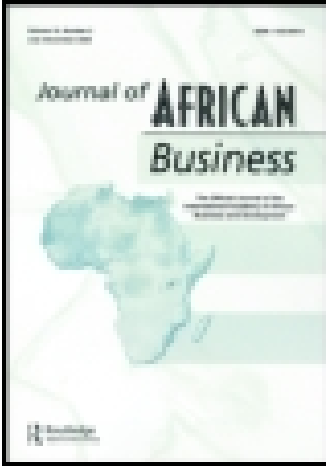


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Work Ethic, Locus of Control and Salesforce Task Performance

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Work Ethic, Locus of Control and Salesforce Task Performance

Joseph Mpeera Ntayi

ABSTRACT. This study explores the relationship between work ethic, locus of control and salesforce task performance. Using data from Uganda retail firms, this study finds that work ethic was a significant positive predictor of salesforce task performance. Further, there was a significant relationship between the different behavioural families of work-related activity work withdrawal behaviours, organizational retaliation behaviours and salesforce task performance. Results from regression analysis indicate that organizational retaliation behaviours and work withdrawal behaviours are important factors for explaining declining performance of salespeople in Uganda retail firms. Managers aiming to improve salesforce task performance should recruit individuals with a strong work ethic. Additionally, retail managers need to reduce work withdrawal and organizational retaliation behaviours so as to increase salesforce task performance. [*Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <http://www.HaworthPress.com> © 2005 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.*]

KEYWORDS. Work ethic, locus of control, organizational retaliation behaviours, work withdrawal behaviours, job withdrawal behaviours

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BACKGROUND

The work ethic is a cultural norm that places a positive moral value on doing a good job and is based on a belief that work has intrinsic value for its own sake (Cherrington, 1980, p. 19; Quinn, 1983, p. 89; Yankelovich and Immerwahr, 1984, p. 64). Like other cultural norms, a person's belief in the work ethic is principally influenced by people we regularly interact with (Braude, 1975), either at home or in the workplace. The work ethic calls for salespeople to work hard and smart, to be personally accountable and responsible for the work that one does.

The concept of work as a determinant of personal value and identity, and as an indicator of good character and good morals (Beder, 2000), is phasing out in Uganda. The work ethic in Uganda is suffering enormously as more and more salespeople want to do less and less for a high pay. Graduates, who find sales jobs after years of street walking, spend more time contemplating greener pastures than doing their assignment in the first week of their employment (Twinamatsiko, 2003). Retail employers have been forced to deal with salespeople who do not want to do a reasonable day's sales work for fair wages and salaries by instituting strict sales supervisory and control mechanisms like signing the attendance book on arrival and departure (clocking in and out), strict monitoring of offices to ensure that employees are on their "seats" working, or impromptu sales checks to ensure salespeople are at their post of duty.

In many Ugandan companies, salespeople take sick leave when they are not sick, they feign injuries to get "down" time and "sit around" on company time. The net effect has been an unjustifiable soaring sales expenditure. The approval of overtime expenditure by senior sales managers is a sign of a collaborated effort to engage in unethical work practices. Salespeople working in retail establishments like supermarkets, petrol stations, etc., pilfer from employers. They continually gripe about their pay and work conditions to both internal and external customers, resulting in loss of psychological energy and company image.

Cases of being involved in "dual relationships" are common. The *New Vision* (Monday, April 22, 2002, page 3) reported that the Central Tender Board was to be abolished and replaced with a new body—the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority. This new body was mandated to investigate corruption in the procurement process and cause disciplinary action to be taken against culprits among other authoritative rights. Various losses amounting to over US. \$110,855 were also reported during the 2001/2002 FY (*The New Vision*, April 22,

2002, page 3). Other media cases include but are not limited to: Three UCB workers attached to Kabwohe-Sub branch in Bushenyi who were suspended over Shs.56m loss (The New Vision, April 30, 2002). Further, Parliament was presented with the cases of National Social Security Fund (NSSF) employees who were suspended due to lack of honesty, integrity and transparency (The New Vision, May 04, 2002, page 5).

Engaging in “insurance fraud” to help the client pay for services in Uganda is commonly reported in Uganda Electricity Distribution Company and Uganda Telecommunications Limited (UTL) and Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) [as revealed by the Ssebutinde commission]. However, attempts have been made in Uganda Electricity Distribution Company (UEDC) to curb the unethical conduct and behaviour of both its staff and customers through “Operation Sigma” with little success (The New Vision, May 05, 2002). Furthermore, UTL customers continue to pay monthly rentals for the service even when telephones are out of function. UTL service staff have a reputation for making empty promises (The New Vision, May 07, 2002, page 11).

Accepting a very expensive gift from a client is common in many manufacturing and financial institutions in Uganda, blurring personal and professional relationships. Commercial Banks, like Co-operative bank, Greenland Bank, International Credit Bank (among others) were closed due to poor performance, despite audit reports from credible and reputable organizations which had declared them sound and fair. Although 60% of employees see the above happening, only 37% feel comfortable reporting any cases of misconduct they might discover (IGG, 2002).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The declining work ethic in Uganda may be responsible for reduction of employee effort, doing personal tasks at work, absenteeism, employee engagements in “insurance fraud”, misuse of company property, providing sensitive information to the public, and insensitivity to customer needs, thereby leading to low task performance.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to establish the relationship between work ethic and locus of control, work withdrawal behaviours, organiza-

tional retaliation behaviours, and job withdrawal behaviours and Salesforce task performance in Uganda Retail firms.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- a. Establish the relationship between work ethic, work withdrawal behaviour and Salesforce task performance.
- b. Examine the relationship between locus of control, organizational retaliation behaviours and Salesforce task performance.
- c. Assess the relationship between work ethic, organizational retaliation behaviors and Salesforce task performance.
- d. Establish the relationship between locus of control, work withdrawal behaviour and Salesforce task performance.
- e. Establish the relationship between locus of control and work ethic.

LITERATURE CITATION, HYPOTHESIS AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL

This section reviews literature relevant for the study, develops propositions used to guide the study, and thereafter presents a conceptual model based on the reviews.

Work Ethic, Work Withdrawal Behaviour and Task Performance

Work ethic is a cultural norm that calls upon individuals to be active, austere and work hard (Tilgher, 1930). It is based on a belief that work has intrinsic value (Cherrington, 1980; Yankelovich et al., 1984; Quinn, 1983; Bernstein, 1988; Anthony, 1977). The Work Ethic Construct is derived from Weber's (1904, 1905) Protestant Work Ethic theory, which supports hard work. This is consistent with the Protestant work ethic, which advocates for diligence, punctuality, deferment of gratification, and primacy of the work domain (Rose, 1985; Deans 1972). Hard work is undoubtedly seen as virtuous (Rodgers, 1978; Porat, 1977). The greatest tribute paid to the deceased is "*worked hard all his/her life, she/he is irreplaceable*" (Dean, 2003). Most employees anticipate that hard work and talent are the basis for success rather than chance or luck (Maccoby, 1988; Sheehy, 1990). Yankelovich (1981) found that younger workers were committed to the work ethic. Within this context, the work ethic would be a significant factor at increasing

sales performance. However, this view is contradicted by Deans (1972, pg 8-9) who found young people entering the workforce less willing to accept hard work as virtue and duty. We therefore, propose that:

- H₁: Work ethic is a significant positive predictor of Salesforce task performance;
- H₂: Work ethic is a significant negative predictor of work withdrawal behaviours, organizational retaliation behaviours and job withdrawal behaviours.

Salespeople with a high level of work ethic are always searching for ways to contribute to the sales job (Yankelovich, 1981). They are concerned with getting every detail right and carefully follow rules and procedures. They do not spend time at work doing things that are unrelated to the job (Hunt, 1996).

However, some salespeople enact behaviors to avoid aspects of their sales job or to minimize time spent on certain work tasks while still maintaining a level of sales performance that will prevent dismissal (Hanisch and Hulin, 1991). These behaviours are referred to as work withdrawal behaviours (Stumpf and Dawley, 1981). Past studies reveal that absenteeism, lateness, tardiness, reduction of personal effort, and doing personal tasks at work qualify as work withdrawal behaviours (Keller, 1984; Bycio, 1992). Studies on work withdrawal behaviours and performance have yielded inconsistent results. For example, whereas Hogan and Hogan (1989) found a negative relationship between job performance and absenteeism, Staw and Oldham (1978) viewed absenteeism as a means by which employees can relieve work related stress, thereby increasing performance. However, Bycio (1992), using data from meta-analysis, found a significant tendency for frequently absent employees to be poor performers. We therefore propose:

- H₃: There is a significant negative relationship between work withdrawal behaviour and salesforce task performance.

Locus of Control, Work Withdrawal Behaviours, Organizational Retaliation Behaviour and Task Performance

Locus of control has been described as a generalized disposition to assign responsibility for outcomes, both positive and negative, to either environmental causes (external locus of control) or internal causes (in-

ternal locus of control) (Martinko, Gundlach and Scott, 2002, Page 38). Further, Blau (1987), Griffeth and Hom (1988), Parker (1993), Spector and Michaels (1986) have reported associations between locus of control and work withdrawal behaviours and exit behaviours.

Storms and Spector (1987) contend that individuals with a high external locus of control are more likely to exhibit work withdrawal behaviours such as coming late to work, absenteeism, and slowdowns. As noted by Neuman (1998), attributions for the causes of negative outcomes are driving forces for aggressive behaviour that leads to organizational retaliation behaviours. Many researchers have argued that employees exhibit retaliation behaviours in order to "get back" at the organization for decisions or managerial actions that are deemed unfair or unjust by the affected employees (Folger, 1993). Such behaviours include theft, sabotage, interpersonal aggression, work slow downs, wasting time or materials, and spreading rumors (Penney and Spector, 2002). Researchers like Martinkos and Zellars (1998) and Weiner (1995) contend that external attributions stimulate negative affective reactions that are directed outward, such as revenge, particularly when the perpetrators' actions are perceived as intentional.

Geddes and Baron (1997) reported that 68.9% of managers indicated they had experienced some form of verbal aggression (insults, threat of retaliation) as a result of negative performance appraisals. McGurm (1988) further showed that up to 75% of employees steal from their employer at least once. Such behaviours could harm the performance of an organization (OECD,1998). Researchers such as Giacalone and Greenburg (1997) and Neuman and Baron (1998) agree that such behaviours are harmful to organizations and people associated with the organization, notably employees and customers. We therefore hypothesize that:

- H₄: Internal locus of control is *positively* correlated to work withdrawal behaviors, organizational retaliation behaviours, and job withdrawal behaviours.
- H₅: External locus of control is negatively correlated to salesforce task performance.
- H₆: Organizational retaliation behaviours and salesforce task performance are negatively related.

Work Withdrawal Behaviour, Organization Retaliation Behaviours and Task Performance

Work withdrawal behaviors, organization retaliation behaviour and job withdrawal behaviours are thought to inhibit performance (Hanisch and Hulin, 1991). This is consistent with earlier conceptualizations of Campbell, (1990) in which they asserted that unethical behaviours such as not being on the job as scheduled (absenteeism, tardiness, long breaks) seriously harm performance. Job withdrawal behaviours refer to the employee efforts to remove themselves from a specific organization and their work role (Hanisch and Hulin, 1991, pg.111). Meta-analytic studies conducted by Bycio, Hackett and Alvares (1990) reveal that employees who were terminated had a tendency to perform poorly. We therefore hypothesize:

H₇: There is a significant negative relationship between salesforce tasks performance and job withdrawal.

From the foregoing literature review, we develop the conceptual model in Figure I.

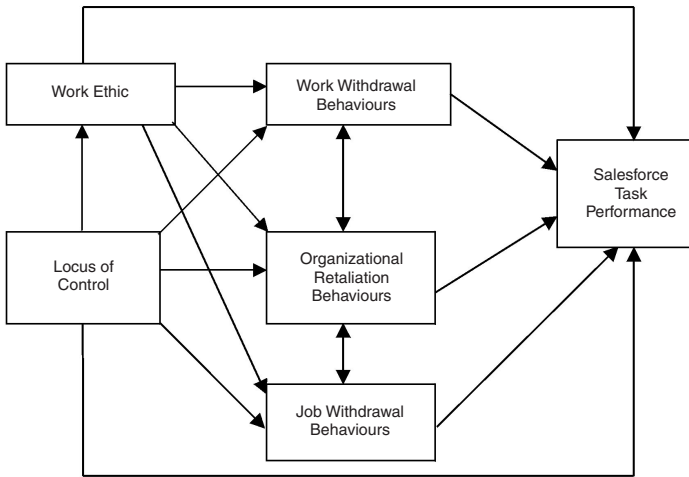
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study took a cross sectional survey design. Correlations were used to establish relationships between the independent and the dependent variables. Data was collected using a self-report strategy consistent with the work of Bennett and Robinson (2000). Gruys (1999) used a similar approach by asking respondents to consider the range of circumstances under which one could work and respond to behaviours using a scale anchored from “no matter what the circumstances, I would not engage in the behaviour,” to “in a wide variety of circumstances I would engage in the behaviour.”

Procedure

The research was carried out in retail institutions in Kampala. Retail institutions in Uganda provide goods and services for ultimate consumption and constitute over 80% of businesses in Uganda (UCA, 2002). This study used random sampling to select a sample of 86 supermarkets out of 110. The population of sales people working in all supermarkets was

FIGURE I. Work Ethic, Locus of Control and Salesforce Task Performance



2,200. The sample size was arrived at using Krejcie and Morgan (1976). Of the 500 retail employees surveyed, 420 responded, an 84% response rate.

The employee sample was confined to retail sales employees who work on a full-time basis. Of the respondent sample, 57.6% were male and 42.4% female. The biggest proportion of the age (89.4%) is between 20-35 years old, while those above 36 years were 10.6%. The biggest percentage of the retail sales employees was at the certificate level (44.2%), followed by diploma (33.8%). Those with degrees made up 21.4%; 29% were married and 66.7% single. A bigger proportion of the respondents (51%) had more than one dependent, while 49% had no dependents at all. Seventy-six and five tenths percent had worked with the organization for more than one year, while 23.5% had worked for less than one year.

Scales Employed

Measurements

Work ethic construct was measured by adopting the works of Hill (1995), Cherrington (1980) and Deans (1972) because ethics is pluralistic, complex, and a situational construct. Work withdrawal, organiza-

tional retaliation, and job withdrawal behaviours were assessed using a behavioural checklist based on a master list compiled from a number of existing measures (Hollinger, 1986; Knorz and Zapf, 1996; Neuman and Baron, 1998; Robinson and Bennett, 1995; Skarlicki and Folger, 1997; Spector, 1975). Participants were asked to indicate how often they had done each of the behaviours on their present job. Five response choices were used ranging from 1 = “never” to 5 = “every day”. High scores indicate a high incidence of the behaviour. Job performance was assessed using a scale developed by Marcus (2000).

Construct Reliability

The scales used in the study were tested for reliabilities using the Cronbach’s alpha tests. Work ethic yielded an alpha of 0.6532; internal locus of control, 0.6783; external locus of control, 0.6520; work withdrawal behaviour, 0.8240; organizational retaliation behaviours, 0.8465; job withdrawal behaviours, 0.7321; and task performance, 0.88780.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Factor Analysis

The items of the study were factor analyzed using principal components with varimax rotation. The results for work ethic construct yielded one factor corresponding to work ethic, explaining 59.562% of the variance.

Four items emerged from items measuring locus of control: powerful others (19.712%), internals (13.150%), and chance (12.508%). The fourth component that accounted for 11.456% of the variance was not clear; it did not clearly load on any of the factors and was therefore ignored. All the four factors accounted for 56.826% of the variance as shown in *Table I*. The construct of powerful others and chance were combined to form the external locus of control construct.

Items measuring organizational retaliation behaviours yielded seven (7) factors: theft (13.30%), misuse of company property (11.368%), assaulting company customers (7.525%), damaging company property and releasing confidential information–aggression (6.430%), sabotage (6.210%), spreading rumours about the organization (5.545%), and conspiracy (5.051%). All these factors accounted for 55.433% of the variance as shown in *Table II*.

TABLE I. Locus of Control

ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX	COMPONENTS			
	Powerful others (1)	Internal (2)	Chance (3)	Blurred (4)
I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.	-2.59E-02	0.17	0.6	0.284
To a great extent, my life is controlled by accidental happenings.	0.2	-0.484	0.447	0.378
Often there is no chance of protecting my personal interests from bad luck happenings.	0.118	0.122	-0.127	0.754
It's not always wise for me to plan too far ahead, because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune, chance.	1.53E-02	-3.35E-02	9.72E-02	0.683
I am usually able to protect my personal interests.	-6.69E-02	0.768	0.141	1.63E-02
My life is determined by my own action.	0.134	0.408	0.538	-2.03E-02
I can pretty much determine what will happen in my life.	7.01E-02	-1.03E+01	0.729	-0.223
When I make plans, I am almost certain to make them work.	0.15	0.685	0.1	0.108
Getting what I want requires pleasing those people above me.	0.66	3.04E-02	0.206	0.128
My life is chiefly controlled by powerful others.	0.793	-6.50E-02	0.106	-2.33E-02
In order to have my plans work, I make sure that they fit in with the desires of people who have power over me.	0.741	0.256	-0.102	0.189
I feel like what happens in my life is mostly determined by powerful people.	0.85	-5.19E-02	-1.54E-02	-3.84E-02

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation

Items measuring work withdrawal behaviours yielded four factors accounting for 52.251% of the variance. All the items loaded well on absenteeism (15.710%); reduction of effort (14.180%); doing personal tasks at work (11.410%); and tardiness (10.951%), details of which are shown in *Table III*.

Relationships Between Variables

The hypotheses on the relationship between work ethic, the three behavioural families and salesforce task performance constructs were as-

TABLE II. Organisational Retaliation Behaviors

ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX	COMPONENT						
	Theft (1)	Misuse of Company Property (2)	Sabotage/ Assault of Comp. Customers (3)	Aggressive (Damage Property) (4)	Sabotage (5)	Rumor (6)	Collusion (7)
I argued with people from outside the organization, e.g., customers or visitors.	0.108	2.66E-02	0.527	0.272	-0.174	0.325	-0.379
I was intoxicated during working hours.	0.47	2.70E-02	-0.177	0.13	-5.28E-03	0.441	8.46E-02
I spread rumors about the firm.	1.71E-02	5.37E-03	2.98E-02	-8.18E-02	-2.35E-02	0.709	7.73E-02
I helped someone to steal company property.	9.80E-02	9.44E-02	0.103	0.148	-7.59E-03	6.97E-02	0.799
I used a company car on my private business without permission.	0.379	0.3	0.407	-0.122	5.40E-02	-0.122	0.237
I took work materials home without permission.	0.742	0.236	-4.10E-02	-7.38E-03	0.139	5.21E-02	-2.60E-02
I turned in a falsified bill of expenses.	0.361	0.366	-8.30E-02	0.303	0.131	0.206	0.277
I made private calls or sent private e-mails at the company's expenses.	0.242	0.643	0.219	4.57E-02	-9.04E-02	0.233	0.122
I used more work materials than absolutely necessary.	0.214	0.675	9.08E-02	0.143	3.77E-02	-1.72E-02	0.137
I took home merchandise without permission.	0.739	5.22E-02	0.217	5.06E-02	5.11E-02	4.87E-02	-2.20E-02
I took money from my workplace that did not belong to me.	0.439	0.357	-0.205	0.153	-2.21E-03	-0.201	-0.264
I took home office supplies for private use.	0.557	0.308	0.287	-2.55E-02	0.143	9.98E-02	8.13E-02
I took part of my work material for private use.	0.623	0.177	0.29	7.48E-02	-6.26E-02	-4.59E-02	0.176
I deliberately damaged property at work.	9.00E-02	8.68E-02	9.78E-03	0.868	-3.90E-02	-6.87E-03	1.63E-02
I did not report theft by others.	-5.42E-03	0.224	7.88E-02	0.203	0.284	0.56	-8.42E-02

TABLE II (continued)

ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX	COMPONENT						
	Theft (1)	Misuse of Company Property (2)	Sabotage/ Assault of Comp. Customers (3)	Aggressive (Damage Property) (4)	Sabotage (5)	Rumor (6)	Collusion (7)
I passed confidential information on to someone outside the organization.	1.92E-02	7.18E-02	0.123	0.626	0.368	8.28E-02	0.148
I sold goods to a friend at a reduced price.	0.231	0.239	0.567	0.143	0.243	-3.12E-02	-5.61E-02
I made private photocopies at the company's expense during working hours without permission.	8.81E-02	0.751	-2.20E-03	-6.98E-02	8.05E-02	7.36E-02	5.19E-02
When a supervisor treated me unfairly, I damaged company supplies in response.	2.49E-02	8.86E-02	0.171	7.80E-02	0.79	1.85E-02	-3.61E-02
I falsified business documents.	0.418	6.68E-02	-8.68E-02	9.42E-03	0.5	0.158	0.121
I intentionally made mistakes.	0.457	0.11	0.206	0.151	0.408	-1.06E-02	-6.34E-03
I accepted payment in exchange for doing someone a favour.	6.66E-02	0.623	0.21	0.14	0.217	9.99E-03	-9.31E-02
I've gotten physically rough with people from outside the organization, e.g., customers, visitors.	4.64E-02	0.101	0.658	-2.30E-02	0.11	1.97E-02	0.152
I gave the employee discount to friends or relatives.	0.353	0.455	0.315	3.77E-02	2.88E-02	-3.08E-02	-0.241

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation

TABLE III. Work Withdrawal Behaviours

ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX	COMPONENTS			
	Absen- teeism (1)	Reduction of Effort (2)	Personal Tasks at Work (3)	Tardiness (4)
I left my work place during hours without permission.	0.623	0.361	7.10E-02	7.604E-02
I stayed away from work without excuse.	0.835	7.44E-02	0.123	2.40E-02
I intentionally worked slowly or carelessly.	4.09E-02	-0.128	0.233	0.783
I came to work late or went home early.	0.337	0.664	0.132	-4.61E-03
I exceeded a break for more than five minutes.	0.336	0.59	0.126	-3.20E-02
There were occasions when I skipped work.	0.445	0.24	0.206	0.4
I worked less in the absence of my supervisor.	0.21	0.226	-7.48E-02	0.72
I arrived at work at least 10 minutes late.	0.271	0.747	4.92E-02	0.16
I took a walk within the firm to shirk working.	0.246	0.144	0.572	-6.53E-04
I shirked unpleasant tasks.	2.59E-02	0.249	0.674	9.31E-02
I stayed away from work, although I was actually very healthy.	0.566	8.19E-02	0.494	8.27E-02
I did not prepare for important jobs sufficiently.	-2.37E-02	0.348	0.191	0.341
For my own business I left my workplace without permission.	0.574	0.131	6.09E-02	0.392
During working hours, I read the newspaper or played computer games.	-0.103	0.536	0.227	0.108
I used working time for private affairs.	7.66E-02	6.02E-02	0.66	0.146

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation

sessed by zero order correlations. The respective coefficients are shown in *Table IV*. Of the hypothesized relationships, four (4) were found to be significant as detailed in *Table IV*. Critical to this research are the findings that:

Work ethic correlated significantly and positively with salesforce task performance ($r = 0.1375^{**}$, $P < 0.000$) supporting H_1 . External Locus of control correlated significantly but positively with work withdrawal behaviours ($r = 0.1471^*$, $P < 0.027$); organizational retaliation behaviours ($r = 0.1121^*$, $P < 0.031$); Job withdrawal behaviours ($r = 0.097^*$, $P < 0.048$) and negatively with task performance ($r = -0.167^{**}$, $P < 0.000$), supporting H_5 .

TABLE IV. Zero-Order Correlations

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Work ethic (1)	1.00						
External locus of control (2)	-.020 (.679)	1.00					
Internal locus of control (3)	.044 (.364)	.000 (1.000)	1.00				
Work withdrawal behaviours (4)	-.026 (.588)	.1471* (.027)	-.034 (.487)	1.00			
Organizational retaliation behaviours (5)	-.062 (.208)	.1121* (.031)	-.003 (.948)	.620** (.000)	1.00		
Job withdrawal (6)	-.011 (.822)	.097* (.048)	-.063 (-.198)	.191** (.000)	.173** (.000)	1.00	
Task salesforce (7)	.1375** (.000)	-.167** (.000)	.043 (.385)	-.232* (.000)	-.183* (.031)	-.044 (.371)	1.00

**Significant at $P = 0.01$, *Significant at $P = 0.05$

Work withdrawal behaviours had a significantly positive correlation with organizational retaliation behaviours ($r = 0.620^{**}$, $P < 0.000$); but negatively with salesforce task performance ($r = -0.232^{**}$, $P < 0.000$). Organization retaliation behaviours had a significant positive correlation with job withdrawal behaviours ($r = 0.173^{**}$, $P < 0.000$), and a significant negative correlation with salesforce task performance ($r = -0.183^*$, $P < 0.031$).

Internal locus of control and job withdrawal behaviours did not significantly correlate with any of the variables in the conceptual model.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was used to assess the effects of various dimensions of work ethic and locus of control on salesforce task performance, and in turn the effect of the three behavioural families of work withdrawal behaviours, organizational retaliation behaviours, job withdrawal behaviours, and salesforce task performance as a dependent variable. Work ethic was found to have a significant positive effect on Salesforce task performance. The sign of the coefficient of the variable was in the hypothesized direction as indicated in *Table V*.

TABLE V. Dependent Variable: Salesforce Task Performance

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	2.744E-17	.048		.000		
Work Ethic	.157	.048	.157	3.252	1.000	1.000
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Sig. F Change	
0.3493	0.125	0.122	.9887692	.025	.001	

The regression model explained about 12% of the total variation in salesforce task performance, and the overall regression relationship was significant at 1% level (see *Table V*). This result suggests that work ethic is an important predictor of salesforce task performance.

Locus of control did not significantly contribute to the prediction of the variance in the salesforce task performance construct. This variable was eliminated from the equation upon the use of stepwise regression analysis.

The next question of interest was the effect of the three behaviour families on salesforce task performance. To explore this, another regression analysis was performed using salesforce task performance as the dependent variable. The adjusted $R^2 = 0.292$ and $F = 4.922$, the standardized beta coefficients, are shown in *Table VI*. While only 28.4% of the variance in Salesforce task performance is explained, the findings indicate that organizational retaliation behaviours and work withdrawal behaviours are important factors explaining salesforce task performance.

Discussion

This study has produced a series of interesting results, several of which confirm previous research. Consistent with Donovan (1990) and Munson (2000), this study finds a positive relationship between work ethic and salesforce task performance. It is expected that a salesperson that scores high on work ethic would equally achieve positive task performance. This is consistent with Dean (2003), who found work ethic to be a significant factor in increasing performance.

Consistent with previous research, work withdrawal behaviours and organizational retaliation behaviours show a negative relationship with

TABLE VI. Dependent Variable: Salesforce Task Performance

Variables in the Equation	Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Colinearity Statistics	VIF
	B		Beta			Tolerance	
(Constant)	4.914E-17	.041		.000	1.000		
Misuse of co. property (ORB)	-.310	.043	-.310	-7.253	.000	.935	1.070
Sabotage (falsify)	-.268	.042	-.268	-6.359	.000	.962	1.040
Tardiness (work withdrawal behaviour)	-.193	.043	-.193	-4.498	.000	.932	1.072
Doing personal task at work	-.129	.043	-.129	-2.975	.003	.903	1.107
Theft (org Ret Beh)	9.489E-02	.043	-.095	-2.218	.027	.934	1.070
R	.541	R Square .292	Adjusted R Square.284	Std. Error of the Estimate .8462571	R Square Change .008	F Change 4.922	df1 (1) df2 414

salesforce task performance (Hogan and Hogan, 1989; Bycio, 1992; Hackett, Bycio and Guion, 1989). However, this finding contradicts Staw and Oldham (1978), who contend that work withdrawal behaviours like absenteeism help to relieve work related stress, thus making employees more productive. However, Bycio (1992), using data from meta-analysis, found that this positive relationship was very slim.

The absence of a significant relationship between internal locus of control and job withdrawal behaviours differs from Steers and Mowday (1981). Williams and Livingstone (1994) contend that poor performers hold negative organizational beliefs in order to maintain adequate justification for their substandard performance on the job.

Consistent with Storms and Spector (1987) and Perlow and Latham (1993), external locus of control was found to be positively correlated to work withdrawal behaviours, organizational retaliation behaviours, and job withdrawal behaviours. Generally, research documents that locus of control is related to incidents of counterproductive behaviour in organizations. This also confirms the negative relationship between external locus of control and task performance. Further, multiple regression

analysis revealed that sabotage was a significant predictor of salesforce task performance. This was consistent with Storms and Spector (1987) and Folger (1993).

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This survey reveals that work ethic is significantly, positively related to task performance, and significantly, negatively related to the external locus of control, work withdrawal behaviours, and organisational retaliation behaviours. The above revelations show that there is an urgent need for sales executives to pay attention to work ethic, reduce the sales executive personnel's external locus of control, work withdrawal behaviours, and organizational retaliation behaviours, which negatively affect salesforce task performance and, consequently, organisational performance. Sales executives need to develop strategies which increase salesforce internal locus of control through training and the use of role models so as to improve salesforce performance. This is likely to result in sales people who set their own work schedules, work with less direct supervision and innovative in their work, all necessary in task performance.

Sales executives may additionally consider introducing strict recruitment procedures that discriminate between good and poor candidates. Sales managers may be recommended to hire salespeople with internal locus of control for positions that require minimum to no supervision, whereas those with external locus of control may be more appropriate for positions that require moderate to constant interaction with the supervisor. Integrity tests using overt- and personality-based scales as a pre-employment screening test should be adopted. Overt tests should openly focus on the applicants' previous behaviors or attitudes towards crime, while personality tests would concentrate on measuring work withdrawal behaviors (e.g., absenteeism, doing personal tasks at work, tardiness); organizational retaliation behaviors (e.g., theft, sabotage, rumour, collusion, misuse of company property), and job withdrawal behaviors. These tests need to be tested for validity and reliability before administration. This method, if used alongside the reference checks, would ensure selection of high quality salespeople with the requisite work ethic and other ethical job behaviors necessary to do the sales job.

Additionally, educators in Uganda at both university or vocational training level should begin preparing students for the transition from school to work. School curriculums should be reviewed to address work

ethic, locus of control, work withdrawal behaviors, organizational retaliation and job withdrawal behaviors and their relevance to work. Trainees can be encouraged to consider their own work ethic, locus of control and counterproductive work behavior by going through integrity tests. These could be used as launching points for discussing ethical considerations that are important for success in work.

The Ministry of Ethics and Integrity, the Inspector General of Government, and credible non-governmental organizations should consider possible ways of creating a national work ethic that emphasizes commitment to work.

LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Our study is subject to several shortcomings that limit interpretation of results. First, the data presented here are correlational and a causal link between work ethic, locus of control, work withdrawal behaviors, organizational retaliation behaviors, job withdrawal behaviors, and salesforce performance cannot be concluded from this study. This study used data from a self-report questionnaire, which is subject to the acquiescence bias. Secondly, this study adopted scales used by previous studies with differing backgrounds. Future researchers might consider developing a culturally specific work ethic battery in the study. It would also be logical to conduct a longitudinal study, to monitor behaviour over time. Further, the study considered only salesforce performance, yet ethics requires management's ability or willingness in creating an enabling environment in shaping salespeople's ethical behaviour. We recommend future researchers to delve into the behaviours of management in promoting work ethic.

CONCLUSION

The net effect of work ethic, locus of control, and behavioural families on salesforce performance is apparent. In general, a positive work ethic and internal locus of control enhance a sales force's performance, while organizational retaliation, work withdrawal, and job withdrawal tends to reduce salesforce task performance. Salespeople need a Protestant work ethic. They need to develop emotional gratification from success in a job well done. This involves having salespeople who are totally present, being involved with a no-nonsense work ethic.

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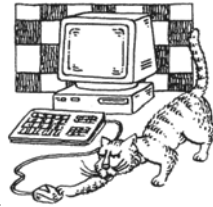
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