links (Luthans *et al.*, 1988; Chao *et al.*, 1994). Further, Ferris *et al.* (2005) argued that the ability to network would exhibit the highest positive correlation with influence tactics and assertiveness. Shi *et al.* (2011) suggested that tactics for interpersonal influence exhibit the highest negative relationship with trait anxiety, and network ability contributes to an employee's altruism. People who can build social networks tend to feel comfortable interacting with diverse networks of people (Ferris *et al.*, 2005). This suggests that NB is conducive to more harmonious relationships; further, it helps employees to behave in a manner such that they coordinate/cooperate and thus fit into their place. A person with higher NB is more likely to perceive himself/herself as fitting within the organization or community.

As for the benefits of social relationships, Ferris *et al.* (2005) indicated that people who are skilled at forming networks are more influential due to the alliances they form or the social capital they control. People who are more capable of building trusty social relations are in a better position to create and capitalize on opportunities and to ensure and maintain their dominance in the social networks, which further facilitate access to valuable resources (Pfeffer, 1992). The sacrifice of material or psychological benefits will be higher after abandoning an existing social relationship. People with comparatively higher NB are more likely to perceive the benefits they would relinquish upon leaving the embedded relationship in an organization or community.

Previous studies show that the skills required in NB are positively associated with the embedded relationship. Allen (2006) found that socialization tactics are positively related to ON, while they are insignificantly related to OFF. Menguc *et al.* (2007) found that the socialization tactics of new salespeople (e.g. building relationships and networks, participating in activities such as information search and performance feedback), significantly affect their perceived level of accommodation and their willingness to adjust to fit with the environment. Menguc and Barker (2005) found

that salespeople's skills in collaborative relationships with others (e.g. links with others) are social, complex, and embedded in human and social capital; thus, these will generate greater economic rents. Accordingly, salespeople who are highly skilled in NB are deeply embedded both on and off the job. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1. NB is positively associated with ON.

H2. NB is positively associated with OFF.

2.2 NB and sales performance

Social capital theory provides a basis for explaining the mechanisms through which employees are highly skilled at building networks to improve their job potency. Social capital is defined as the resources embedded in a social network that are accessed and mobilized in purposive actions (Lin, 2001, p. 29). The characteristics of social relations that result in social capital consist of the opportunities provided by the network structure, the motivational force driven by social norms and values within the network, and the reputation effect diffused by the nodes in the embedded relations (Kwon and Adler, 2014). The social network determines the extent to which an individual can access information, influence, and bring about change within interconnected relationships (Burt, 1997). Thus, social capital – as the goodwill available to individuals – is associated with innovation, performance, and work outcomes such as job attitudes (Brass *et al.*, 2004; Van Hove *et al.*, 2009).

People who are highly skilled at building social networks tend to show networking behavior for developing and maintaining social relations (Forret and Dougherty, 2001; Van Hove *et al.*, 2009). Further, such individuals tend to be proactive in interpersonal contacts for fostering formal or informal relationships (Ferris *et al.*, 2005; Pfeffer, 1992) for instrumental and emotional benefits (Thomas and Kram, 1988). Kwon and Adler (2014) argued that social skill refers to an actor's ability to effectively interact with other actors and to induce cooperation from the other actors by their accurate perception of others, management of impression, and persuasiveness. Thompson (2005) suggested that NB provides social support to proactive employees, which may embolden them to exercise discretion in pursuing initiatives that can extend beyond their formal job expectations. This combination of NB and associated social support, can further enhance confidence and self-efficacy, resulting in positive self-expression and performance improvement. Such behavior is crucial in the organizational integration of social resources for achieving goals (Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). Further, NB helps employees to gain social support in the face of difficult tasks that are beyond their role expectations (Thomas and Kram, 1988).

Michael and Yukl (1993) found that NB can affect an employee's career achievements. Gersick *et al.* (2000) found that the different relational experiences outside the domain regarded as being formative of professional careers foster different career logics or attempts to gain success. Thompson (2005) provided evidence that an employee who is highly skilled in building social networks would be highly proactive, which would lead to higher performance. Wolff and Moser (2009) found that an employee's NB is associated with increasing salary. Shi *et al.* (2011) showed that networking ability and interpersonal influence positively influence the in-role performance. Blickle *et al.* (2012) reported that an employee with conscientiousness and a learning approach that interplays with a social-related variable will have improved performance in jobs that have complex

demands. Thus, salespeople with a high ability to build networks establish stronger interpersonal relationships, providing additional resources to potentially improve performance. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3. NB is positively associated with sales performance.

2.3 JE and sales performance

According to Gorgievski and Hobfoll (2008), JE might result in the enhancement of an organization's resources. A person's embedded relationships within social groups may help to predict the value of the resources that are determined not only by personal factors but also by the external social and cultural environment. Individuals will attempt to acquire, retain, protect, and develop what they consider valuable resources in the social context. The more an individual is embedded, the more resources there are at his/her disposal (Hobfoll, 1989).

Hobfoll (2001) indicated that diverse resources are helpful for constructing replacement and substitution mechanisms, which would further facilitate one's sales tasks. This is because these mechanisms allow an individual to quickly find resources to meet the job requirements and performance goals. For example, if a person experiences family conflicts, the loss of social support can be compensated by his/her good relationships with colleagues (Hirsh and Rapkin, 1986; Hobfoll, 2001). Maslach *et al.* (2001) argued that employees with richer resources typically demonstrate higher self-efficacy in the face of setbacks at work; further, they tend to maintain a positive work attitude from which they would earn many benefits in social relationships. Resources affect an employee's decision to perform well at the job (Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2008).

High ON implies that a salesperson possesses valuable resources within the organization, which in turn indicates that the salesperson frequently engages in activities (i.e. links). While socializing, a salesperson may acquire various resources (such as knowledge, skills, and information) that are relevant to his/her job, perceive high compatibility with other salespeople or organizational activities (i.e. fit), and enjoy benefits that would otherwise have to be abandoned if they were to leave their job (i.e. sacrifice). Wright and Hobfoll (2004) and Sun and Pan (2008) provided evidence that richer resource stocks can reduce negative emotions, and they have a positive effect on an employee's performance. There is strong empirical evidence of a positive association between ON and job performance (e.g. Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2008; Lee *et al.*, 2004; Sekiguchi *et al.*, 2008). For the life insurance sector, Cheng (2014) found that the ON of salespeople is positively related to sales performance. Cheng and Chang (2014) reported that financial salespeople with higher ON have higher levels of job satisfaction which is positively correlated to sales performance. These findings indicate the potential benefits of strengthening JE for the organization's performance. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4. ON is positively associated with sales performance.

Salespeople rely on various social relations out of their work field to promote the possibility of career success. Higher OFF implies that an individual has acquired abundant resources from informal relationships. Hobfoll (2001) argued that in addition to physical assets, intimate relationships outside the formal organization, psychological support from family/relatives and friends, participation in community activities or church services, and trust from social groups are potentially invaluable resources. Interpersonal resources result from the social context in which an

individual lives and the relational and affective attachments to these social groups in this relational context, which further influence the person's resource capacity (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001).

OFF is likely to affect the development of replacement and substitution mechanisms. Drawing upon OFF, salespeople will have the ability to identify other potential customers when confronting rejection (e.g. termination of a contract) while constructing social relationships (Cheng and Chang, 2014). For example, if a salesperson faces one customer's refusal, he/she can quickly benefit from another customer's referral.

Based on the resource mechanisms, salespeople gain benefits not only from customers' loyalty (e.g. repurchase) and referral (instrumental benefits such as sales performance) but also from certain customers' relational quality (emotional benefits such as trust and satisfaction) (Crosby *et al.*, 1990). Rich and diverse customer resources are conducive to increasing the customer-embedded relations, which can provide salespeople with a greater number of customers and high-quality customer relationships, thereby potentially enhancing their sales performance (Crosby *et al.*, 1990; Verhoef *et al.*, 2002).

Higher OFF, is also reflected greater participation in community and/or family activities and having a wide social network outside of the workplace. By increasing the number of various social relations, the potential to obtain more customer resources increases (e.g. potential repurchase intentions, reputation, and referrals among customers), the standard of relational quality may also increase and subsequently, salespeople with high levels of OFF are likely to have better relationships with customers.

In addition, higher OFF potentially assists salespeople in generating several cost efficiencies. Better customer relationships help to reduce the transaction costs of future sales and increase the investment returns of customer relationships (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). Salespeople can also use various customer relationships as investment portfolios to effectively develop markets. For example, quality customer relationship from different areas or age groups can reduce the risk of customers taking their business to a competitor and thereby helping to stabilize customer relationships. Thus, salespeople with high OFF are likely to utilize their resources more effectively for higher sales performance. Crosby *et al.* (1990) found that life insurance salespeople with high quality off-the-job relationships with their customers were better at developing cross-selling and referral opportunities. Frankwick *et al.* (2001) provided evidence that greater contact by salespeople contributes to the maintenance of, or increase in, customer evaluated salesperson status, customer retention rates, and additional purchases. Cheng and Chang (2014) found that OFF is positively associated with sales performance among salespeople with greater networks. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5. OFF is positively associated with sales performance.

2.4 Mediating role of JE

To enhance performance, a firm usually sets sales targets as the daily benchmark for the salespeople. We maintain that a salesperson with higher NB typically possesses superior social skills; thus, they would be able to perform better at their job. However, sustained efforts are necessary to perform any task well. Without proper adaptation according to various sales tasks, the risk of wasting resources on unnecessary relationships or activities would be high (Crawford *et al.*, 2010).

JE can stabilize critical resources. Prior scholars have suggested the role of JE as a mediating variable between organizational shocks and employee retention (Holtom and Inderrieden, 2006; Mitchell *et al.*, 2001; Murphy *et al.*, 2013). When salespeople possess sufficient resources to perform their work, they can effectively create a buffer

(Bakker *et al.*, 2005) that can prevent negative outcomes such as job burnout (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). Further, Hobfoll (2001) argued that a person's diverse resources include physical and financial resources as well as interpersonal relationships. Because of JE, a person may become entrenched in his/her social networks, and it could become difficult for them to move elsewhere. This implies that job stability can be achieved through the relationships that are built inside or outside the organization. ON can help salespeople to enhance their professional knowledge through social relations, whereas OFF can help them strengthen their customer resources. Both these forms of embeddedness are considered to be critical resources for performance. Interpersonal contacts outside of the organization, in particular, are considered to be critical sources of customer resources that are vital for the potential performance of salespeople (Crosby *et al.*, 1990). This reflects that, unlike many other types of employees whose performance is predominantly influenced by internal factors, job output of salespeople is mainly dependent on outside relationships. Harris *et al.* (2011) reported that organizational JE is an intermediary mechanism that mediates the relationship between leader-member exchange (LMX) and job outcomes in the automobile sector. Karatepe and Ngeche (2012) found that full-time frontline hotel employees with JE mediate the relationship between their engagement and job outcome. Lev and Koslowsky (2012) reported that on-the-job-embeddedness is a key mediator between relationship conscientiousness and contextual performance in an educational framework. In a longitudinal study, Murphy *et al.* (2013) found that the JE of working adults fully mediated the relationship between their perceptions of job insecurity and their intention to stay. Therefore, through JE, salespeople can effectively utilize their resources to create positive job motivation. They can also maintain a stable source of critical resources to improve their performance. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

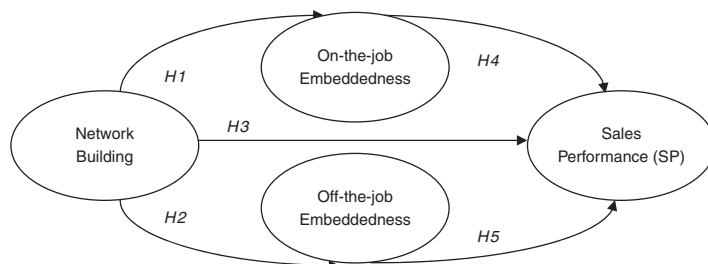
H6. JE mediates the relationship between NB and sales performance.

The hypothesized model is depicted in Figure 1.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample

Five insurance companies were selected for inclusion in our study. This selection was based on organizational scale, including the two indicators of sales manpower and new insurance policy income. We focussed on salespeople with full-time jobs in insurance sales and services. The total employment of salespeople in these five companies is about 108,000 salespeople. The average ratio of full-time to part-time salespeople is



Note: *H6* JE mediates the relationship between network building and sales performance

Figure 1.
Hypothesized model

about 50 percent, thus the total full-time salespeople in these five companies is close to 54,000. The average number of full-time employees in each company is about 10,800 salespeople. We used the calculator of sample size available from the creative research systems web site (Creative Research Systems, 2015) to evaluate the validation of sample size. These calculations indicated a sample size of 780 salespeople to achieve validity at 95 percent confidence level and 3.5 percent sampling error[1]. The total number of salespeople for the selected five companies is close to 70 percent of all salespeople in the life insurance market in Taiwan. Moreover, for the five companies, income premiums from new insurance policies account for 66 percent of the market share in Taiwan. Another reason why these five companies were selected for our study is the use of their sales force as their main marketing strategy and the attention paid to sales training and ethics for the advancement of the sales force. Recently, these companies were aggressively engaged in the internationalization of the financial industry within Southeast Asia and China. Further, they actively developed various financial products involving annuity and pension funds. Thus, the sample has a high degree of representativeness.

Following pilots, the questionnaires were mailed from the firms' national headquarters to agency offices located across Taiwan. Before distributing the questionnaires, we contacted the managers of the sales department in the headquarters of the five companies by phone to check the appropriate time for receiving the questionnaires and to request their assistance in encouraging participation among their salespeople. After mailing the questionnaires, we followed up to ensure their receipt. In addition to the questionnaires, each packet contained a letter explaining the purpose of the research.

A total of 496 questionnaires were returned (return rate = 63.5 percent). After excluding unsuitable respondents (e.g. sales administrative staff and agency assistants) and incomplete surveys (e.g. those with more than two consecutive questions unanswered), we obtained 445 valid responses; the valid response rate was about 57.1 percent.

The characteristics of the sample revealed that 45.4 percent are men and 54.6 percent are between 20 and 50 years of age. On average, the respondents had 16 years of education, five years of work experience in a sales job, and four years of experience in the current position. No statistically significant differences were found based on the demographic characteristics of the participants, except for the effect of experience on sales performance. Further, using ANOVA analyses, we examined whether any differences in sales performance would exist among groups with various levels of work experience. The findings show that there is a significant and positive relationship between work experience (sales job and current position) and sales performance (customer relationships and product selling). The differences in customer relationship performance (CRP) exists among various levels of years in sales job ($F = 5.40, p < 0$) and current position tenure ($F = 35.41, p < 0$). The differences in product selling performance (PSP) occur among groups with different tenure in sales job ($F = 4.71, p < 0$) and current position tenure ($F = 30.45, p < 0$). Therefore, the salesperson's experience is used as a control variable in our hypothesized model.

3.2 Measures

To consider the sales practices, we utilized variables that were employed in previous studies. Any adjustments to extant variables reflected the context of this study and were based on input obtained from interviews with several life insurance sales managers, senior salespeople, and two scholars in the field. Using a 5-point Likert

scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), the participants were asked to answer how each item described themselves. The measures are presented in the Appendix.

NB. We adopted a validated scale from Ferris *et al.* (2005). The four-item scale assesses the extent to which people develop and build social networks to increase their influence in facilitating activities at work ($\alpha = 0.88$). Higher scores indicate a higher tendency toward NB.

JE. The two JE dimensions were measured using scale items that were validated by Lee *et al.* (2004) and Holtom and Inderrieden (2006). The two composites were measured using 11 items to determine the extent to which the salespeople valued their attachment to their jobs and communities. Following Lee *et al.* (2004), the three organization-focussed sub-dimensions (five items) were aggregated to form ON ($\alpha = 0.82$). The community-focussed sub-dimensions (six items) represented OFF ($\alpha = 0.84$).

Sales performance. The measure of sales performance included two fields. The first type is an input measure and measures key inputs including proxies of customer contact efficiencies (e.g. the number of phone calls required to complete a sale) and sales skills which are evaluated against specific goals (sales output) (Pilling *et al.*, 1995; Boles *et al.*, 1995). Following Bluen *et al.* (1990) and Butler and Reese (1991), we used the number of insurance policies sold by each sales agent during the previous 12-month period as an indicator of insurance sales performance.

Further, we ensured that all the items loaded on their hypothesized factors and did not have high cross-loadings with the non-hypothesized factors. We conducted a factor analysis to identify factorial validity. Item loadings over 0.40 were used to determine the factor structure (Nunnally, 1978). Two substantial factors emerged from the data. The first factor incorporated three items measuring efficient CRP, which accounted for 51.2 percent of the variance (eigenvalue = 3.07). Three customer relation-focussed performance items (the number of customers increased; new customers referred by other customers; and contact efficiency in the previous one year) were aggregated to form the CRP construct ($\alpha = 0.85$). The second factor comprised three items measuring the PSP; this accounted for 23.19 percent of the total variance (eigenvalue = 1.39). The three product-focussed performance items (total first year commission, FYC; average monthly first year premium, FYP; the number of salespeople recruited in the previous one year) were aggregated to form the PSP construct ($\alpha = 0.80$). Subsequently, we revised the hypothesized model.

Control variable. Our analyses of the sample characteristics indicated that the experiences in a sales job would impact a salesperson's sales performance. The result is in accordance with the prior research on customer relationship marketing, which suggested that the seller's expertise may affect the dependent variables of the sales outcome (e.g. the customer's future interactions and sales performance) (Crosby *et al.*, 1990; Doney and Cannon, 1997). We included two experience items that would proxy for the salesperson's expertise and knowledge, namely, the sales seniority in the company (e.g. the years a salesperson works for his/her company) and for the position (e.g. the years a salesperson works on the current authorized level, such as the title of an agent) ($\alpha = 0.89$).

3.3 Data analysis

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the hypotheses. Using factor analysis, we initially explored the construct of sales performance for a better understanding of the

life insurance sales context. The constructs of NB and JE are well theorized in the previous research. Since our research objective is to validate the mediating role of JE on the relationship between NB and sales performance, the SEM technique is adequate for the assessment of the theoretical model. This is because SEM can specify the causal relationships involving the latent variables, describe the causal effect, and assign the explained and unexplained variances (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1996). Employing the LISREL model, our analysis consists of two parts. First, we performed the measurement model to examine the data fit with the hypothesized model. Second, the SEM was tested to specify the causal relationships of the proposed structural model and a fit comparison to the nested alternative models. Specifically, we estimated a multiple mediator model using the asymptotic critical ratio (Z-statistic) approach proposed by Preacher and Hayes (2008) in order to address the problems of estimating the total indirect effect of several mediating variables.

4. Results

Table I shows the inter-correlations of the measures. Overall, the values of the correlation coefficients between the pairs of explanatory variables are generally modest, except the correlation coefficient of 0.65 between NB and ON. Further, we calculated the variance inflation factor (VIF) values for each explanatory variable. The calculated VIF values are less than 2 (1.02-1.94), suggesting that the problems associated with multicollinearity are relatively unlikely in this analysis (Gujarati, 1995).

4.1 Convergent validity

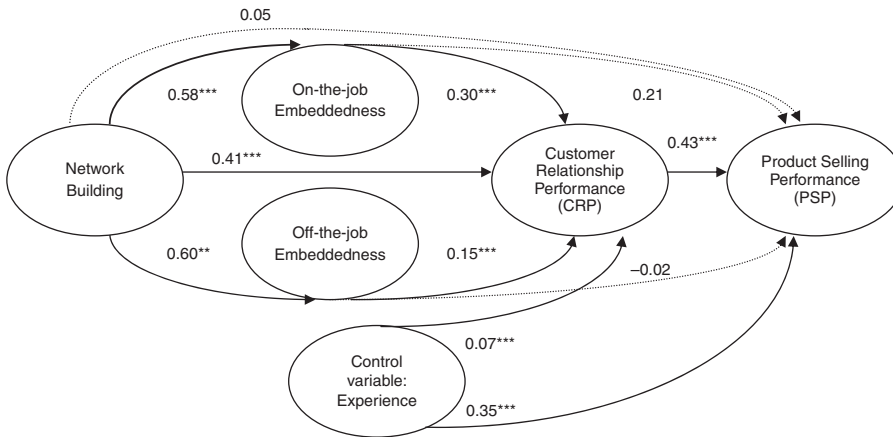
To substantiate the efficacy of the measurement model, the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed using LISREL 8.7 to fit the data with the revised hypothesized model (Figure 2). We first executed a series of CFAs to evaluate whether each of the measurement items would load significantly onto the corresponding scales. Following Hair *et al.*'s (1998) suggestion, the results reveal a good data fit ($\chi^2_{(215)} = 405.04$; $p = 0.00$; $\chi^2/df = 1.88$; GFI = 0.93; CFI = 0.98; RMSEA = 0.045; RMR = 0.043).

Table II presents these statistics along with the standardized item loadings, *t* values, and reliability. As shown in Table II, the standardized coefficients from the items to the factors range from 0.49 to 0.91. The CFA results indicate that a significant relationship exists between each indicator and its respective construct ($p < 0.05$), thereby establishing the proposed relationships among the indicators and constructs, and thus, proving convergent validity (Hair *et al.*, 1998).

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Network building (NB)	3.92	0.65	–					
2. On-the-job embeddedness (ON)	3.95	0.60	0.65***	–				
3. Off-the-job embeddedness (OFF)	3.62	0.63	0.44***	0.40***	–			
4. Customer relationship performance (CRP)	3.59	0.82	0.43***	0.41***	0.32***	–		
5. Product selling performance (PSP)	2.45	1.06	0.24***	0.26***	0.19***	0.37***	–	
6. Control variable: Experience (EXP)	2.50	1.38	0.41	0.09	0.12**	0.15***	0.49***	–

Note: ***Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

Table I.
Original data means,
standard deviations
and correlations
among variables



Note: ***Significant at 0.01 level

Figure 2.
Results of the
revised hypothesized
model

	Standardized loading	(<i>t</i>)	Reliability
Network building (NB)	0.77	18.71	0.88
	0.84	21.03	
	0.87	22.18	
On-the-job embeddedness (ON)	0.77	18.63	0.82
	0.60	13.17	
	0.71	16.22	
	0.80	19.28	
	0.58	12.60	
Off-the-job embeddedness (OFF)	0.82	19.84	0.84
	0.49	10.42	
	0.53	11.39	
	0.79	19.04	
	0.80	19.12	
	0.77	18.19	
Customer relationship performance (CRP)	0.72	16.59	0.85
	0.80	19.16	
	0.72	16.76	
	0.91	23.01	
Product selling performance (PSP)	0.77	17.58	0.80
	0.80	18.39	
	0.70	15.58	
Experience (EXP)	1.00	23.38	0.89
	0.82	18.48	

Table II.
Measurement
properties

4.2 Discriminant validity

Following the method proposed by Bagozzi and Yi (1988), the series of tests involving the correlation between each pair of constructs were constrained to 1.0, and the chi-square for the constrained model (Model 1) was compared with that of the unconstrained model (UM1). A significantly lower chi-square for the UM1 indicates that the constructs are not perfectly correlated, which supports the discriminant validity of the scales (Table III).

Table III.
 χ^2 comparison

Unconstrained model (UM1) Equal between constructs	$\chi^2_{(215)} = 405.04$ ($p = 0.00$), $\chi^2/df = 1.88$ GFI = 0.93, CFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.045, RMR = 0.043	
	Constrained model $\chi^2_{(df = 216)}$	Comparison*** $\Delta\chi^2_{(df = 1)}$
$\psi(\text{NB, EXP}) = 1$	721.19	316.15
$\psi(\text{NB, ON}) = 1$	734.68	329.64
$\psi(\text{NB, OFF}) = 1$	1,457.42	1,052.38
$\psi(\text{NB, CRP}) = 1$	892.94	487.90
$\psi(\text{NB, PSP}) = 1$	797.17	392.13
$\psi(\text{EXP, ON}) = 1$	720.86	315.82
$\psi(\text{EXP, OFF}) = 1$	718.59	313.55
$\psi(\text{EXP, CRP}) = 1$	742.91	337.87
$\psi(\text{EXP, PSP}) = 1$	693.88	288.84
$\psi(\text{ON, OFF}) = 1$	1,201.16	796.12
$\psi(\text{ON, CRP}) = 1$	927.98	522.94
$\psi(\text{ON, PSP}) = 1$	802.18	397.14
$\psi(\text{OFF, CRP}) = 1$	946.39	541.35
$\psi(\text{OFF, PSP}) = 1$	807.26	402.22
$\psi(\text{CRP, PSP}) = 1$	746.20	341.16

Note: ***Model comparison is significant at 0.01 level

4.3 Hypothesis testing

To investigate whether $H1-H5$ are supported by the proposed model, we tested the hypotheses (Table IV). The results of the hypothesized model ($\chi^2_{(218)} = 417.96$; $p < 0.00$; $\chi^2/df = 1.92$; GFI = 0.92; CFI = 0.98; RMSEA = 0.045; RMR = 0.049) indicate that the model fits the data (Hair *et al.*, 1998). Although the p -value is zero, the ratio of the χ^2 to the df is 1.92 (417.96/218); hence, the model fits the data (Figure 2). The findings also indicate that NB has a significantly positive effect on both ON (NB→ON: $\gamma_{11} = 0.58$, $t = 10.64$) as well as OFF (NB→OFF: $\gamma_{21} = 0.60$, $t = 7.51$). Thus, $H1$ and $H2$ are not rejected.

Moreover, the results show that NB exerts a significant effect on CRP (NB→CRP: $\gamma_{31} = 0.41$, $t = 3.40$), although the effect on PSP is insignificant (NB→PSP, $\gamma_{41} = 0.05$, $t = 0.28$). Thus, $H3$ is partially supported. Further, the results show that ON has a significant effect on CRP (ON→CRP: $\beta_{31} = 0.30$, $t = 2.05$), while the effect on PSP is insignificant (ON→PSP: $\beta_{41} = 0.21$, $t = 1.09$). Thus, $H4$ is partially supported.

Although the findings indicate that OFF has a significant influence on CRP, the effect on PSP is insignificant (OFF→CRP: $\beta_{32} = 0.15$, $t = 2.15$; OFF→PSP: $\beta_{42} = -0.02$, $t = -0.21$). Thus, $H5$ is partially supported. CRP has a significantly positive effect on PSP (CRP→PSP: $\beta_{43} = 0.43$, $t = 5.21$).

4.4 Model comparisons

In Table IV, the analysis of the UM2 indicates that NB has an indirect impact on PSP through JE and CRP. Following Bentler and Bonnett (1980), we compared the UM2 with the other potential models of the data to assess the selection of the UM2. We examined another model (Model 1) for which the weakest paths were deleted (including NB→PSP (γ_{41}), ON→PSP (β_{41}), and OFF→PSP (β_{42})) to identify the mediating role of JE and CRP. The fit results of Model 1 are $\chi^2_{(221)} = 420.53$, GFI = 0.92, CFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.054, and RMR = 0.052. We also performed a χ^2 test to evaluate the

	Hypothesized model (unconstrained model, UM2)	Model comparison	
		Model 1(M1) constrain γ_{41} , β_{41} and β_{42}	Model 2 (M2) constrain γ_{41} , β_{41} and β_{42} , free β_{21}
<i>Path</i>			
NB→ON (γ_{11})	0.58 (0.05) 10.64***	0.57 (0.05) 10.61***	0.57 (0.05) 10.56***
NB→OFF (γ_{21})	0.60 (0.08) 7.51***	0.60 (0.08) 7.51***	0.39 (0.10) 3.85***
NB→CRP (γ_{31})	0.41 (0.12) 3.40***	0.41 (0.12) 3.41***	0.41 (0.11) 3.67***
NB→PSP (γ_{41})	0.05 (0.16) 0.28	–	–
EXP→CRP (γ_{32})	0.07 (0.02) 3.32***	0.07 (0.02) 3.33***	0.07 (0.02) 3.34***
EXP→PSP (γ_{42})	0.35 (0.04) 9.14***	0.34 (0.04) 9.07***	0.34 (0.04) 9.07***
ON→CRP (β_{31})	0.30 (0.14) 2.05***	0.31 (0.14) 2.14***	0.31 (0.14) 2.16***
OFF→CRP (β_{32})	0.15 (0.07) 2.15***	0.15 (0.07) 2.14***	0.15 (0.07) 2.13***
ON→PSP (β_{41})	0.21 (0.19) 1.09	–	–
OFF→PSP (β_{42})	–0.02 (0.09) –0.21	–	–
CRP→PSP (β_{43})	0.43 (0.08) 5.21***	0.50 (0.07) 7.15***	0.50 (0.07) 7.16***
ON→OFF (β_{21})	–	–	0.34 (0.13) 2.66***
<i>Properties</i>			
χ^2	417.96 ($p < 0.00$)	420.53 ($p < 0.00$)	411.98 ($p < 0.00$)
df	218	221	220
Comparison		M1-UM2	M2-M1, M2-UM2
$\Delta\chi^2_{(df)}$		2.57 ₍₃₎ ns	8.55 ₍₁₎ sig., 5.98 ₍₂₎ sig.
RMSEA	0.045	0.054	0.044
RMR	0.049	0.052	0.051
CFI	0.98	0.98	0.98
GFI	0.92	0.92	0.93
<i>Parsimony index</i>			
PNFI	0.83	0.84	0.84
PGFI	0.73	0.74	0.74
Model AIC	533.96	530.53	523.98
<i>Asymptotic critical ratio Z</i>			
NB→PSP	0.396/0.135 = 2.93***		
ON→PSP	0.126/0.065 = 1.94**		
OFF→PSP	0.062/0.031 = 2.00***		
Notes:	$Z = \frac{\text{total indirect effect}(f)}{\sqrt{\text{Var}[f]}}$. *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$		

Table IV.
Results of
hypothesized model
test: comparisons
and path coefficients

difference in fit between the UM2 and Model 1; the results indicate that the difference between the estimated parameters of the two models is insignificant ($\Delta\chi^2_{(3)} = 2.57$). Therefore, based on the results of the revised full model (M1), we conclude that JE and CRP mediate the paths from NB to PSP.

Our data is large enough to avoid the problem of normal distribution for deriving a p -value for the indirect effect. To validate the mediator of the JE and CRP variables, we assessed the significance of the total indirect effect for the paths from NB to PSP and from JE to PSP by examining the asymptotic critical ratio (Z -statistics) (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). In Table IV, the findings indicate that the Z -statistics are all significant (NB→PSP: $Z = 2.93$, $p < 0.01$; ON→PSP: $Z = 1.94$, $p < 0.05$; OFF→PSP: $Z = 2.00$, $p < 0.01$), rejecting the null hypothesis that the total indirect effect is zero. Thus, we confirm the intervening role of JE and CRP in the multiple mediator models. The results show that NB has an indirect relationship with PSP through JE and CRP. In other words, NB is conducive to CRP, but only after JE is introduced as a mediator. Further, NB and JE do not directly lead to PSP. The two constructs rely on CRP as a mediator to positively influence PSP. Thus, $H6$ is supported.

4.5 Further analysis

We examined an additional direct path between ON and OFF (Table IV: Model 2). The finding shows that a significant difference exists between the two χ^2 values (M2-M1: $\Delta\chi^2_{(1)} = 8.55$; M2-UM2: $\Delta\chi^2_{(1)} = 8.98$), suggesting an improved model fit with the data. Further, using the parsimony index, we find that Model 2 is more modest (PNFI = 0.84; PGFI = 0.74; AIC = 523.98), which indicates that Model 2 is superior, compared to the other models in the theorization.

5. Discussion and conclusion

The objective of this study is to integrate the JE theory with NB in order to determine whether there was a positive association with sales performance and to test whether JE mediated the posited relationship between NB and sales performance. This study uses the data set of the salespeople working for the top five life insurance companies in Taiwan. Consistent with the JE theory and the NB argument, our findings indicate that NB has a direct effect on ON, OFF, and CRP. Moreover, NB does not directly correlate to PSP, which is only directly associated with higher JE of salespeople with NB.

This study has not only clarified the relationships among NB, JE, and sales performance but has also verified the mediating effects of JE (on on-the-job and off-the-job-embeddedness) and CRP in the sales context. Moreover, beyond the proposed hypotheses, we found that ON is positively associated with OFF. This provides support for Hobfoll's (2001) argument that diverse resources are helpful for developing replacement and substitution mechanisms, suggesting that resources gained from inside and outside social relations can be pooled together in the salespeople's resource portfolio for effective allocation. In addition, this supports the argument that the very nature of the sales job is to act as a boundary spanner between the internal operations and external customer relationships (Ahearne *et al.*, 2005).

5.1 Discussion and contribution

Introducing NB into JE theory. The results contribute to the growing literature which finds a positive association between social or interpersonal skills and ON (e.g. Allen, 2006; Menguc and Barker, 2005; Menguc *et al.*, 2007). Our findings provide additional

evidence of a positive association between NB and OFF. However, this is in contrast to Allen's (2006) study which indicates social skills are insignificantly related to OFF. We believe a possible explanation for the difference between the two studies is that the sample in the Allen's (2006) study was of financial employees who work predominantly with internal operations, thus social skills for constructing outside relationships would not be their primary job demand. Our findings also show that achieving better external relationships (i.e. OFF) is directly related to the social skills of sales people. The positive association between NB and OFF found here adds additional support for the relationship marketing argument that social skills are crucial for building customer contacts and relationships (Crosby *et al.*, 1990). Practically, salespeople should develop social skills that are aimed at the ability of observing the advantages and disadvantages of interpersonal relationships with their colleagues and customers, thereby allowing them to better cultivate internal and external embedded resources from social relations.

Clarifying the relationship among NB, JE, and sales performance. It is found that ON and OFF are positively and significantly associated with sales performance. These results are broadly consistent with the resourcing arguments whereby JE increases resources that influence replacement and substitution mechanisms (e.g. Gorgievski and Hobfoll, 2008; Hobfoll, 1989, 2001). In contrast to previous research on the direct effect of JE on performance, in our study PSP is found to be directly impacted by CRP only, which can be promoted through NB and JE. Thus, it is likely that in order to increase PSP, salespeople must maintain relationships with customers (CRP). In sum, CRP is found to be important for NB, JE and PSP.

According to our findings, there are two paths to promote PSP. The first is that NB has a direct and positive association with CRP, not PSP. The second is that NB has an indirect relation to CRP, with JE intervening in this relationship. As was expected, the key mediating role of JE is validated. This evidence contrasts with the relationships found by other scholars (e.g. Thompson, 2005; Wolff and Moser, 2009; Shi *et al.*, 2011) that NB ability is directly and positively related to job performance. We provide additional support for the indirect relationship from NB and JE to PSP, while CRP is also another key in the relationship. The reasons that our results are different from previous research on NB and performance could be our context is the insurance industry. Insurance salespeople with higher performance are likely to develop and maintain customer relationship for a long period. Namely, to achieve performance goal, salespeople should be stable on their sales job and focussed on their customers. Thus, we theoretically refine the important roles of JE and CRP. In practice, in order to promote NB of salespeople, sales managers should provide their employees with clear directions and targets. For example, sales people could be offered rewards that are linked to the performance of customer relationship. Moreover, the results show that JE serves as a buffer in stabilizing and adapting effective resources. Thus, another recommendation is that managers construct clearer indicators and measures of on-the-job and off-the-job-embeddedness. This should also improve customer stability.

Verifying the positive influence of CRP on PSP. The findings of this study indicate that sales performance can be assessed based on CRP and PSP. In our study, CRP refers to sales inputs – i.e., performance related to building customer relationships, including the increase in the number of customers, referrals, and contacts needed to close a deal. PSP measures sales outputs and thus captures sales performance metrics such as the number of products actually sold, first year commission, average

monthly first year premium, and the number of new salespeople successfully recruited in the previous year. In this study, JE was also found to influence PSP through CRP.

JE is representative of an employee's development of rich social resources (Gorgievski and Hobfoll, 2008) and can also reflect an employee's job stability. The impact of JE on job performance is indirect. JE, as a mechanism for higher performance, must engage in the exchanges with organizational stakeholders in social networks (Hom *et al.*, 1984; Sekiguchi *et al.*, 2008). Our findings indicate that the primary task of salespeople is to assist their organizations in effectively managing customer relationships. CRP can demonstrate the results of a salesperson's interactions with important organizational stakeholders. The study finds that ON- and OFF and the two performance measures are both highly significant, reflecting at least in part, the importance of guanxi and social networks in Chinese culture (Taifel and Turner, 1979). Ramesh and Gelfand (2010) have provided the evidence that person-job fit is a significant predictor of job outcome (e.g. lower turnover) in the USA; however, person-organization fit, organization links, and community links are all significant predictors of job outcomes (e.g. lower turnover) in India, a more collectivistic culture. Further, instead of looking for profits from product sales, managers should initially pave the way for salespeople to embed themselves in sales work by providing clear measures for customer contacts or relations. The analysis demonstrates that both types of JE are important antecedents in the context of sales in China. OFF is of particular importance, which likely reflects China's collectivist culture.

5.2 *Limitations and suggestions for future research*

This study investigated the under-explored relationships between JE, networking buildings and the sales performance. Several useful results were obtained from the analysis. However, there are at least three relevant research areas that merit further investigation based on this study's findings and limitations. First, the use of self-reported data can potentially result in common method variance (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2012). Due to the cross-sectional nature of the dataset, no causal influences can be inferred in the analysis and the possibility of reverse causality cannot be eliminated. Thus, the collection of objective longitudinal data, especially for the performance variables provides an important avenue for future research.

Second, since we examined a single industry, we cannot generalize relationships found. Wilson (1995) found that the social bonding of service employees with customers could help to increase customer loyalty behaviors and yield more word-of-mouth and referral opportunities. Thus, a second useful avenue for future research will be to expand the analysis to other industries, especially those in services. The study was conducted in Taiwan, where on and off-the job networking is of particular importance, thus some of the relationships found may be stronger than if tested in more individualistic, less collectivist cultures such as the USA or UK.

JE is a state of an employee's social relations inside and outside the organization. It shows an employee's attachment level and perceived value in the relational bonding (McCall, 1970). Future scholars could collect a data set from boundary-spanning employees to examine the mediating effects of JE on the relationship between NB and customer loyalty.

Finally, future research could examine the moderators of the relationship between NB and JE. Scholars have attempted to apply various theories to extend the application of JE

in employees' job stability and performance (e.g. social exchange theory). Sekiguchi *et al.* (2008) suggested that the direct explanatory effect of JE on job performance is not strong. According to the social exchange perspective, however, the LMX theory provides a clear explanation of the effect of JE on job performance. Moreover, Carmeli *et al.* (2009) reported that managers could use their leader-relational behaviors to effectively enhance their employees' bonding in social relationships, and subsequently improve their job capacity and performance. Hence, future research could examine leadership behaviors that can intensify the development of employees' organizational embeddedness.

Note

1. The Creative Research system is a kind of on-line calculator which is supported by two associations, including American Association for Public Opinion Research and American Marketing Association.

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Further reading

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Constructs	Measures
Network building	($\alpha = 0.88$) 1. I spend a lot of time and effort working with others. 2. I am good at building relationships with influential people at work. 3. I have developed a large network of colleagues and associates at work whom I can call on for support when I really need to get things done. 4. I am good at using my connections and networks to make things happen at work.
Job embeddedness	
On-the-job embeddedness	($\alpha = 0.82$) 1. I must interact with co-workers on my daily work. (link). 2. I fit with this organization's culture (fit). 3. I like my work schedule (e.g. flextime, shift) (fit). 4. I would sacrifice a lot of friends if I left this job (sacrifice). 5. I believe that the prospects for continuing employment with this company are excellent (sacrifice).
Off-the-job embeddedness	($\alpha = 0.84$) 1. My family roots are in the community where I live (link). 2. I regularly visit persons in the community (link). 3. I usually spend leisure time in the community near my house (link). 4. I really love the place where I live (fit). 5. I have good relationships with neighbors in the community (fit). 6. People respect me a lot in my community (sacrifice).
Sales performance	Please mark on each question that represents your job outcome in the previous one year.
Customer relationship performance (CRP)	($\alpha = 0.85$) 1. In recent years, the number of my customers has increased: <input type="checkbox"/> 5/below <input type="checkbox"/> 6~10 <input type="checkbox"/> 11~15 <input type="checkbox"/> 16~20 <input type="checkbox"/> 21/above (person) 2. In recent years, the number of new customers referred by my old customers has increased: <input type="checkbox"/> 5/below <input type="checkbox"/> 6~10 <input type="checkbox"/> 11~15 <input type="checkbox"/> 16~20 <input type="checkbox"/> 21/above (person) 3. The number of contacts I have made to close a deal: <input type="checkbox"/> 5/above <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 (contact)
Product selling performance (PSP)	($\alpha = 0.80$) 1. Total first-year commission (FYC) in the past year. (NT\$) <input type="checkbox"/> under 21 <input type="checkbox"/> 21-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51-80 <input type="checkbox"/> 81-110 <input type="checkbox"/> above 110 (ten thousand) 2. Average monthly first-year premium (FYP) in the past year. (NT\$) <input type="checkbox"/> under 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 3-7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8-12 <input type="checkbox"/> 13-17 <input type="checkbox"/> above 17 (ten thousand) 3. The number of salesperson that I have recruited successfully (person) <input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6-8 <input type="checkbox"/> above 8
Control variable Experience (EXP)	($\alpha = 0.89$) 1. You serve as a salesperson in this company. Your seniority is <input type="checkbox"/> under 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7-9 <input type="checkbox"/> above 9 (year) 2. You have been on this authorized level. Your seniority for this position is <input type="checkbox"/> under 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5-6 <input type="checkbox"/> above 6 (year)

Table A1.
Measures of studied constructs

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