

A Cross-cultural Examination of Media Effects on Students Expectations for Sales Careers

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Abstract

Media sources commonly provide inaccurate information about professional sales careers to media users (Hartman, 2006). Research over decades indicates that students often hold inaccurate and negative perceptions regarding professional sales careers. Students in the United States have described professional sales as a “low prestige” career in studies over a number of years (Bristow, Gulati, Amyx, & Slack 2006; Cook & Hartman, 1986; Mason, 1965). Cross-cultural studies on professional sales indicate that students globally may hold similar perceptions of professional sales careers. Decades of research indicates a consistency of student attitudes, often negative, over time and between countries (Bristow, Gulati & Amyx 2006; Cook & Hartman, 1986; DelVecchio & Honeycutt, 2000; Honeycutt, et.al, 1999; Stevenson & Bodkin, 1998). The consistency of these attitudes across countries may indicate that student perceptions are influenced by an information sources accessible to individuals across the globe. It is proposed the media, in both traditional (television and movies) and computer-based (internet) may act as sources of occupational information.

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of both traditional (television and movies) as well as computer-based information (personal and work-related) on student expectations for professional sales careers. Three questions will be addressed. First, does media usage have an impact on student expectations for sales careers? Second, does student media use have a cross-cultural effect on their expectations for sales careers? Third, does work experience have a greater impact on student sales job expectations than media use? Business students in the US and Central India will be examined to answer these questions. The sample consisted of two groups of graduate students in MBA programs enrolled at universities in Midwest United States (N=287) and Central India (N=156).

Results indicate that media use has an impact on student expectations for sales jobs. The effect of individual media types on the media use construct was different within and across countries. The findings may suggest that cross-cultural differences in patterns of media use exist. Comparison of findings from US and India datasets suggest a cross-cultural effect of media use on student expectations for sales jobs. Although the composition of the media use differed between India and US, the construct was found to have a significant overall impact on sales job expectation in both countries. Thus, there is a need for further studies regarding media as a contributor to student expectations for sales career and jobs within the global context. More specifically, multinational recruiters should be aware of the media types affecting the students and the portrayal of sales people in the respective countries.

References Cited in this Abstract Available on Request