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Impacts of Technostress on Innovation and Performance: The Professional Sales Context

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ABTSRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

We examine the research question thus is – How does technostress impact the performance of the sales professional? Noting that the sales context offers increased possibility of role stress, high expectations for technology-enabled performance, increasing requirements for innovation in customer solution development, and high failure rates for IS adoption/use, we investigate the effect of conditions that create technostress, on role stress, technology enabled innovation and technology enabled performance of the professional sales person. Noting that salespersons have traditionally been reluctant to use IS, we also look at the role of technology self-efficacy in mitigating the effects of technostress.

Technostress describes the stress that users experience as a result of their use of IS in the organizational context. Conditions that create technostress, i.e. "technostress creators" are associated with decreased productivity, job satisfaction and commitment, and increased role stress (Tarafdar et al 2007). Technology self-efficacy represents an individual's judgment about his or her ability to use computers in the accomplishment of a task. Higher self-efficacy is associated with lower computer related anxiety and higher comfort in using computers (Compeau et al., 1999). The changing nature of the salesperson-customer relationship requires creativity and innovation on part of the salesperson to jointly develop solutions with individual customers. Given the innovative aspects of sales force IS, and that innovating by creatively utilizing sales IS is an expected outcome of their use (Ahearne and Rapp 2010), we believe that technology enabled innovation is important in understanding how technostress impacts sales performance.

HYPOTHESES

We examine the following hypotheses:

H1: Technostress Creators is positively related to Role Stress.

H2: Role Stress is negatively related to Technology Enabled Performance

H3: Technostress Creators is negatively related to Technology Enabled Innovation.

H4: Technology Self-efficacy is negatively related to Role Stress.

H5: Technology Self-efficacy negatively moderates the relationship between Technostress Creators and Role Stress

H6: Technology Self-Efficacy is positively related to Technology Enabled Innovation

H7: Technology Enabled Innovation is positively related to Technology Enabled Performance

METHODS

We test our hypotheses through survey data collected from 237 institutional sales professionals. Survey items for the constructs were adapted from existing instruments.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Expected contributions include (1) extending current literature by examining performance and innovation impacts of technostress, (2) integrating insights from Social Cognitive Theory into the technostress domain, and (3) understanding technostress in the context of the sales professional, or similar boundary spanning and relationship oriented roles, that entail IS-enabled task innovation along with possible reluctance to use IS.

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