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Salesperson Lone Wolf Tendencies: The Roles of Social Comparison and Mentoring in a Mediated Model of Performance

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SALESPERSON LONE WOLF TENDENCIES: THE ROLES OF SOCIAL COMPARISON AND MENTORING IN A MEDIATED MODEL OF PERFORMANCE

David A. Locander, Frankie J. Weinberg, Jay P. Mulki, and William B. Locander

Despite contemporary shifts in sales organizations toward more collaborative work, the sales profession tends to comprise many individuals with a psychological preference to work alone, known as “lone wolf tendencies” (LWT). For this reason, theory about LWT has been almost exclusively developed in the sales literature. The current literature has largely assumed that lone wolfism is an innate characteristic, and results have been mixed with regard to the relationship between LWT and sales performance. This study considers an alternative to this prevailing assumption and proposes a nurture model of LWT in which one’s level of exposure to social workplace interactions (i.e., social comparison and career mentoring) may influence LWT. Our research questions are tested in a sample of 279 business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) salespeople using structural equation modeling. Results support our social learning-based hypotheses and reveal a positive association between LWT and job involvement and performance via the mechanism of concern over mistakes. These results suggest an extension to the current understanding of LWT at work and open a dialogue concerning the influence of social context on creating and reinforcing the lone wolf phenomenon.

Success in today’s business world requires multiple interactions across a number of functional areas of the firm (Kahn 2009). Achieving work process goals is often

conceptualized as dependent on each individual’s ability to get along with others and work well collaboratively (Hogan 2004). In a series of recent interviews with sales executives, Ulaga and Loveland (2013) discovered that a salesperson’s propensity to work cooperatively with others is an emergent challenge for sales forces. In light of this trend, the issue of managing lone wolfism—defined as individuals who have negative attitudes about working with others (Dixon, Gassenheimer, and Barr 2003)—becomes an important issue with respect to building and maintaining a competitive sales organization (e.g., Briggs, Jaramillo, and Weeks 2012). In fact, the changing environment of selling and sales management brings to light a pervasive theme in the sales literature, that is, “the increasing importance of key account and ad hoc selling teams relative to ‘lone-wolf’ salespeople” (Jones et al. 2005, p. 105).

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Researchers tend to assume that lone wolf tendency (LWT) is *the nature of the beast*—that is, that some people are born with these tendencies. Although lone wolfism may be present in other areas of the organization, the majority of past research on this phenomenon has been concentrated within a sales context. Specifically, previous research generally conceptualizes LWT as “a preexisting disposition possessed by some salespeople to a great degree” (Briggs, Jaramillo, and Weeks 2012, p. 424). Given this inherent assumption,

little focus has been given to the conditions that may foster lone wolf tendencies (Mulki, Jaramillo, and Onyemah 2009). This raises the important question of the susceptibility of individuals to LWT—that is, whether LWT may possibly be, in part, *nurtured* through the process of workplace social learning, rather than merely a product of *nature*.

Further, despite considerable focus on negative characteristics of and associations with lone wolves (e.g., Barr, Dixon, and Gassenheimer 2005; Mulki, Jaramillo, and Marshall 2007; Shankar and Seow 2010), research has also found that salesperson LWT may be associated with a number of positive workplace outcomes including task performance, innovativeness, and dedication to and identification with their jobs (e.g., Griffeth, Gaertner, and Sager 1999; Ingram 1996). There currently exists “a lack of agreement in the literature about the impact of lone wolf tendencies on salesperson’s performance” (Briggs, Jaramillo, and Weeks 2012, p. 425). The little empirical data linking lone wolfism to performance has produced inconsistent findings. While Briggs, Jaramillo, and Weeks (2012) found a negative relationship between LWT and sales behavioral performance and Mulki, Jaramillo, and Marshall (2007), found a negative relationship between salesperson LWT and contextual performance, an earlier study by Ingram, Lee, and Lucas (1991) found no performance differences between groups of individuals with high LWT and other groups of salespeople. These apparently contradictory findings lead one to believe in the possibility that other variables may play into the relationship between LWT and performance-related outcomes.

Accordingly, the objective of this study is twofold: (1) to open dialogue about whether LWT may come about, in part, as a result of a lack of workplace social interactions; and (2) to explore whether other variables may help us to understand the complex relationship between LWT and work performance. We seek to accomplish these goals by first drawing on social learning theory to propose that one’s degree of LWT may be affected by low levels of career mentoring and social comparison at work, two prominent variables in the social learning literature. Second, we shed light on the relationship between LWT and work performance by introducing the concept of *concern over mistakes* as an important mediating mechanism linking LWT to positive workplace outcomes. The nature of concern over mistakes is that it brings light to failure (Frost et al.

1990), something individuals with LWT avoid in order to maintain their *perfect* self-image. Finally, we explore a research question regarding the role that biological sex plays in the relationships between social learning experiences and lone wolfism.

THEORY DEVELOPMENT AND HYPOTHESES

Lone Wolf Tendencies

Lone wolf tendency is “a psychological state in which one prefers to work alone when making decisions and setting/accomplishing priorities and goals” (Dixon, Gassenheimer, and Barr 2003, p. 205). Lone wolves focus primarily on individual goals, as opposed to those of the organization (Griffeth, Gaertner, and Sager 1999; Ingram, Lee, and Lucas 1991). They have little regard for others’ ideas, view others as less effective, and consequently have little patience for group process (Barr, Dixon, & Gassenheimer 2005; Dixon, Gassenheimer, and Barr 2003). Moreover, lone wolves are disdainful of others who do not measure up to their personal standards. It is clear that lone wolves prefer doing their own thing in their own way (Ingram, Lee, and Lucas 1991). Lone wolf salespeople tend to be very dedicated to their jobs and love selling (Ingram 1996). Although lone wolves tend to be somewhat indifferent to their organizations’ global objectives, they tend to strongly identify with their own jobs (Mulki, Jaramillo, and Marshall 2007). However, whereas having little regard for others’ ideas is considered part of the definition of LWT (e.g., Barr, Dixon, and Gassenheimer 2005), it has yet to be explored as to whether individuals are pre-disposed to this preference or whether it plays a role in ultimately bringing on isolationist tendencies.

Lone Wolf Tendencies and Workplace Interactions—The Prevailing View

Existing conceptualizations of lone wolf tendencies have taken the position that lone wolfism is an innate characteristic. This perspective isolates the person from the context and assumes that individuals come to work predisposed to approach experiences in a certain way. The unlikelihood of lone wolves integrating themselves with colleagues contributes to the notions that they are neither willing to consider input from others, nor concerned with what others think or do (Dixon,

Gassenheimer, and Barr 2003). Rather, they believe that they are superior to those around them and, as such, would show little interest in any form of social learning. This prevailing view that lone wolf tendencies are an innate characteristic that influences the ways in which individuals approach workplace experiences has yet to be fully explored, the result of which is to accept the assumption that workplace experiences have little influence in shaping LWT.

An Alternative Perspective: The Influence of Workplace Experiences on Lone Wolfism

Some research has begun to suggest that LWTs may be, at least in part, a product of the work environment. For example, Briggs, Jaramillo, and Weeks (2012) discovered that salespeople's perceptions of their company influence tendencies toward lone wolfism through a mechanism of social identity. This echoes Mulki, Jaramillo, and Marshall's (2007) claim that LWT can be cultivated by a salesperson's perception about the firm and management. These suggestions infer that lone wolf tendencies may come about as a response to an individual's workplace experiences. What remains of interest, then, are insights into the underlying psychological dynamics of isolationism and how these tendencies may be cultivated among salespeople (Griffeth, Gaertner, and Sager 1999; Mulki, Jaramillo, and Onyemah 2009). Thus, the alternative perspective to the notion that LWT is an innate characteristic merits examination.

By recognizing that social interactions may influence LWT among salespeople, sales managers may be better equipped to understand how their salespeople's perceptions and attitudes come about. This understanding may provide insight into how managers can better communicate with and influence their sales force. Thus, understanding the role that social influences can play in influencing lone wolf tendencies is important not only to academics, but also to practitioners desiring to understand their sales force better and to create desired changes within.

Social Comparison

Social comparison is a type of social learning that provides a mechanism for identity building in the workplace (Davis and Luthans 1980). It is through observational learning and comparison that new

internal mental states are formed. According to Wenger (2000), social learning systems provide a mechanism through which to expand one's boundaries of community beyond oneself: "Learning from our interaction with others ... is ... a matter of opening up our identities" (p. 239). Wenger explains that social learning systems allow us to develop our own personal identities by bridging experiences across communities of learning. This assertion suggests that those individuals who engage in low levels of social comparison may be less likely to develop community-oriented identities. Social comparison provides a social depth to a person's identity, and it stands to reason that one's identity may be considered "a lived experience of belonging [or not belonging]" (Wenger 2000, p. 239).

Lankau and Scandura (2002) explain that "adult development is characterized by transformations in how individuals see themselves in relation to others and requires sophisticated interpersonal skills" (pp. 779–780). Those who engage in little social comparison, on the other hand (i.e., by disregarding or not seeking the opinions of others), are unlikely to transform their identities through social means. When people are closed off to social comparison, they do not look to others as models of behavior. Low levels of social support are associated with enhanced individualism and egoism, poor work attitudes, as well as high disengagement and low interaction with others (Hughes 2011; Pels and Nijsten 2003; Ragins, Cotton, and Miller 2000)—all characteristics of lone wolves.

Salespeople who do not engage in social comparison will miss out on some opportunities to receive verbal feedback and to learn best practices with regard to selling behaviors and the sales process (Rich 1998). Rich explains that when individuals have fewer opportunities for socially based comparisons, they do not benefit from the collaborative learning that fosters trusting relationships and the capacity to recognize others' capabilities. In addition, Wenger (2000) explains that people who are less likely to engage in social learning are also less likely to develop community-oriented identities. This can be seen in LWT salespeople, in that they are indifferent to their organizations' objectives but strongly identify with their job (Mulki, Jaramillo, and Marshall 2007). By distancing oneself from the opinions of others, one is likely to assume the type of egocentrism, exaggerated positive self-identity, and devaluation of others that are characteristic of lone wolf salespeople (Dixon, Gassenheimer, and Barr

2003). Thus, it is reasonable that there would be a negative relationship between consideration of others' opinions and LWT. This leads to H₁:

Hypothesis 1: There is a negative relationship between social comparison (via consideration of others' opinions) and lone wolf tendencies.

We present this hypothesis to address, in part, the question of whether LWT is, in fact, merely the *nature of the beast* and to introduce the perspective that organizational situations may contribute to these tendencies.

Career Mentoring

Career-focused mentoring is considered critical toward the development of sales representatives (Pousa and Mathieu 2010), and mentoring is specified as an important leadership challenge necessary to empower sales organizations to meet the demands associated with the "complexity, collaboration, and accountability" that characterize today's changing sales climate (Ingram et al. 2005, p. 137). Despite these references to mentoring relationships as vital toward salesperson development, a recent study continues to lament the scarcity of research examining the outcomes of mentoring in a sales context (Hartmann et al. 2013).

Career mentoring occurs when a workplace mentor provides a protégé with sponsorship, exposure, visibility, coaching, protection, and opportunities to participate in challenging assignments (Noe 1988). However, mentoring relationships are fragile, and the negative outcomes associated with receipt of marginal or dysfunctional mentoring are well documented in the literature (c. f., Ragins, Cotton, and Miller 2000). Further, ineffective, poor quality workplace mentoring is often associated with a lack of support from the organization and its leaders (Ehrich, Hansford, and Tennent 2004). Social exchange theory suggests that an individual's perception of low or poor organizational support is likely to create ambivalence toward the organization (Wayne, Shore, and Liden 1997) and contribute to the development of a strong preference for isolationism (Mulki et al. 2008).

From a purely educational perspective, Cobb (2003) makes the case that when the interaction between an instructor and a student is minimized, the learner must "self-regulate their motivation,

confidence, and cognitive abilities" (p. 5). That is, they learn to work in an isolated manner. However, the process of workplace mentoring is a reciprocal one requiring a special bond between both parties so that a trusting relationship develops over time (Weinberg and Lankau 2011; Weinberg and Locander 2014). Mentoring involves acquiring those skills which help to connect an individual with others: self-reflection, self-disclosure, active listening, empathy, and feedback (Kram 1996).

Developing one's personal learning helps to foster interpersonal skills in a work context and to see one's self in relation to others (Kegan 1994). The role of social learning via career mentoring has been noted to be very important in the development of salespeople (Rich 1998). As career mentoring from within one's organization is associated with employees feeling connected to their company (Mulki et al. 2008), it follows that individuals who perceive poor quality of career mentoring may tend to feel more psychologically isolated from the organization, as compared to those who receive stronger career mentoring. This may be particularly salient for agent salespeople, whose positions generally isolate them from others within the organization and limit their options with regard to whom to reach out for support (Locander, Mulki, and Weinberg 2014).

Thus, in sales organizations, one's workplace mentor may represent the strongest and potentially only career-developmental connection to the company. The feeling of alienation and disenfranchisement resulting from low levels of career mentoring may foster maladaptive attitudes and behaviors that tend to be associated with lone wolfism (Muro and Jeffrey 2008). These attitudes and behaviors are consistent with the characteristics of egoism and preference for individualism, which describe lone wolves. For these reasons, H₂ is as follows:

Hypothesis 2: The receipt of low career mentoring is associated with increased tendency toward lone wolfism.

LWT and Concern over Mistakes

Lone wolves are inwardly focused and hold high standards for themselves. They are also disdainful of others who do not meet their personal standards (Dixon, Gassenheimer, and Barr 2003; Griffeth, Gaertner, and Sager 1999). Moreover, lone wolves are intrinsically

motivated to perform well and to maintain their personal marketability. They desire positive professional visibility and want to maintain job mobility to avoid getting stuck working with others who they view as mediocre coworkers (Mulki et al. 2008). Dixon, Gassenheimer, and Barr (2003) explain that lone wolves have great confidence in their abilities and are able to impress customers with their energy and drive. Working alone requires considerable self-efficacy, which is described by Bandura (1977) as “self-appraisals of operative capabilities” that motivate people to “deploy their attention and effort to the demands of the situation” (pp. 122–123). Thus, lone wolves, who are highly ego-involved and may be characterized by high levels of self-efficacy, are likely to devote considerable effort toward avoidance of mistakes that have the potential to diminish their image.

Whereas lone wolves have very little concern for the behaviors of others and tend not to consider any coworkers as substantially worthy of self-comparison, their isolationist preferences set up a perspective from which they are their own critics, meeting Hewitt and Flett’s (1991) definition of a self-oriented perfectionist. Perfectionism has been described as *the tyranny of the should* (Horney 1950). Definitions of perfectionism vary by source and author, but research generally tends to agree that *the distinguishing feature of the perfectionist is concern over mistakes* (Frost et al. 1990; Pacht 1984). One’s concern over mistakes “reflects negative reactions to mistakes” (Thompson, Foreman, and Martin 2000), and this reaction involves a self-oriented social aspect. The nature of mistakes is that they bring to light failure (Frost et al. 1990). Sales mistakes and failures have received only scant attention in the literature (Mayo and Mallin 2010), despite their importance in triggering an important psychological response (Frost et al. 1993). Thus, as with self-oriented perfectionists, lone wolves will psychologically process mistakes most likely as failure to meet their self-imposed, exceptionally high standards (Stoeber et al. 2008).

For those with high concern over mistakes, failure is to be avoided at all costs, as it violates the all-or-none thinking that these individuals adopt to reinforce their ideal self-schema (Hewitt and Flett 1991). The perceived discrepancy between self-imposed performance expectations and self-evaluation of current performance plays an important role in determining one’s evaluation of self (Clark, Lelchook, and Taylor 2010).

As lone wolves tend to be considerably self-reliant egoists (Dixon, Gassenheimer, and Barr 2003), it may be in both their motivation to achieve and their desire to eliminate this self-concept discrepancy that concern over mistakes becomes a manifestation of lone wolfism in the workplace. Thus, H₃ follows:

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between lone wolf tendencies and concern over mistakes.

Concern over Mistakes, Job Involvement, and Work Performance

Concern over mistakes has been defined as representing “a person’s intrinsic motivation at work for fulfilling self-esteem needs” (Haase and Prapavessis 2004; Kanungo 1982, p. 341); and accordingly, concerning oneself with such rigorous standards is associated with high levels of achievement and satisfaction (Leonard and Harvey, 2008). However, while intrinsically motivated individuals tend to be highly job involved, this relationship is likely to suffer if their sense of competence or effectiveness (i.e., their sense of *effectance*) is lacking (Brown 1996). According to Mallinson and Hill (2011), people who guard against mistakes do so for one of several reasons: (1) to strive for high achievement/effectiveness, (2) to express their personal autonomy and gain control over the job, and (3) to protect their image as one who performs their duties with high levels of competence. These individuals believe in a mental model of personal autonomy and the desire to control their environment as a means to achieve higher levels of performance. In other words, they see mistakes as undermining their model of attaining higher levels of effectance. In the workplace, this is likely to manifest as high job involvement, because for them, the job encompasses the arena in which their competence is recognized and their reputation is enhanced or diminished. To this end, concern over mistakes may signal an elevated level of compulsiveness to be highly involved in one’s job (e.g., Frost and Steketee 1998).

Lastly, the positive relationship between job involvement and associated effort toward job performance has been previously upheld in samples of salespeople (Brown and Leigh 1996). Thus, in line with the findings of earlier studies (e.g., Diefendorff, Brown, and Kamin 2002; Rich, Lepine, and Crawford 2010), we

expect a positive relationship between job involvement and job performance. By including this previously tested relationship in our model and including performance as the model's ultimate endogenous outcome, this will afford us a better understanding of the nomological network of lone wolf tendencies. Moreover, it allows us to predict a path whereby lone wolfism indirectly relates to positive workplace outcomes (i.e., job involvement and performance) through the mechanism of concern over mistakes.

Hypothesis 4a: There is a positive relationship between concern over mistakes and job involvement.

Hypothesis 4b: Concern for mistakes mediates the relationship between lone wolfism and job involvement, such that the relationship dissolves when this mediating variable is removed from the model.

Hypothesis 5: There is a positive relationship between job involvement and job performance.

The Role of Biological Sex

Although we have made the case that career mentoring and social comparison are likely to influence LWT, the question of whether these social interactions differentially affect male and female tendencies toward lone wolfism appears worth exploring. Previous research has found that women are more likely to display inclusiveness and helping behavior (Muzio and Tomlinson 2012), and that men may be more likely to take on lone wolf characteristics than women (Mulki, Jaramillo, and Marshall 2007). This may be due, in part, to women's communal nature. Eagly and Carli (2007) explain that "women are associated with communal qualities ... [which] include being especially affectionate, helpful, friendly, kind, and sympathetic, [and] interpersonally sensitive" (p. 66). When women communicate, they tend to hold open-ended discussions (Campbell 1993), engage in conversations to learn about others (Johnson 1996), and desire to maintain open communications (Mills 1999). If one is predisposed to a particular mode of thought (such as approaching social interactions as collaborative learning experiences), then the individual is likely to listen to messages that support those modes of thought. That is, it is possible that when women are exposed to strong career mentoring support, they may engage more collaboratively and openly in the process and learn more through their

mentoring conversations than their male counterparts. Further, men and women tend to experience social comparison differently. Specifically, women frequently "feel better when social comparisons highlight their similarity to others" whereas men prefer to find "contrasts between themselves and similar others ... [which] highlight their uniqueness" (Cross and Madson 1997, p. 13). Given these differences in the ways in which men and women engage in communication and social comparison, we wish to explore whether these two workplace learning experiences affect lone wolf tendencies differently in the two sexes. Hence, the following research question is proposed:

Research Question: Does biological sex moderate the relationships between social comparison and career mentoring with lone wolf tendencies?

METHOD

Sample

This study is based on responses of salespeople from two industries. Both samples represent salespeople who act as agents for their parent company. The first set of responses was collected from 162 salespeople gathered to participate in an in-house corporate sales training program. These salespeople represent a company that sells medical devices to surgeons and hospitals. The questionnaire was distributed at the meeting by one of the researchers who briefly explained the project and guaranteed anonymity of individual responses. Potential respondents were told that it was a study of work habits and workplace setting that would improve the quality of the relationship between the sales force and the parent organization. A total of 154 completed questionnaires were collected, representing a 95 percent response rate.

The second set of responses was collected from professional real estate agents gathered at a training seminar conducted by a local real estate trade association. The same questionnaire was used with an introduction from the researcher explaining the purpose of the project along with guarantee of anonymity. A total of 128 surveys were completed from this audience, representing a 56 percent response rate. Differences in response rate in the two samples can be attributed to each research setting: the first set of

responses was collected in-house, and the data collection was included on the agenda for a national sales training program sponsored by the parent organization. The second sample was collected at a general training seminar sponsored by a national trade organization. Of these 282 responses, three incomplete surveys were discarded and 279 responses were coded for analysis. Sixty-five percent of the sample were males. Eight of the respondents did not indicate

sex. Respondents' average tenure with their present firm was 8.28 years and their average total work experience was 20.39 years. Respondents' average age was 45.26 years.

Measures

Table 1 shows scale items and standardized loadings for items from the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA, i.e.,

Table 1
Scale Items and Factor Loadings

Construct Name and Items	Standardized Loading
Concern for Mistakes (Frost et al. 1990)	
If someone does a task better than I do, I feel like I failed the whole task.	0.789
If I do not do well all the time, people will not respect me.	0.921
People will probably think less of me if I make a mistake.	0.753
Lone Wolf Tendencies (Dixon, Gassenheimer, and Barr 2003)	0.812
Given a choice, I would rather work alone than work with others.	
At work, I prefer solitude over social interaction with work colleagues.	0.681
I am more successful when I work by myself than with others.	0.832
<i>For me, working with others poses a threat to my success.</i>	0.434*
Working with others is a hassle.	0.686
<i>I have little tolerance when others make mistakes.</i>	0.411*
<i>I don't like attending team or committee meetings where I have to listen to the simple-minded ideas of others.</i>	0.496*
Career Mentoring (Scandura 1992)	
My mentor takes a personal interest in my career.	0.853
My mentor has placed me in important assignments.	0.774
My mentor gives me special coaching on the job.	0.877
My mentor advises me about promotional opportunities.	0.746
My mentor helps me coordinate professional goals.	0.859
<i>My mentor has devoted special time and consideration to my career.</i>	0.450*
Job Performance (Piercy et al. 2001)	
Building effective relationships with customers	0.707
Making effective presentations to customers	0.717
<i>Keeping expenses at acceptable levels</i>	0.334*
Achieving sales targets and other business objectives	0.854
Understanding our products and services	0.746
<i>Providing feedback to management</i>	0.547*
Understanding customer needs and work processes	0.727
Contributing to my sales unit's revenues	0.812
Job Involvement (Holmes and Srivastava 2002)	
I feel the most important things that happen to me involve my job	0.820
I feel the major satisfaction in life comes from my job	0.922
I live, eat, and breathe my job	0.772
Social Comparison: Opinion (Gibbons and Buunk 1999)	
I often like to talk with others about mutual opinions and experiences.	0.600
I often try to find out what others think who face similar problems as I face.	0.824
I always like to know what others in a similar situation would do.	0.805
If I want to learn more about something, I try to find out what others think about it.	0.720
<i>I never consider my situation in life relative to that of other people. (R)</i>	0.345*

Note: * Items deleted from the final measurement model.

the measurement model). All latent constructs were measured from well-established and previously used instruments. When asked about their perceived level of career mentoring received, respondents were directed to consider mentoring received by a member of their current organization. Scandura's (1992) mentoring scale has been widely cited in organizational literature and her 6-item career development sub-scale was used to capture career mentoring. Four items representing the social comparison scale developed by Gibbons and Buunk (1999) were used to measure the degree to which respondents consider others' opinions (social comparison). The lone wolf scale, developed by Dixon, Gassenheimer, and Barr (2003), was used to measure salespeople's lone wolf tendencies. The three items from Frost et al.'s (1990) measure of perfectionism, which represent one's concern over mistakes, were employed to capture this construct. Finally, job involvement was measured with Holmes and Srivastava's (2002) scale, and Piercy, Cravens, and Lane's (2001) scale was used to measure job performance. All the scale items used were Likert-type instruments with scores ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Test for Common Method Bias

To test for common method bias (CMB), the latent methods factor procedure proposed by Podsakoff and associates (2003) was used (Sonenshein and Dholakia 2012). Following this procedure, all measures in the structural model were loaded on a single latent factor, in addition to their respective factors, and a structural model was then run using AMOS 21. The pattern of results showed that path coefficients were similar to the path coefficients in the model used for testing the hypotheses. These results indicate that the pattern of relationships was not significantly affected by CMB (Sonenshein and Dholakia 2012).

Test for Measurement Invariance of Sample

The members of the sample for this study represent two distinct industries: medical supply sales agents and professional real estate agents. While the two types of selling have some similarities, there are some important differences in selling to an individual consumer compared to selling to an organization. In

terms of similarities, both groups in the sample deal with clients who are making major purchase decisions, and, in both instances, the samples represent members of an agent sales force characterized by high autonomy and empowerment to make decisions on behalf of their principal. Success in both cases is dependent on communication and interpersonal skills, product knowledge, and understanding of customer's latent needs.

However, medical supply sales agents are business-to-business (B2B) salespeople who deal with multiple decision makers and buying centers that purchase products on behalf of the organization. The complexity and size of the purchase can vary, and buying decisions are made while keeping in mind the strategic objectives of the firm, such as operational efficiency, cost reduction, competitive advantage, and revenue increase. Organizational buying is primarily decided by functional needs and follows a formal process with different phases that are guided by company rules and regulations. These salespeople place considerable emphasis on long-term relationship development and position themselves as advisors who understand a firm's operations, changes in business environment, and long-term industry trends impacting business. More often, they have to work closely with others in their own organization to orchestrate resources from different functional areas within the company to meet customer needs or to close a sale.

Real estate agents are also independent sales agents whose compensation is primarily based on commission. The real estate business is mostly transactional in nature, but with less emphasis on long-term relationships. Real estate agents generally interact with families, who are the final consumers of the service that they provide. Psychological, social, and family needs play a primary role in the purchase decisions. Thus, the sample in this study comprises of two different styles of selling (B2B and B2C) and provides greater generalizability than earlier empirical studies of lone wolfism, which first examined students (e.g., Dixon, Gassenheimer, and Barr 2003), and later studied sales representatives within a single industry (i.e., pharmaceutical representatives, Mulki, Jaramillo, and Marshall 2007).

Given that our sample came from salespeople from two different industries, tests for sample measurement invariance were conducted to address the key concern of

Table 2
Test for Invariance of Factor Structure across Samples

Model		χ^2	df	χ^2/df	CFI	RMSEA	
1	Unconstrained	789.839	568	1.391	0.93	0.05	
2	Invariance of factor loading	830.033	588	1.680	0.93	0.05	
3	Invariance of factor covariance	841.176	609	1.693	0.93	0.05	
Equivalence Test		Model Comparison	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	Critical χ^2^*	ΔCFI	$\Delta RMSEA$
Metric Equivalency		2 and 1	40.194	20	37.56	0.00	0.00
Metric and factor variance equivalency		3 and 1	51.337	41	64.94	0.00	0.00

Note: * Critical χ^2 at $p < 0.01$.

whether the factor structure was invariant across the two groups (Byrne 1998; Hewett, Money, and Sharma 2006). As prescribed by Byrne (1998, 2010), two invariance hypotheses were tested: (1) whether the number of underlying factors was equivalent across the two groups, and (2) if the pattern of factor loadings was equivalent. First, a multi-group model with no equality constraints was run. Results displayed in Table 2 show that fit indices were in the acceptable range ($\chi^2 = 789.839$, $df = 568$, $\chi^2/df = 1.39$; CFI = 0.93; RMSEA = 0.05; TLI = 0.92), indicating an equivalent factor structure (Byrne 1998). Additional tests were conducted to assess whether the pattern of factor loadings were equivalent and if the variance-covariance matrices were invariant. As shown in Table 2, chi-square difference was significant for Models 1 and 2 for metric equivalency ($\Delta\chi^2 = 40.19$, $\Delta df = 20$, Critical $\chi^2 = 37.56$, $p < 0.01$), but was not significant for Models 1 and 3 ($\Delta\chi^2 = 51.34$, $\Delta df = 41$, Critical $\chi^2 = 64.94$, $p < 0.01$). However, researchers agree that χ^2 difference test is extremely stringent test for invariance since “SEM models at best are only approximation of reality” (Byrne 2010, p. 221). In view of this, Cheung and Rensvold (2002) recommend the use of ΔCFI rather than $\Delta\chi^2$. Further, Byrne (2010) states that “the ΔCFI value of 0.001 contends that the measurement model is completely invariant” (p. 223), as it is less than the 0.01 cutoff proposed by Cheung and Rensvold (2002). As shown in Table 2, the differences between fit indices were negligible when the unconstrained model (Model 1) was compared to the constrained models (Models 2 and 3). This provides support for both the equivalency of factor loadings and the invariance of factor variance-covariance (Hewett, Money, and Sharma 2006), suggesting that the two groups of salespeople may be analyzed as one sample.

RESULTS

Measurement Model

Figure 1 displays the model used to study lone wolf tendencies from a socially learned perspective and to suggest an indirect path through which LWT relates to positive workplace outcomes.

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using AMOS 21 to assess the properties of the latent variables. The measurement model indicates adequate fit indices for the data ($\chi^2 = 653.935$, $df = 335$, $p < 0.01$; RMSEA = 0.055, $CI_{90\%} = 0.048$ to 0.062; CFI = 0.92; TLI = 0.91). As in previous research (e.g., Lassk et al. 2001), low-loading (less than 0.60) and cross-loading items were removed to improve the model fit, while taking care to see that all scales used in the model had three or more items (see Table 1). The CFA results for the revised model showed highly acceptable fit indices ($\chi^2 = 508.025$, $df = 279$, $p < 0.01$; RMSEA = 0.054, $CI_{90\%} = 0.047$ to 0.062; CFI = 0.94; TLI = 0.93).

Correlations and descriptive statistics for all variables in the measurement model are displayed in Table 3. From these results, it is clear that younger salespeople and those salespeople with less sales experience tend to engage in higher social comparison ($r = -0.17$, $p < 0.001$; and $r = -0.20$, $p < 0.01$, respectively), and tend to have received higher levels of career mentoring ($r = -0.14$, $p < 0.05$; and $r = -0.20$, $p < 0.01$, respectively). As is typical in sales research, age, sex, and sales experience were controlled in subsequent analyses. The reliability of each measure was assessed with Cronbach's alpha. Each measure was found to be in the acceptable range, as indicated along the diagonal in Table 3, providing evidence of adequate reliability (Anderson and Gerbing 1988). Discriminant validity was assessed by testing the confidence intervals

Figure 1
Model Results—Nurture

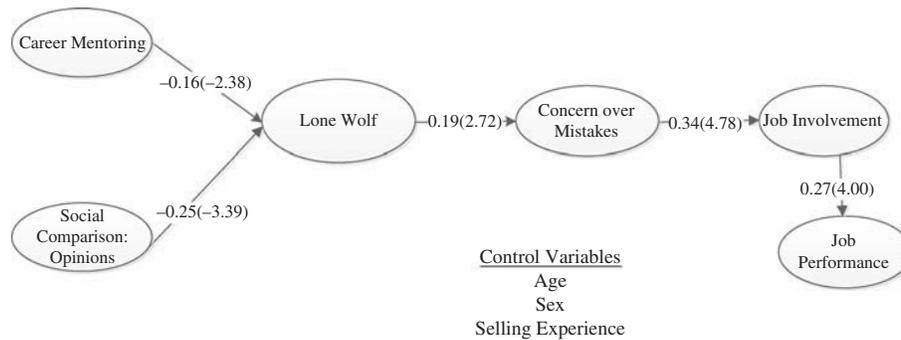


Table 3
Correlations and Descriptive Statistics

		SOC	CRM	LWT	COM	JOBI	JOBP	AGE	EXP
SOC	Social Comparison - Opinion	(0.82)							
CRM	Career Mentoring	0.12	(0.91)						
LWT	Lone Wolf Tendency	-0.26**	-0.18**	(0.83)					
COM	Concern over Mistakes	0.04	-0.01	0.19**	(0.82)				
JOBI	Job Involvement	0.10	0.14*	0.00	0.35**	(0.87)			
JOBP	Job Performance	-0.06	0.08	0.02	0.00	0.18**	(0.89)		
AGE	Age	-0.17**	-0.14*	0.14*	-0.22**	-0.21**	0.17**	-	
EXP	Selling Experience	-0.20**	-0.20**	0.11	-0.10	-0.13	0.17**	0.55**	-
SEX	Sex (Male = 1)	0.10	0.07	-0.12	0.15*	0.17**	0.04	-0.11	-0.01
	Mean	3.86	5.02	3.04	3.20	3.64	5.32	45.26	8.28
	Standard Deviation	0.64	1.48	1.47	1.58	1.64	1.07	13.69	8.62
	Average Variance Extracted	0.55	0.70	0.57	0.62	0.71	0.58		

Notes: ** indicates a correlation that is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed);

* indicates a correlation that is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed);

Cronbach's alpha on the diagonal in parentheses.

All significant relationships are presented in bold.

of the factor correlations. It was found that none of the 95% confidence intervals of the factor correlations included one. Moreover, AVE for each of the factors was greater than the squared correlations for all pairs of factors thus providing support for discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker 1981). In addition, average variance extracted statistics (r_v) were in the acceptable range (Fornell and Larcker 1981), as the average variance extracted for each of the factors is greater than the squared correlations for all pairs of factors.

Multicollinearity was not an issue in our study. Research shows that multicollinearity impacts results when the correlations among the exogenous variables are greater than 0.90, construct reliabilities are smaller than 0.70, and sample sizes are small (Grewal, Cote,

and Baumgartner 2004). It has also been demonstrated that when construct measures have high reliabilities, even fairly high levels of multicollinearity have minimal impact (Grewal, Cote, and Baumgartner 2004). As shown in Table 1 in the manuscript, correlations among the variables used in the model were modest (highest 0.35), reliabilities above 0.70, and sample size was 279. The evidence of discriminant validity further provides support for lack of multicollinearity.

Structural Model

A structural equation model was built using AMOS 21 to test the relationships between dimensions of interest in this study. Respondents' age, sex, and sales

experience acted as control variables. As per McDonald and Ho (2002), the results of the structural model shown in Figure 1 indicate an acceptable fit with the data, with the 90 percent confidence interval of the RMSEA below 0.08 and the other fit indices above 0.90. ($\chi^2 = 643.466$, $df = 352$, $p < 0.01$; $RMSEA = 0.055$, $CI_{90\%} = 0.052$ to 0.057 ; $CFI = 0.93$; $TLI = 0.92$). All of the stated hypotheses were supported by the results, which show that lone wolf tendencies were predicted by low levels of both career mentoring ($\beta = -0.16$, $t = -2.38$) and social comparison ($\beta = -0.25$, $t = -3.39$). Further, the lone wolf tendency of salespeople is positively related to concern over mistakes ($\beta = 0.19$, $t = 2.72$), and job involvement is predicted by concern over mistakes ($\beta = 0.34$, $t = 4.78$). Moreover, as predicted in Hypothesis 4b, concern over mistakes provides a crucial bridge that fully mediates the relationship between lone wolfism and job involvement (note that the path coefficient for LW→JI is nonsignificant [$\beta = 0.04$, t -value = 0.57]). The relationship between LWT and job involvement does not exist without the mediating mechanism of concern over mistakes (see Table 4, which shows that the path coefficient from LWT to job involvement (JI) is not significant, regardless of whether concern over mistakes [COM] is entered into the model).

Finally, as predicted, job involvement has a positive relationship with job performance ($\beta = 0.27$, $t = 4.00$). Among the control variables, both age ($\beta = -0.23$, $t = -2.84$) and sex ($\beta = 0.14$, $t = 2.17$) show significant relationships with concern over mistakes. This suggests that concern over mistakes decreases as salespeople grow older, and when compared to women, male salespeople tend to be more concerned about mistakes. Age is also positively related to job performance ($\beta = 0.19$, $t = 2.45$), indicating that older salespeople perceive themselves as higher performers. Tables 5 and 6 show

Table 5
Hypotheses and Standardized Paths

Hypotheses	Standardized Paths (t-values)
Hypothesis 1: Social Comparison (Opinion) → Lone Wolf Tendencies	-0.25 (-3.39)
Hypothesis 2: Career Mentoring → Lone Wolf Tendencies	-0.16 (-2.38)
Hypothesis 3: Lone Wolf Tendencies → Concern over Mistakes	0.19 (2.72)
Hypothesis 4: Concern Over Mistakes → Job Involvement	0.34 (4.78)
Hypothesis 5: Job Involvement → Job Performance	0.27 (4.00)

Table 6
Control Variables

		Standardized Paths	(t-values)
Age	Lone Wolf Tendency	0.07	0.95
Age	Concern over Mistakes	-0.13	-2.07
Age	Job Involvement	-0.23	-2.84
Age	Job Performance	0.19	2.43
Sex (male =1)	Lone Wolf Tendency	-0.07	-1.08
Sex (male =1)	Concern over Mistakes	0.14	2.17
Sex (male =1)	Job Involvement	0.10	1.57
Sex (male =1)	Job Performance	0.06	0.87
Selling Experience	Lone Wolf Tendency	-0.01	-0.04
Selling Experience	Concern over Mistakes	-0.01	-0.53
Selling Experience	Job Involvement	-0.02	-0.30
Selling Experience	Job Performance	0.10	1.32

the standardized path coefficients for the hypothesized relationships as well as those for the control variables with the dependent variables in the model.

Testing the Moderating Impact of Sex

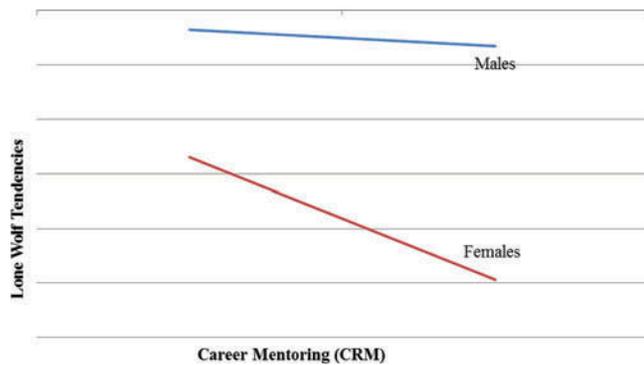
A multi-group analysis was conducted using AMOS 21 to test our research question concerning the moderating impact of employees' biological sex in the relationship between both career mentoring and social comparison with salespeople's LWT. The

Table 4
Mediating Effect of Concern Over Mistakes

	LWT → JI	LWT →COM → JI
Path Coefficient for LWT-JI	$\beta = 0.04$, t value = 0.57	$\beta = -0.05$, t value = -0.67
Explained Variance for JI	6.2%	16.4%

Notes: LWT = lone wolf tendency; JI = job involvement; COM = concern over mistakes.

Figure 2
Moderation by Biological Sex



Note: The interaction effect was plotted using the method outlined by Aiken and West (1991).

sample was divided into two groups, females (96) and males (175), using reported information. The χ^2 result from the restricted-path model was compared to the model with unrestricted paths between career mentoring (CRM) and LWT, as well as social comparison (SOC) and LWT. The chi-square difference between the two models ($\Delta\chi^2 = 7.20$, $\Delta df = 1$) was greater than critical $\chi^2 = 3.84$ ($df = 1$, $p < 0.05$) only for the path between CRM and LWT and not for SOC-LWT ($\Delta\chi^2 = 1.96$, $\Delta df = 1$). The results suggest that the CRM-LWT relationship is moderated by sex (see Walsh, Evanschitzky, & Wunderlich 2008). The path coefficient between CRM-LWT for females ($\beta = -0.38$, $t = -3.55$) is significant, but this relationship is not significant for males ($\beta = -0.05$, $t = -0.53$), as indicated in Figure 2. This interaction effect was plotted using the method outlined by Aiken and West (1991) showing lone wolf tendencies (LWT) on the Y axis and level of career mentoring (CRM) on the X-axis for males and females.

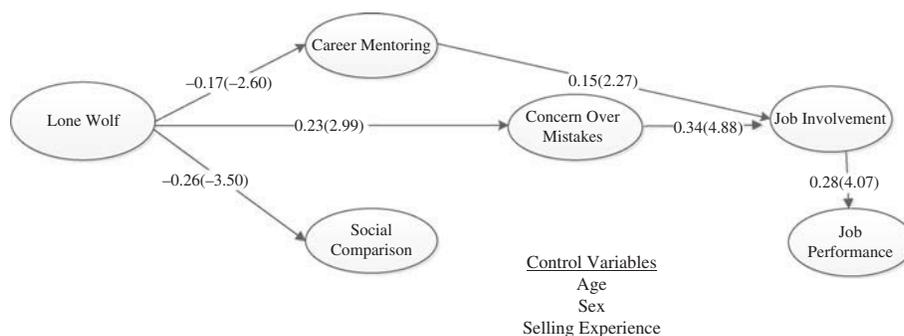
DISCUSSION

Our study makes a number of important contributions that extend theoretical understanding of salesperson lone wolf tendencies in the workplace. First, past research has been vague with regard to how lone wolf tendencies come about in a sales force, and, in response, we hypothesized and tested a model that brings reveals the possibility that LWT may come about, at least in part, through workplace interactions. Results confirm our expectations that social

interactions contribute to the nurturing of LWT such that low levels of career mentoring and social comparison behaviors at work are likely to bring about a propensity for LWT. This differs from extant thinking, which largely considers LWT as an inherent predisposition. Second, the relationship between LWT and work performance has been unclear. To our knowledge, only one previous study (an unpublished dissertation by Wilson 2006) examined the notion that LWT may have a positive impact on sales performance, despite evidence that lone wolves are highly dedicated to their jobs, particularly when the job involves selling activities. Wilson's finding adds to what Briggs, Jaramillo, and Weeks (2012) recognize as a lack of agreement in sales literature regarding the impact of lone wolf tendencies on salespeople's performance. This disparity in the literature brings to the surface the possibility of important mediating variables affecting the relationship between LWT and sales performance. Accordingly, we have shown how LWT appears to have an indirect, positive relationship with job involvement and sales performance. This finding highlights the pivotal role that concern over mistakes plays in bringing about these outcomes. At the onset of this study, we outlined two research objectives: to open a dialogue regarding whether LWT might be influenced in some way by workplace interactions, and to explore whether there exists a connection between LWT and positive workplace outcomes. What follows is a discussion of the implications of our findings for each of these objectives.

Our results suggest a *nurture* model where social workplace experiences contribute to and may reinforce lone wolf tendencies. However, though we provide theoretical and empirical evidence in favor of negative relationships between both social comparison and career mentoring with LWT, the chain of effects may be questioned. Here, it is prudent to acknowledge that the prevailing view of lone wolfism would suggest that one's tendencies toward self-isolationism may influence the results of social learning opportunities (i.e., a "nature" model of LWT). From this line of reasoning, it appears necessary to compare our model against a second model wherein lone wolf tendencies are predicted to drive one's experiences of social learning opportunities and to compare the fit of the data between our hypothesized (*nurture*) model and the prevailing (*nature*) model of lone wolf tendencies.

Figure 3
Alternate Model Results—Nature



Note: Insignificant paths not shown.

Consistent with typical conceptualizations of LWT, the nature model (displayed in Figure 3) suggests that people who self-identify as lone wolves will be less open to opportunities for social influence and, as a result, engage in less social comparison and report the receipt of less career mentoring. While the fit statistics for the nature model are also within acceptable range ($\chi^2 = 653.19$, $df = 352$, $p < 0.01$; $RMSEA = 0.055$, $CI_{90\%} = 0.049$ to 0.062 ; $CFI = 0.925$; $TLI = 0.91$), there is an increase in chi-square for this model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 9.72$, $\Delta df = 0$), suggesting that the nurture model provides a slightly better fit to the data.

Although the difference in the fit between these models is not large, the practical implications are noteworthy. Specifically, whereas the literature has yet to test whether LWT may be brought about or enhanced through exposure to workplace social experiences, our findings imply that, even if the models were exactly equal in terms of explanatory power, the role that social interactions play in fostering LWT merits serious consideration. Overall, the findings presented here lend credence to the notion that sales managers and researchers should be cognizant of the power that context and social interactions have on LWT at work, thereby accomplishing our first research objective.

We conducted a post-hoc analysis to test whether the addition of an unhypothesized path between career mentoring and job involvement will change the relationships in the nurture model. Results indicated that there were no differences in fit indices. In addition, while the path between career mentoring and job involvement was statistically significant, with a standardized path of 0.14, the direction and magnitude of

the path coefficients among the other constructs in the model did not change.

Our second objective was to explore the complex relationship between LWT and work-related performance variables; particularly, does concern over mistakes mediate the relationships between LWT and positive workplace outcomes? We found that concern over mistakes completely mediates the relationship between LWT and job involvement and also indirectly influences job performance. This finding is interesting because it demonstrates that lone wolves tend to be very mindful about making mistakes, which, in turn has a positive influence on job involvement and the resulting sales performance. Results suggest a better understanding of the psychological dynamics through which LWT may enact positive outcomes. That is, lone wolves are sensitive to making mistakes: mistakes may affect personal self-interest or diminish one's egoistic self-image.

While organizations may cast a negative light on LWT, it should be noted that lone wolves, ironically, engage in activities that bring about positive workplace outcomes. This raises an interesting question: What should sales managers do about lone wolf tendencies within their sales force? Drawing on our findings and past research, the answer to this question is "it depends." One factor that may guide managerial response to LWT is the way in which the sales organization is structured. Our findings suggest that LWT can lead to positive workplace outcomes across two different, yet similar, commission-based sales agent samples who work independently from their respective host organizations. In organizations such as these, where

the sales force is highly independent and is rewarded primarily on individual achievements, LWT may not be as undesirable as previously thought. However, past research has shown that individuals with LWT working within an educational team setting can have a negative impact on team performance (Barr, Dixon, and Gassenheimer 2005). Therefore, sales organizations with team-based selling may wish to acknowledge and embrace the LWT phenomenon and provide training in which members are encouraged to take and assign team roles that are suited to their individual preferences and capabilities. Questions regarding best practices that might allow for stronger training of people who hold different attitudes about collaborative work could be of particular value and would be a worthwhile research endeavor. For instance, drawing on our finding that concern over mistakes mediates the relationship between LWT and positive workplace outcomes, it could be enlightening to open a dialogue about the constructive nature of unearthing and examining individual mistakes as a learning tool. Such research would inform sales managers so that they may be made aware of the implications of our findings with respect to person-job fit within their respective organizational structure and reward system.

We also made an interesting discovery with regard to sex-based differences among lone wolves. Although we found that, women are, on average, considerably less likely to exhibit LWTs than men, those women who receive high levels of career mentoring are even less likely to have these tendencies. On the other hand, men's LWT appear to be relatively unaffected by career mentoring. This may be of particular interest and have a greater bearing on implications associated with managing lone wolves when understood in light of current literature on sex-based differences in mentoring. Specifically, given that larger percentages of women are entering today's workforce, and the suggestions of previous research that women generally experience greater barriers to obtaining mentors than males (e.g., Allen 2007; Okurame 2013; Weinberg and Lankau 2011), a good number of female employees might not have or recognize the opportunity to be mentored, and, therefore, may be more likely to develop or enhance their lone wolf tendencies as a result. In this case, women might end up following the same path as their male counterparts in falling subject to environmental influences that encourage LWT.

Study Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research Directions

This study has a number of strengths which bolster our understanding of sales force behavioral tendencies. First, the use of structural equation modeling provides not only a stringent test of our hypotheses, but also the opportunity to test our theory against an alternative, more generally accepted assumption that lone wolfism is merely a product of nature. Further, we have identified antecedents to LWT, suggesting that these tendencies can be influenced through social opportunities at work. By introducing the concept of concern over mistakes to the model, we yield insights into not only the psychological dynamics of lone wolfism, but also into the process through which lone wolfism is related to positive workplace outcomes. Finally, our sample contains both B2B and B2C salespeople, which adds to the generalizability of our study's findings. This is not to say that LWT only exist within a sales force, as lone wolfism may very well be present elsewhere in an organization.

Despite its strengths, however, this study is not without limitations. First, as with the majority of research on sales and organizational behavior, our study is limited by its cross-sectional design. With the research objective to open dialogue about an alternative view of LWT, cross-sectional data was deemed a good starting point. However, in order to determine the causal structure of LWT development, future research would greatly benefit from studies featuring experimental and/or longitudinal designs. Second, given the nature of sales jobs and the characteristics of people generally attracted to these positions, lone wolf tendencies have primarily been examined with regard to salespeople. While we believe that our sample of both B2B and B2C salespeople strengthens the generalizability of our study, the sample domain used here limits our discussion of LWT outside of the sales profession.

To extend the theory of LWT, future research might consider other areas of the firm to examine the influence of LWT on workplace practices and behaviors. For instance, extending research into professionals such as human resource managers, customer service representatives, and technical experts such as nurses, is an important step toward expanding the construct's generalizability. Of particular note may be that research into the ways in which lone wolves operate as members of organizational teams is worthy of investigation.

Although previous research has examined LWT manifestation with regard to teamwork in student teams and found that lone wolves do not work well with other team members (e.g., Barr, Dixon, and Gassenheimer 2005), we suggest that future research extend this line of thinking to investigate questions such as whether lone wolves tend to withdraw from team discussion and decision-making, or, rather tend to dominate these processes amid the complexities of the workplace. Further, research would benefit by examining the causal relationships between LWT and team characteristics. This would be of particular value, given that many contemporary organizations increasingly rely on teams, rather than hierarchical structures, to accomplish work goals (Weinberg, Trevino, and Cleveland *in press*).

Although we found evidence that lone wolf tendencies may be nurtured, it would be an overstatement to claim that some people are not predisposed to lone wolfism. Future research is needed to explore which characteristics may predispose an individual to LWT and the degree to which any predispositions may be altered through social-contextual variables such as training, mentoring, and opportunities for social exchange. Such analyses may also help in expanding the nomological network of the lone wolfism construct so that it is useful in the fields of applied psychology and organizational behavior, where it is currently underrepresented. Moreover, this discussion would add to the current dialogue in social science that objects to framing human development as a nature versus nurture issue, but rather, paradoxically, a phenomenon of nature *and* nurture. Future research should more thoroughly explore the simultaneous impact of both natural predispositions and contextual influences on one's tendencies toward lone wolfism.

An additional limitation is that, while this study considers salespeople's relationships with their most influential workplace mentor, literature has begun to establish that individuals often seek guidance from larger developmental networks of experienced individuals (e.g., Dobrow et al. 2012). Future research should consider whether and how social networks of developmental relationships influence one's tendency to take on (or not take on) lone wolf tendencies. It also may be worth investigating whether the degree of lone wolf tendencies of men and women who either are or are not involved in organizational mentoring programs differentially change over time as the mentoring

relationships unfold. Such an investigation could help establish whether a causal link between mentoring and LWT exists, in part through a study design featuring measures captured at two different points in time. Finally, we should not overlook many other influences that possibly shape sales force behavioral tendencies. Future research will determine the degree of impact that other organizationally determined influences have on the propensity to create, nurture, and reinforce lone wolfism.

A final avenue for future research relates to our findings of positive associations between lone wolfism, job involvement, and self-assessments of job performance. These results make it clear that while lone wolves prefer their solitude, they retain their value in contemporary organizations. This has particular implications for management of older workers, as we found that they tend to be more likely to self-identify as lone wolves, and that it is unlikely that these older workers' level of sales experience influences this relationship (see Table 3). As the baby boomers begin to retire and members of Generation X take over leading roles in the organization, it may become increasingly important to investigate the relationship between age and LWT. People in Generation X are described as being more cynical, individualistic, independent, and self-sufficient than those of other generations, and less likely to display loyalty to a particular organization (Wong et al. 2008). Future research may benefit from investigating whether differences in LWT exist along generational lines, and, if so, the implications for workplace outcomes.

Implications for Practice

Although past research has discussed how lone wolves tend to be highly committed to their jobs, research has yet to make the connection between this commitment and being highly job-involved. We have hypothesized and found that the lone wolf-job involvement relationship appears to be mediated by concern over mistakes, and ultimately results in higher individual performance.

Managers, however, must understand the complex balance between lone wolves' personal motivations toward individual performance and their attitudes with regard to organizational objectives. At the same time, managers need to be mindful of integrating individuals with high LWT into the more collective, team-based selling structure prevalent in many of today's

sales organizations. Suggestions may include (a) monitoring sales compensation systems and clearly stating any socially based expectations for participation in inter- and intra-organizational initiatives, and (b) conducting training programs in natural work groups so that salespeople and other functional members of the firm may learn together in an interactive environment.

These suggestions highlight how the intersection of one's personal tendencies and the influences of job design and compensation may be helpful toward creating and supporting a context in which lone wolfism can serve both personal and organizational agendas. In particular, sales managers should be sensitive to the contemporary work environment in which lone wolf salespeople are often being brought into communal work contexts, while still being subject to individual reward systems. Current individual incentive-based reward systems may encourage salespeople to continue their lone wolf behaviors. As evidenced herein, this encouragement could have positive effects with regard to their own sales performance but possibly not motivate individuals to participate in team-based initiatives adequately. It is up to the sales manager to balance individual and organizational efforts to achieve overall sales organization performance.

In conclusion, the present study has added to our understanding of LWT by introducing the perspective that social influences might well play an important role in influencing lone wolfism at work. Whereas previous research has embraced a *nature of the beast* perspective, this literature have not yet addressed whether lone wolves are immune to social influences. Our study reveals a new story where lone wolfism may be, in part, reinforced by low engagement in social comparison and receipt of low levels of career mentoring. If organizations provide opportunities for social comparison and mentoring, isolationist tendencies among sales force members are likely to decrease. However, it might not be in the organization's best interest to do so. A sales organization with narrowly defined individual sales goals, for instance, could be well served by salespeople who possess high lone wolf tendencies. Results from our study suggest a link between high LWT and performance via the mediating influences of concern over mistakes and job involvement. This observation implies the need for a richer understanding of the psychological dynamics underpinning concern for mistakes and the implications of those dynamics for managing lone wolves across varying sales contexts.

We hope that the present study inspires future work that incorporates both contextual influences and personal motivations into explanatory models of lone wolf tendencies.

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