

ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF UNETHICAL SALES BEHAVIOR

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Description: This paper assesses the antecedents and consequences of unethical sales behavior.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research Question – Despite numerous studies, a comprehensive understanding of the factors leading to unethical sales behavior and its consequences remains elusive. Specifically, the investigation into performance outcomes has not been thoroughly explored in empirical research. We thus examined what are the antecedents and consequences of unethical sales behavior.

Method And Data – We developed and validated a comprehensive framework by examining 310 sales professionals in the UK.

Summary of Findings – We found that unethical sales behavior is significantly influenced by factors such as self-deception, salesforce obsolescence, perceived organizational politics, creativity and risk-taking, and learning orientation. However, it is not affected by ethical climate and performance orientation. We further found that unethical sales behavior has a negative impact on behavioral performance and value creation competence but does not affect financial performance.

Statement of Key Contributions – Unethical behavior is widespread, and the literature has made significant advancements in identifying factors, but there are still important questions that warrant further empirical studies. First, we do not yet know if unethical behavior affects performance. Second, the literature indicates the need to examine multiple layers of influence to understand the origins of unethical behavior, but these approaches are still rare, making it difficult to understand the specific role of variables in shaping unethical behavior. We demonstrate that unethical sales behavior does not improve financial performance but rather hurts relationships with customers.