



Capítulo 10

Antecedents of
the salesman's stress

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Abstract

This research analyzes the effects of the Spanish financial situation on the sale-force's stress. The empirical results, using a sample of 124 vendors, indicate that perceived uncertainty has a major effect on borne pressure and stress, due to the sellers' awareness of the difficult circumstances and the few work opportunities offered in the country. Moreover, other behavioral changes of Spanish companies influence the stress of salespersons; standing out is the perceived remuneration injustice as a result of the general salaries reduction and objectives based remuneration. In addition, in Spain, numerous hired sellers feel low job identification since many of them have been educated in different areas and do not have a lot of experience; in turn, adding to higher levels of stress on the sellers.

Key words: stress, job identification, perceived injustice.

Introduction

Unemployment has increased at an accelerated pace since 2008 in Spain, caused, in 75% of the cases, by the cessation of many firms' activities or by their wrongdoing. There still doesn't seem to appear any indication of employment improvement in 2013. This context affects all industries and all the Spanish regions (EPA, 2012; INE, 2012).

This economic downturn has meant a relevant change in all the levels of the economy (Berges, 2009) which has influenced the structure of many firms, their sales organization, and the environment perceptions by salesmen. Thus, the crisis has affected the sales force situation and, among other consequences, it is remarkable the influence it has on the stress felt by salespeople (Borrás, 2009).

Being aware that stress can lead to troubling problems like anxiety and depression, which are very common nowadays, and that their consequences may be very serious on the mental stability of people (Patton, 1988; Patton and Questell, 1986; Sarger and Wilson, 1995), this research focuses on analyzing in full the antecedents of stress, caused by the unstable and troubling labor situation that the sales force in Spain is currently suffering. Among these antecedents, we would like to underline 1. the uncertainty experienced by salespeople due to the possibility of losing their jobs (Borrás, 2009; Enreh, 2010), 2. the increase in payments based only on achieved objectives, currently being used more and more by companies as a form of compensation for the efforts made by the sellers (Atienza, 2010), and 3. the low identification with the position felt by a lot of sellers educated in different areas (Nieto and Ramos, 2010) and who may feel forced to work in sales, without feeling identified with the commercial position (Enrech, 2010). From the literature review conducted in this research, it appears that the named variables have not been analyzed as antecedents of stress, so their study may involve new findings in the area of sales management.


To achieve the research objectives, we review the literature, focusing on the background of stress in the discipline of the sales force and the possible effects of the economical crisis on job stress. Next, we present a model that shows the possible relationships between the consequences of the crisis and the stress of the sales staff; followed by an empirical study, which is presented in order to test the hypothesis of the model. Finally, we present the results and main conclusions.

2. Stress in the personal selling staff

A lot of research has focused on studying the construct of “stress” in the workplace. In the 70s, the literature analyzed its effects on the overall business performance (i.e. Boles, Johnson & Joseph, 1997; McGrath, 1976; Organ, 1979; Osman, Karatepe, Babakus & Avci, 2006; Sarger, 1991, Sanjeev and Ramaswami, 1993; Taylor, Pettojohn & Pettijohn, 2000; Sarger et al., 1998). In the eighties and nineties, literature started to present some research in the area of marketing, in order to understand how stress affects the sales force (i. e. Bartol, 1999; Behrman, 1984; Flaherty, Dahlsotrom & Skinner , 1999; Lazarus, 1999; Parasunaman, 1982;; Sarger, Yi & Frutrell, 1998).

Job stress can be defined as “a psychological response to a disturbance experienced by the individual as he or she perceives his or her demands at work, or a restriction found at work” (Parasunaman and Alutto, 1984, p. 332). Even though there are other definitions in the literature (Blau, 1981; Edwards, 1992; Motowidlo, Packard & Manning, 1986; Schuler, 1980; among others) with some differences to the one mentioned above (Sarger and Wilson, 1995), in general, there is agreement on the main elements that comprise job stress (Boles, Johnson & Joseph, 1997; Flaherty et al., 1999, Tanner, Dunn & Chonko, 1993, Taylor et al., 2000; Tracy and Neidermeyerb 2004, Sarger et al. 1998). These elements include: (1) role conflict: difference between the expectation of the performance of their work and the perception of its assessment (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn & Snoek , 1964; Rizzo, House & Lirtzman, 1970), and (2) role ambiguity: inadequate amount of resources and information to carry out the tasks (Kahn et al., 1964; Rizzo et al., 1970).

It must be noted that, in most cases, role conflict is due to the form of hierarchical organization in the company (Rizzo et al., 1970), in which the seller can receive divergent instructions from the superior (Behrman and Perreault, 1984). On the other hand, role ambiguity is due to a lack of organization and resources in the company, or it might also be due to rapid changes that occur within the organization (Cameron, Jeffrey & James, 1996), or an unstable environment, which can lead to technical changes which provoke stress through the increase of role ambiguity (Behrman and Perreault, 1984 Rizzo et al., 1970).

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Some authors have interpreted role conflict and role ambiguity separately when analyzing stress, considering both dimensions independently (Berhman and Perreult, 1984).

In the present investigation, and following the proposal by Rizzo et al. (1970), we understand that role ambiguity is more closely linked to the stress suffered by the seller due to the current situation. In this sense, and taking into account the fact that stress is a multidimensional construct, we approximate it in our research as role ambiguity. Not surprisingly, some studies suggest that changes in the environment affect businesses (Boles, Johnson & Joseph, 1994), mostly after the introduction of new methods or techniques, which affects role ambiguity experienced by the sales force (Behrman and Perreault, 1984; Rizzo et al., 1970). Additionally, another major cause affecting role ambiguity is the turnover in the company, due to frequent layoffs (Rizzo et al., 1970). Thus, in studies where the main analysis context is the country's situation, the analysis of the sellers' role ambiguity is relevant (Behrman and Perreault, 1984; Tanner et al., 1993). Therefore, the role ambiguity is a key dimension to understanding the stress of sales staff in a crisis situation.

Together with the definition of the term in the literature, the researches related to the construct of "stress" have covered both the study of its antecedents (Adams, 1965; Boles, Johnson & Joseph, 1997; Cameron et al., 1996; Osman et al., 2006, Rizzo et al., 1970, Sanjeev & Ramaswami, 1993; Sarger, 1991; among others) and its consequences (Flaherty et al., 1999; Patton and Questell, 1986; Singh, Goolsby & Gary, 1994; Taylor et al., 2000; Tracy & Neidermeyerb, 2004; Sarger et al., 1998; among others).

Regarding the consequences caused by stress, the literature identifies studies focused on analyzing the effects on self-esteem, socialization and mental well-being of the individual (Patton and Questell, 1986), dissatisfaction at work (Tracy & Neidermeyerb, 2004), motivation (Taylor et al., 2000), the lack of energy (Sarger et al., 1998), and conflicts with other individuals at different levels of the organization (Flaherty et al., 1999; (Sanjeev and Ramaswami, 1993), etc. In all cases, the consequences of stress are very negative (Patton and Questell, 1986), especially for the organization (Sanjeev and Ramaswami, 1993).

From the point of view of the antecedents, it is noteworthy that there is some empirical evidence that supports how certain characteristics of sellers and their family life have an important influence on the stress experienced at work (Boles, Johnson & Joseph, 1997; Osman et al., 2006).

Additionally, the job characteristics also affect the level of stress of the seller. Sarger and Wilson (1995) indicated that a sales force supports a lot of stress according to the characteristics of the job. The study by Goolsby (1992) highlights how stress increases when sellers work in an environment where their results are constantly controlled. Moreover, because of the importance of the sales force in the performance of the company, sellers receive continuous pressure from managers (Goolsby, 1992). Furthermore, the pressure exerted by customers sometimes forces sellers to solve problems far from their responsibilities, in many cases, without having the adequate resources to resolve them (Sarger and Wilson, 1995). So much pressure, a lack of resources, and little control are considered antecedents of sales force stress (Goolsby, 1992; Sarger and Wilson, 1995).

On the other hand, the literature has shown that an unclear job description and an unclear and poor definition of the objectives and responsibilities can affect the stress levels of sellers (Graen, 1975; Liden and Graen, 1980). Thus, one of the key elements that influences role ambiguity and role conflict, and therefore, influencing stress, is the quality of exchanges within the organization, between management and the sales force (Tanner and Castleberry, 1990). Accordingly, the literature highlights the need for frequent communication between superiors and their subordinates (Tanner et al., 1993). Jackson and Tax (1995) indicated how when the seller does not clearly know the values of the company for which he or she works, the level of stress is higher. Flaherty et al. (1999) pointed out that in the late nineties, the proliferation of various departments in the same company provoked conflicts between the customer orientation of the marketing department and the financial guidance from members of the same organization. When these conflicts occur, the sales staff become stressed.

The current crisis experienced in Spain is another factor that certainly puts significant pressure on the labor situation, introducing major changes in the day-to-day business (Berges, 2009; Borrás, 2009). This crisis can lead to high levels of mistrust, uncertainty in the workplace, and perceived unfairness in relation to the rewards and pressure made by managers (Atienza, 2010; Enrech, 2010; Tabibnia, Satpute & Lieberman et al., 2008).

Despite the importance of the economic situation as an antecedent of job stress, not a lot of research has focused on the influence of this situation on the stress levels of the sellers. Therefore, our objective is to analyze the effects of the financial crisis on the stress of the sales force.

3. Antecedents of the sales force resulting from the Spanish economic situation

3.1. Unemployment in Spain and its effect on stress

Unemployment in Spain in 2012 reached a record level of 5,273,600 unemployed, which constitutes 22.25% of the workforce. Thus, due to the job destruction in less than four years, the number of unemployed has increased by more than three million (EPA, 2012). It is remarkable how in the last two years, there was a rise in employment in the commercial sector; however, this is not due to cyclical improvement, but instead the hiring of unskilled professionals from other areas; mostly part time and commission paid workers (INE, 2012).

In this sense, we can say that, since 2008, unemployment has become an economic, social and familiar problem for many people, and that the ravages of the economic crisis does not only affect those who don't have a job or cannot find one. There are a large number of people, who are economically active, but who live the current economic crisis with the fear of losing their jobs (Borrás, 2009).

The stress suffered by a person can be related to the environment he or she lives in. If a person perceives it as threatening, he can feel stress (Lazarus, 1999; Vagg and Spielberger, 1998). The environment thus causes uncertainty and stress for the worker (Berges, 2009; Lazarus, 1999). Based on these studies we plan the following hypothesis:



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H1: Uncertainty perceived by a seller due to the economic situation, positively affects his/her job stress.

Furthermore, for over 40 years, literature has also analyzed the above uncertainty together with the pressure exerted on the workplace and the consequent effect on stress (Chemers, Hayes, Rhodewalt & Wysocki, 1985; Edwards and Cooper, 1990; French and Caplan, 1972; Vagg and Spielberger, 1998). So, we can state that due to the economic crisis, sellers perceive more pressure when performing their work, and, at the same time, this pressure becomes stress sustained over time (Borrás, 2009). These results lead us to propose the following hypotheses:

H2: Uncertainty perceived by a seller due to the economic situation positively affects the pressure supported by him or her in the workplace.

H3: The pressure supported positively affects the stress suffered by the seller.

3.2. Crisis in Spain, remuneration and effects on stress

The economic crisis has had patent changes on the remuneration market in Spain. Thus, apart from the fact that wages have declined in recent years (INE, 2011), one of the most notable changes is that companies are now using more assiduously variable pay systems (Atienza, 2009).

In relation to this data, which indicates low salaries, and in many cases, based only on objectives, salespeople may perceive injustice in return for their efforts. Some psychological studies claim that humans are particularly sensitive to the feeling of injustice (Tabibnia et al., 2008), to the point that the pursuit of justice is considered a basic impulse of people (Tyler, 1991). Monetary compensation is one of the most influential variables on perceived justice in a business context (Gupta and Shaw, 1998; Lawer and Jenkins, 1992; Miceli and Lane, 1991) affecting job satisfaction, pressure, commitment and motivation (Bartol, 1999, Taylor et al., 2000).

Thus, this desire of more monetary benefits for their efforts creates tension (Adams, 1965; Moorman, 1991; Organ, 1990; Shaw and Gupta, 2001). And so, after feeling unfairly treated, workers often change their behaviors (Organ, 1990). In some cases, sellers may feel discouraged, which influences their work performance (Fehr and Gächter, 2000; Janssen, 2001). In other cases, it leads to an increase in pressure as they try to set more ambitious objectives in order to achieve better remuneration (Adams, 1965; Brett, Cron & Slocum, 1995, Doran, Stone, Brief & George, 1991, Kahn, 1981; Moorman, 1991; Organ, 1990). Based on these studies, we formulated the following hypothesis:

H4: Remuneration injustice as perceived by a seller positively affects the pressure felt regarding his or her work.

Furthermore, the literature has shown how low salaries and pay systems based only on objectives have a direct effect on stress (Taylor et al., 2000), affecting mainly the role ambiguity (Organ, 1988) and the perceived lack of organizational support (Wayne, Shore, Bommer & Tetrick, 2002). This is due to perceived injustice felt by the employee (Shaw and Gupta, 2001; Tabibnia et al., 2008). According to these statements, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H5: Remuneration injustice as perceived by the seller positively affects stress.

3.3. Unqualified sales force staff, poor identification with the job, low motivation and job stress

According to the report from La Caixa (2009) about the recession and the labor market in the EU, in Spain there is a production system consisting of low-skilled occupations that cannot generate enough jobs chords for the population with university studies (La Caixa, 2009). Consequently, many individuals with a high level of education have been forced to accept jobs that require fewer years of education than they have, which has generated a high percentage of over-educated workers (Nieto and Ramos, 2010). This has an effect on the sales staff of the different companies.

Enrech (2010) states that, in Spain, employment offers for salespersons are attended by professionals from other sectors with little or no sales experience. Therefore, it is observed that in Spain there is a strong mismatch between the technical preparation of the professionals and the work they do; in turn, affecting the sales force and attracting employees from other areas. This may generate low identification of the sellers with their jobs (Enrech, 2010). A low identification with the job can lead to feelings of dissatisfaction, depression (Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1995, Shaw and Gupta, 2001; Thoits, 1991) and stress (Behrman, 1984; Cameron et al., 1996; Tanner et al., 1993), and also, in many cases it affects the pressure suffered by the employee in his or her work (Brown 1996; Brown, Cron & Leigh, 1993; Sanjeev and Ramaswami, 1993). Based on these statements, we can make the following assumptions:

H6: Job identification negatively affects the pressure supported by the seller.

H7: Job identification negatively affects stress.

Finally, some studies state that when an individual is in a workplace that reports stability and meets his/her needs, this person feels more identified with the job. However, when the business environment is uncertain or threatening, the individual feels unmotivated and less identified with his/her job (Brown and Leigh, 1996; Griffin, 1991, Kahn, 1990; Pfeffer, 1994). Similarly, the perceived injustice in payment for their efforts has a negative influence on job identification (O'Driscoll and Randall, 1999). In this regard, the following assumptions are made:

H8: Seller uncertainty due to the economic situation negatively affects his or her job identification.

H9: Remuneration injustice as perceived by the seller negatively affects his or her job identification.

In Figure 1, we present the theoretical model that integrates our hypotheses:

Figure 1: Theoretical model

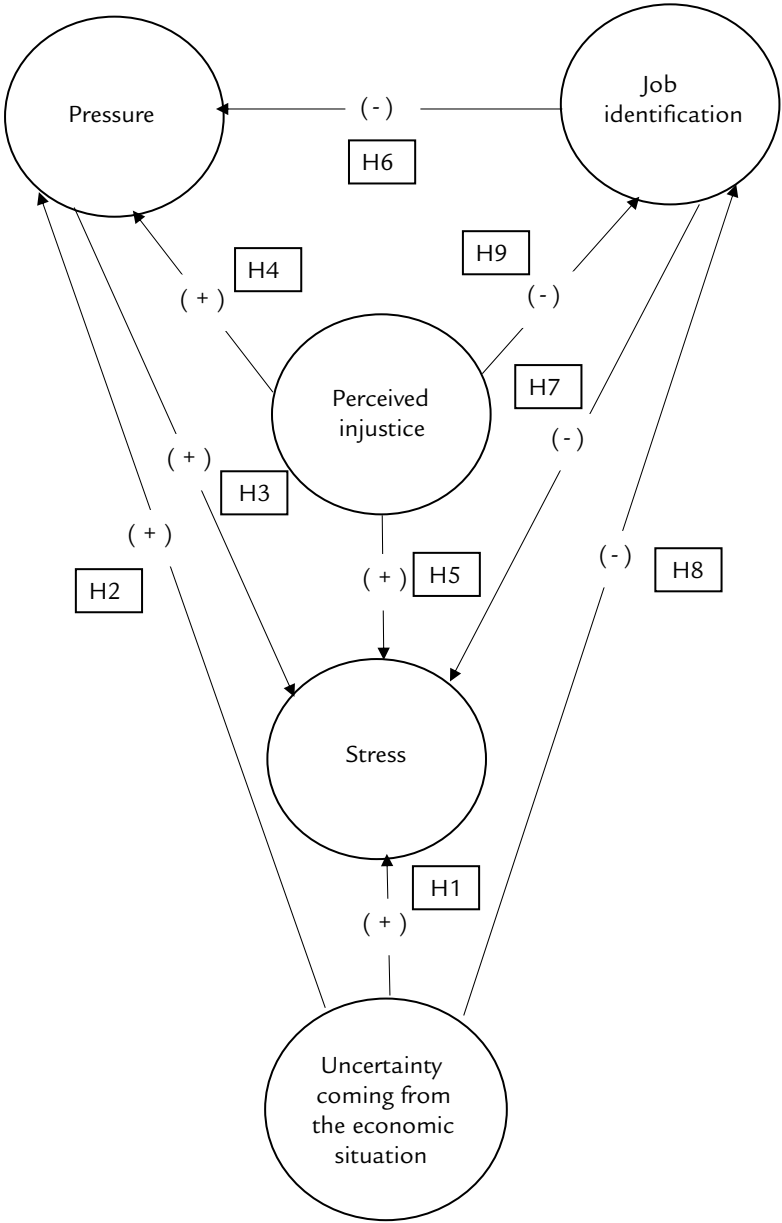


Figure 1. Here

4. Methology

In order to achieve the proposed goals and contrast the hypotheses, an exploratory research was performed. A quantitative research was carried out by using a structured survey and personal interviews.

The universe of the study was based on Spanish sellers from different sectors of activity. The selection of the sample was performed by non-probability sampling trials, identifying the most important commercial areas of the region. As a result, 124 valid surveys were collected in the city of Valencia, Spain.

From the 124 respondents, 39.5% worked in the beverage industry, 21.8% were cosmetic sellers, 10.5% worked in the insurance industry, 8.1% belonged to the telecommunications sector, 7.3% worked for NGOs, 4.8% worked for travel agencies, and 2.4% were car sellers. Regarding the profile of the sample, 48.4% were men and 51.6% were women; 14.5% were between 18 and 25 years old, 79.8% between 26 and 45 years old, and the other 5.6% were older than 45. In relation to education, 77.5% had graduated. In relation to salaries, 52.4% obtained a salary based on fixed pay plus variable remuneration, 32.4% received a fixed pay, and the remaining group received a salary based only on commission. More than 50% of the sample earned less than 1000 Euros per month.

Regarding the measures of the used variables in the research, all the chosen scales were adapted from previous investigations. Thus, the Likert scale of 7 points was used, which ranged from 1 (totally disagree) to 10 (totally agree). In order to measure the stress of the sellers, we used the roll ambiguity scale by Rizzo et al. (1970) composed of six items. Then, in order to measure the pressure on the sellers we chose the six items scale by Vagg and Spielberger (1998). In order to measure the uncertainty created by the economic situation, we adapted the scale developed by Taylor (1994), which comprises five items. The perceived justice was measured using the four items scale by Netemeyer, Boles, McKee & McMurrian, (1997). Finally, in order to measure job identification, we chose the four items scale by Luhtanen and Crocker (1992).

5. Analysis of the results

5.1. *Measurement instrument validation*

Before testing the hypothesis, scale reliability and validity was verified by a confirmatory factor analysis with EQS 6.1 (Bentler, 2005).

Convergent validity is demonstrated because all the items were found to have significant factor loads over .60 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988) and the Lagrange multipliers test did not suggest significant relations for a factor other than those they were indicators for (Hatcher, 1994). The measurement model also showed good fit (see Table 1).

Reliability was measured with Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951). The threshold value for this coefficient is .70 to guarantee internal consistency of the scale (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). As Table 1 shows, all of Cronbach's α (Cronbach, 1951) were above the recommended value of .70 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). The composed reliability index was also calculated and for all values it was over the recommended value of .70 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Average variance extracted (AVE) values were over .50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Reliability and convergent validity

Factor	Indicator	Load	Robust t	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
STRESS	STR1	0.722**	10.265	0.911	0.701	0.684
	STR 2	0.633**	8.242			
	STR 3	0.886**	17.911			
	STR 4	0.877**	15.625			
	STR 5	0.859**	14.699			
	STR 6	0.772**	12.234			
PRESSURE	PRE1	0.747**	13.348	0.907	0.729	0.618
	PRE2	0.803**	12.671			
	PRE3	0.838**	13.772			
	PRE4	0.799**	12.190			
	PRE5	0.742**	10.304			
	PRE6	0.793**	14.156			
UNCERTAINTY	UNCERT1	0.851**	15.419	0.933	0.764	0.735
	UNCERT2	0.904**	17.055			
	UNCERT3	0.867**	13.289			
	UNCERT4	0.849**	14.640			
	UNCERT5	0.816**	12.640			
INJUSTICE PERCEIVED	INJ1	0.849**	9.584	0.922	0.784	0.760
	INJ2	0.922**	11.378			
	INJ3	0.865**	11.259			
	INJ4	0.825**	9.829			
JOB IDENTIFICATION	IDE1	0.770**	9.650	0.926	0.785	0.761
	IDE2	0.885**	14.290			
	IDE3	0.910**	14.630			
	IDE4	0.916**	16.583			

N = 124; **p < 0.01; S-B χ^2 = 2877.890; gl = 300; NNFI = 0.926; CFI = 0.934; IFI = 0.935; RMSEA = 0.072.

Discriminant validity was evaluated following two criteria (see Table 2). Firstly, it was found that none of the 95% confidence intervals for correlation estimations between the pairs of factors contained the value 1 (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). Secondly, the variance shared between each pair of constructs (squared correlation) was below the corresponding variance extracted indexes (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

5.2. Estimation of the conceptual model

The methodology of structural equations models was used with EQS version 6.1. software to evaluate the structural model and to estimate the set of coefficients for the causal relations between variables. Table 3 shows verification of the hypothesis for the whole sample. It can be seen that all the hypotheses, except two, are fulfilled. On one hand, we cannot accept that the perceived injustice in the remuneration affects job identification in the context of the analysis (H9 not fulfilled). Furthermore, we cannot accept the direct relationship between uncertainty and stress (H1 not fulfilled), but there is a relationship between these two variables indirectly through pressure (H2 and H3 fulfilled).

Table 2. Discriminant validity

	STRESS	PRESSURE	UNCERTAINTY	INJUSTICE PERCEIVED	JOB IDENTIFICATION
STRESS	0.684	(0.69-0.89)	(0.42-0.71)	(0.17-0.48)	(0.42-0.71)
PRESSURE	0.481	0.618	(0.46-0.75)	(0.46-0.75)	(0.26-0.62)
UNCERTAINTY	0.326	0.369	0.735	(0.19-0.55)	(0.19-0.53)
INJUSTICE PERCEIVED	0.108	0.349	0.137	0.76	(0.07-0.43)
JOB IDENTIFICATION	0.319	0.192	0.131	0.065	0.761

The diagonal represents the average variance extracted AVE. Above the diagonal is the 95% confidence interval for the inter-factor correlations. Below the diagonal is the variance shared by each pair of factors (squared correlation).

Table 3. Hypothesis verification

RELATION	β	(t)
H1: Uncertainty \rightarrow Stress	0,105	1,153
H2: Uncertainty \rightarrow Pressure	0,390***	4,338
H3: Pressure \rightarrow Stress	0,745***	5,467
H4: Injustice \rightarrow Pressure	0,396***	4,452
H5: Injustice \rightarrow Stress	0,215*	2,655
H6: Identification \rightarrow Pressure	0,196*	2,011
H7: Identification \rightarrow Stress	0,255**	2,660
H8: Uncertainty \rightarrow Identification	0,311**	3,129
H9: Injustice \rightarrow Identification	0,140	1,375

N = 124; ***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05; S-B χ^2 = 2877.890; gl = 300; NNFI = 0.926; CFI = 0.934; IFI = 0.935; RMSEA = 0.072.

Greater uncertainty leads to reduced job identification (H8 fulfilled). Greater job identification helps to reduce the pressure supported (H6 fulfilled) and stress suffered by the seller (H7 fulfilled). Finally, perceived injustice in the remuneration reinforces not only the levels of pressure (H4 fulfilled), but also the stress experienced by the seller on the job (H5 fulfilled).

6. Conclusions, management implications, limitations and future lines of research

This research shows how some underlying factors of the economic situation in Spain can influence the stress of the salespeople. Since this is a study focused on the current economic situation, and taking into consideration the particularities of the Spanish commercial sector, some of the factors haven't been analyzed in the literature, and consequently, the obtained results come as new information related to stress in the sales force arena.

Thus, the results of the investigation indicate that the uncertainty of the sellers, after observing the effects of the crisis in Spain and its consequences, affects their stress levels and the pressure supported by them in their jobs. Moreover, today the salaries are lower than they were some years ago in the commercial sector, and there is also an increase of the use of payments based only on commissions (INE, 2012). As the results show, all these factors have an effect on the stress experienced by the sellers, both directly and indirectly, given that remuneration problems also affect pressure supported by the salespeople.

On the other hand, the hiring of nonprofessional sellers was pointed out to be one of the most relevant changes in the Spanish sales force; people who have graduated from different areas and with experience in other sectors are currently working as sellers in Spain (Nieto and Ramos, 2010). At the same time, it was indicated that the lack of formation and experience is linked to low job identification (Enrech, 2010). Regarding that fact, the results of the research show how low job identification has a direct effect on the stress experienced by sellers and how it affects, at the same time, the pressure on the salespeople. Also, the results show that the uncertainty of the sellers due to the economic crisis affects their job perception, making them feel a higher risk of losing their jobs, meaning that they work in a disturbing environment, and in turn, affecting their job identification. Therefore, uncertainty has an indirect effect on stress, through a low job identification of many current Spanish sellers.

Finally, based on the literature reviewed, the perceived injustice was linked to the low job identification. In some researches, this relation has been valid (see O'Driscoll and Ramdall, 1999); however, we cannot confirm this hypothesis in the chosen study scope. That might be because, while the perceived injustice affects pressure and stress due to a need for higher salaries, the low job identification comes about because of a labor force that does not provide jobs according to the area of formation of the workers. Both facts are divergent, and although both affect stress separately, the data indicates that there is no direct link between them.

Therefore, it seems important to mention that in those companies where the stress of the seller is a problem, they should reduce the perceived uncertainty by their sales force, since it is proven that this variable affects the stress experienced by the salespeople. So, it is important to create a stable environment for the seller. The literature indicates how quality and frequent communication from the part of the manager can reduce uncertainty (Tanner and Castleberry, 1990) by making clear the importance of the sellers to the company, and reduce their fear of losing their jobs. However, the literature also indicates the importance of the managers following the sellers' results without generating too much pressure (Flaherty et al., 1999; Rizzo et al., 1970). This will produce a higher job identification perceived by the seller, since it has been established that uncertainty affects job identification. What's more, this variable (job identification) has been found to have an influence on stress, thus, as long as stress is a personal or organizational problem, the company should hire experienced salespeople; in turn, helping to reduce the problem of low job identification. In addition, we propose that the company provide some incentives to the sellers, such as compensation at different times of the year when the benefits are higher, giving special remuneration when exceeding set goals, or paying for expenditure made by the seller on behalf of the company (travel, company, uniform etc.); these incentives help increase the job identification of the salespeople. There are also a series of non-quantitative incentives which can be very useful in order to decrease stress and increase job identification, such as the verbal appreciation of the managers in regards to the seller's work.

Finally, it is important to mention the fact that, due to the need of narrowing the study scope, this research presents some limitations in relation to the representation of the results. Although the Spanish crisis affects the whole country without any exceptions, the circumscription of the research to Valencia makes it difficult to present conclusions valid for all the cities in Spain. Thus, it would be interesting to analyze these approaches in other cities, such as Madrid and Barcelona. On the

other hand, the research focuses on the antecedents of stress due to the crisis in Spain, and so, it would be interesting to analyze the consequences of the stress experienced by the salespeople in the current economic situation.

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ANEXO 1: SCALE ITEMS

Stress <i>(Rizzo et al., 1970)</i>	My objectives are not clear	Pressure <i>(Vagg y Spielberger, 1998)</i>	I have to stop because of frequent interruptions
	I think the time is not well structured		I perform tasks which are not in the job prescription
	My responsibilities are not clear.		I take responsibilities for things I shouldn't
	I do not know what is expected from my work.		I work more hour than I should
	I do not know the authority I have		I feel as if I am in the spotlight
	The superiors' indications aren't clear		I perceive insufficient personal time to do my job
Justice perceived <i>(Netemeyer et al., 1997)</i>	I think my salary is low considering my responsibilities	Uncertainty <i>(Taylor et al., 1994)</i>	The current economical situation makes me feel:
	I think my salary is low considering my efforts		Anxious
	I think my salary is low considering the stress.		Nervous
	I think I receive too few rewards considering the results of my job		Worried
Job Identification <i>(Luhtanen y Crocker, 1992)</i>	Overall my job has very little to do with how I feel about myself		Unquiet
	My job reflects my personality.		Insecure
	I think my jobs says a lot about who I am.		
	My job is a part of my image and my identity		