



## Bringing Meaning to the Salespersons’ Performance: The Effect of Salespersons’ Emotional Regulation and Salespersons’ Selling Skills

<sup>a</sup> Faheem Ahmad Khan, <sup>b</sup> Muhammad Umer Quddoos, <sup>c</sup> Mazhar Iqbal, <sup>d</sup> Arslan Ahmad Siddiqi

<sup>a</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Management Sciences, COMSATS University, Islamabad, Pakistan  
E-Mail: [faheemkhan@ciitwah.edu.pk](mailto:faheemkhan@ciitwah.edu.pk)

<sup>b</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, PAKISTAN  
E-Mail: [umerattari@bzu.edu.pk](mailto:umerattari@bzu.edu.pk)

<sup>c</sup> Lecturer, Department of Commerce, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan  
E-Mail: [mazhar.iqbal@bzu.edu.pk](mailto:mazhar.iqbal@bzu.edu.pk)

<sup>d</sup> General Manager, Institute of Industrial and Control System, Islamabad, Pakistan  
E-Mail: [dr.arslan.siddiqi@gmail.com](mailto:dr.arslan.siddiqi@gmail.com)

### ARTICLE DETAILS

#### History:

Accepted 03 February 2025

Available Online February 2025

#### Keywords:

Satisfaction with Supervisor, Customer Orientation, Emotional Regulation, and Selling Skills.

#### JEL Classification:

DOI: [10.47067/ramss.v8i1.464](https://doi.org/10.47067/ramss.v8i1.464)

### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of the study is to make a pragmatic contribution by confirming the usefulness of the suggested theoretical framework and to test a research model confined to realistic proxy variables integrated into the framework of performance. The study's goal is also to substantiate that the suggested, multi-stage structure will verify the underlying process by which salespeople can achieve higher performance in the pharmaceutical sales context. This study proposes the process-based framework of salespersons’ performance given a few certainties significant in the pharmaceutical sales performance today i.e., customer orientation of the salespeople due to increased demand of customers for a total solution, emotional regulation, and sales-related skills to meet the challenging competition. An argument is presented that proposes that there are supplementary, probable stages in the overall sales process. The research model is developed to test pieces of this process framework. Downstream salespersons’ behaviors and the outcome of these behaviors are thus the central idea of this framework. Data was collected from pharmaceutical salespeople (n = 300) from 20 pharmaceutical firms (national and international). The paper concludes with a summary of managerial and theoretical implications and research limitations as well as proposed future directions for researchers. This research offered more of a direct consequence to senior and field managers. The precise characteristics of the pharmaceutical salespersons i.e., salespersons’ customer orientation are influenced by the servant leadership style of field managers, and emotional regulation and selling skills do play an important role in boosting their performance. We also found a major variance in salespersons’ performance that was attributed to emotional regulation and selling skills. This offers concrete proof that the outcome salespersons bring in as a result strong emotional regulation and professional selling skills are significant drivers of performance. The downstream effects that result from the servant*

*leadership style of field managers drive performance. The results show a promising configuration of relationships within the proposed model.*

© 2025 The authors. Published by SPCRD Global Publishing. This is an open access article under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0

---

Corresponding author's email address: umerattari@bzu.edu.pk

## **1. Introduction and Background of the Study**

Today's marketing and sales environment has become multifarious; varied factors are influencing the market conditions and as a result, the market is becoming exceptionally competitive. Customers are becoming less faithful to the firms and are becoming more educated and at the same time becoming more challenging for the firms to capture sales (Khan et al., 2023). As a result of these changing factors, the nature of buyer-seller relationships and customer management has moved from a basic production and sales outlook to a more composite arrangement of partnering with customers. In this situation, the role of face-to-face selling is becoming very important not only in generating revenue but also in gaining first-hand information on the market conditions (Vieira et al., 2022). Parallel to this unbendable competition where many firms are operating, a firm needs to craft strategies that are best fit for not only customers but also for their salesforce to make more productive (Hamzah et al., 2022; Mallin et al., 2022). As the business-related environment is shifting in terms of technological progression, enmity among firms and consumer purchasing conformations are also shifting quickly, considering these facts, firms, and salespeople need to align them according to the environment. Today firms are concentrating on evolving strategies to build strategic relationships with customers; and they are more engrossed in applying the contemporary concept, rather than smearing just a selling concept (Good et al., 2022). Consequently, all these strategies can only be helpful if firms comprehend the importance of their salesforce (Vieira et al., 2022). A supervisor's leadership style influences on attitudes and behaviors of salespeople (Dugan et al., 2022). Supervisors, in a sales context, are a source of knowledge and motivation to the salesforce. Conversely, field managers must recognize the attitude and behavior of salespeople toward the customer, like Customer Orientation (CO) of the salespeople, in other words, many researchers have advocated that a salesforce needs to identify the basic needs and wants of customers. However, previous studies exposed the fact that there is a need to do more work when it comes to measuring the relationship between salespeople's Emotional Regulation (ER) and the Sales Skills (SS) they possess (which influence the efficacy of CO). Precisely, researchers raised requests to clarify more about the influence of CO on salespersons' Performance (PER).

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the factors that influence the PER of salespeople working in the pharmaceutical sector. As far as pharmaceutical companies are concerned, they are facing stiff competition (Limbu & Huhmann, 2022). The relationship between salespeople and supervisors is more critical in the pharmaceutical industry (Morgan & Zane, 2022). The insight of this study also offers applicable and important direction for the formulation of strategies for salesperson's level of satisfaction with supervisors as well as gives direction, on how supervisors can positively impact the PER of salespeople, and make appropriate strategies not to just increase sales but to maintain long-term relationships with the customers.

The role of salespeople in contemporary organizations has become central (Khan et al., 2023; Kidwell et al., 2021). According to Mallin et al. (2022), several researchers have studied salespeople's CO and its impact on PER, and how salespeople interact with customers at the individual level (Malek et al., 2022). Furthermore, salespeople's ER and salespeople's attitudes and behavior were also not

addressed appropriately in measuring the outcome performance of the salespeople. Many researchers differ on the relationship between CO and PER, and how CO can affect the PER (Wierzbiński et al., 2023). Firms cannot achieve their goals due to heavy dependency on salespeople's cognitive factors, this notion highlights the importance of ER for salespeople, because researchers suggested that as human beings, salespeople can react differently in different situations, so their emotional aspect cannot be neglected (Wisker & Poulis, 2017). Salespeople's knowledge and experience also positively influenced the PER (Conde et al., 2022; Mallin et al., 2022). Limbu and Huhmann (2022) suggest that salespeople must be trained in terms of technical (product knowledge) and SS. Researchers in this context believe that managers/supervisors are a source of knowledge and motivation for salespeople, consequently, their relationship affects the PER of salespeople.

A meager understanding of the supervisor's interaction with salespeople may lead to a negative impact on the CO process, and weak CO in sales may lead to poor results for salespeople (Wisker & Poulis, 2014; 2017). This study aims to investigate whether Satisfaction with a Supervisor (SWS) affects CO and whether CO affects PER via a mediating mechanism. We posed three questions in this study i.e., does any relationship exist between SWS and the salesperson's CO? Does the salesperson's CO impact the salesperson's PER of salespeople? And do the salesperson's ER and salesperson's SS play the role of mediators between the salesperson's CO and the salesperson's PER?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Satisfaction with Supervisor**

The term leadership is widely used in marketing literature. Leadership can be defined as influencing other's behavior and attitude to achieve the overall goals of an organization. Previous studies show that supervisors are one of the important factors in forming job commitment in salespeople, reducing job stress, boosting PER, and reducing the turnover ratio (Windon, 2020). Studies revealed that more than 40% of the job satisfaction of employees depends on the relationship between salespeople and their supervisors (Qureshi, 2017). The role of supervisors in the sales context is somewhat more important as compared to other fields (considering the outbound selling activities). Researchers believe for many reasons, the role of field managers is central especially in a sales context because salespeople work alone in the market, he/she should face all the challenges and customers' criticism without having the direct eye of supervisors on them at the time of sales call, henceforth supervisors' role is crucial for an organization in managing selling function.

Extant literature, highlighted factors, like motivation, goal clarity, training, and satisfaction with supervisors which have always been important in shaping salespeople's behavior and attitude. Numerous studies are available that show SWS influences salespeople's PER, and a strong positive relationship with supervisors reflects on their PER (Pap et al., 2021). Many studies revealed that job commitment, turnover rate, job PER, and organizational engagement are highly influenced by the relationship between the workforce and their supervisors (Chang & Wang, 2023). Salespeople consider their managers as a source of motivation and surrogates for the company, therefore managers' actions highly influence salespeople's PER (Mallin et al., 2022). Supervisors are one, who gives feedback to the higher managers and rate the PER of the workforce (Tevfik & Guven, 2017). Baloyi et al. (2014) claimed that supervisors are a source of knowledge, skills, and motivation for the salespeople.

Researchers argued that salespeople feel more comfortable when they have a strong relationship with their supervisors; this may lead to a positive impact on PER because researchers believe that salespeople work better in a favorable/comfortable environment. The extent of the literature shows that the field manager/supervisor plays the role of bridge between salespeople and top management;

he/she is a source of knowledge, motivation, and inspiration for salespeople. Organizations believe customer satisfaction is a key to success, but it is not clear, how customer satisfaction can be achieved, or how it could be possible for an organization to satisfy customers (Pap et al., 2021). To achieve an ultimate objective like customer satisfaction, firms now acknowledge the importance of the role of supervisors. Researchers revealed that salespeople who are more satisfied with their supervisors are more effectively satisfied customers as compared to those who are dissatisfied with supervisors; hence SWS is one of the factors underneath in the overall effectiveness of the selling process.

## **2.2 Customer Orientation**

In this rigid competitive situation, where a large number of companies offer almost homogenous products are trying to make strategies that fulfill the requirements of customers, or in other words, make strategies that align with customers' needs (Cavazos-Arroyo & Puente-Diaz, 2023). In a sales process, a successful salesperson must identify the needs of the customer, and then try to make sales strategies according to their needs, he/she must also be able to handle the objections raised by customers and give them a proper solution which leads toward positive long-term relationship (Yeo et al., 2019). CO plays the role of motivator in salespeople as it enables them to serve customers, and successfully meet the needs of customers as well (Baber et al., 2020). Salespeople who are more skilled and customer-oriented can perform better as compared to those who are not (Bidisha Banerjee & Sudin Bag, 2022). Authors also highlighted that salespeople are considered consultants to customers who are more customer-orientated; hence customers get a higher level of satisfaction from them. Various studies established a positive relationship between CO and sales PER (Grant et al., 2020). In contrast to the selling concept, more customer-oriented salespeople always follow the marketing concept which allows them to make long-term relationships with the customers (Cavazos-Arroyo & Puente-Diaz, 2023). CO in the sales context satisfies and fulfills the needs of customers within the available resources, researchers argued that customer-orientated salespeople are more satisfied with their jobs and are more concerned about the organization's expectations (R.M. et al., 2019). In a sales process, salespeople play a very critical role in creating the relationship between companies and customers as far as the customer-oriented selling concept is concerned. The concept of CO is important if the organization wants to achieve long-term relationships with the customer, while in the selling concept, an organization just focuses on creating demand for the products it produces (Grant et al., 2020). Extant literature on the issue related to a salesperson's CO demonstrates that it is influenced by many factors, some are controllable and others are uncontrollable.

Hamzah et al. (2016) Suggested that CO influences customer relationships, especially at the individual level when a salesperson directly communicates with the customer. Salespeople, who are more customer-oriented, control their emotions while interacting with customers, which positively affects PER because they are more conscious of fulfilling the needs of customers. Bidisha Banerjee and Sudin Bag (2022) Studied that a salesperson with a strong CO is more able to achieve a higher outcome. CO is all about how to perform the selling job considering the customers' perspectives, and what procedures eventually lead to a positive long-term relationship with a customer, therefore previous studies show there is a positive significant relationship between salesmanship skills and a salesperson's CO (Khan et al., 2024). Furthermore, CO is a cost-effective approach especially when salespeople have the resources to fulfill the needs of customers and have a variety of product lines available to offer them.

## **2.3 Emotional Regulation**

ER has been found a central variable in overall output, and that is largely interpersonal (Wisker & Poulis, 2014). In a sales context, the impact of ER on an individual salesperson's ability has a strong

effect on the PER of salespeople. In the cognitive psychology literature, the term ER was first used in the 1960's. Yoon et al. (2016) defined ER as a trait of an individual. In a sales context, ER has remained an interesting issue for many years. In a sales call during direct interaction with customers, salespersons' behavior and emotions are significantly reflected on PER. Leonidou et al. (2019) argued that in a direct interaction with the customer, ER positively influences buyer-seller relationships; therefore ER or the behavior of salespersons always remains important in maintaining a long-term relationship with customers for sales outcomes. Salespersons' ability to control emotions shows their attachment to social norms of society; this ability enables them to manage goals and objectives and helps them control the overall plan of the sales call (Wisker & Poulis, 2017). Successfully controlling or regulating emotions is one of the most challenging tasks in selling jobs. (Danish Habib & Attiq, 2020: Wisker & Poulis, 2017). In earlier studies, it has been suggested that ER is considered a predictor of PER. Research suggested that, for many years, it has remained important for researchers to investigate the variables that affect the PER, these might be related to some physical aspects and some other psychological factors like ER, behavior, attitude perception, etc. (Danish Habib & Attiq, 2020; Yoon et al., 2016).

## **2.4 Sales Skills**

Researchers have inadequate knowledge in finding the relationship between a salesperson's SS and a salesperson's PER and they still have no answer as, to what skill specifically is more central to measuring the salesperson's PER, further researchers don't have a definite answer, whether different skills are necessary for different situations (Sindi & Hamas, 2020). As mentioned earlier, in a sales context, salespeople need some basic skills to achieve effective results, these skills can be categorized as interpersonal skills like communication, the second is salesmanship skills like presentation skills and the third one is technical skills like product knowledge, territory knowledge, etc. (Ben Amor, 2019). Researchers also tried to find out the determinants of PER at the micro level e.g., consultation and negotiation skills used by salespeople to achieve sales outcomes. Researchers argued that SS is all about how certain tasks are performed effectively related to sales jobs, without having prior knowledge of SS, salespersons cannot achieve sales targets. SS can also be improved through a training process; therefore, organizations spend enormous resources on training to develop skills in salespeople so that they can confidently interact with the customer. Salonen et al. (2021) revealed that the selling approach is different in low performers versus high performers e.g. low performers use an Indigenous/traditional selling style which is more standardized whereas high performers are more focused on the modernized way of selling to achieve the sales targets, similarly, salespeople who possess good SS, need more updated training to maintain those skills to ensure consistency in their work because on the other hand organizations expectations from that salespeople are higher than those who are a low performer.

Many researchers also examined SS from the buyer's perspective i.e., what buyers think or perceive the sales tactics used by the different salespeople. The study revealed that buyers react differently in different situations but often they closely observe the sales tactics of the seller, salespeople who are more focused on the product technique emphasize more on product demonstration, application, etc. on the other hand salespeople who are more focused on customer-focused selling technique emphasizes more on buyers' objections, a benefit approach (Rodriguez et al., 2023). Researchers believed that skilled salespeople have greater abilities to convince customers, while some researchers argued that PER also depends on other personality traits, like behavior and attitude, such as interpersonal and technical skills, furthermore, more skilled people, also have a greater level of CO, organizational commitment, etc. (Høgevold et al., 2023).

Scholars are also interested in investigating the interpersonal skills of salespeople because these skills also influence the PER, studies also suggest that interpersonal skills i.e. (regulation of emotions, rapport building, and social interaction) play an important role in PER. In today's customer-oriented selling environment, maintaining and building relationships with customers depends on salespeople's activities. (Khan et al., 2023, 2024). Although researchers have found different ways to measure sales PER, i.e., revenue generated, increase in market share, etc. however it has been found that rapport building in the sales context is considered important, because it shows the level of satisfaction and loyalty of customers (Rodriguez et al., 2023). Researchers argued that non-verbal conversation in buyer-seller interaction has also been significant, hence interpersonal skills allow salespeople to better understand customers' needs and enable salespeople to maintain long-term relationships with customers (Khan et al., 2023). The sales presentation is one of the most important aspects of buyer-seller interaction during a sales call; it is more challenging and needs some basic skills of a salesperson during a sales call. (Hu et al., 2024). SS can be categorized into three components, first is interpersonal skills related to salesperson communication skills, their way of communicating with the customer, how salespeople can cope with the conflicting situation, and whether they can resolve the conflict or not, second salesmanship skills or SS which describes how much salesperson is capable of delivering the presentation in front of customers, whether he/she can close the sale calls successfully, third is technical skills which relate to product knowledge, salespeople must know the complete knowledge of the product they are selling.

## **2.5 Salesperson's Performance**

Determining the measurement and effectiveness of salesforce PER has always been a vital research area (Kerr & Marcos-Cuevas, 2022). There are varied factors that influence salespeople's performance like the size of the territory assigned to salespeople and the workload given by salespeople to achieve the sales targets (Oliveira Santini et al., 2019). Besides, what will be the appropriate way to measure the salesforce PER always remains debatable among many researchers regarding the operationalization of PER i.e. behavioral and non-behavioral performances. (Hermawan et al., 2021). Although a little progress can be seen in this area but still a huge gap can be found in this particular area. The salesperson's ER, adaptive selling approach, and salesperson's CO also heavily influenced on salesperson's PER. (Høgevoid et al., 2023). Kidwell presented two approaches to quantity PER, perceived PER (which mainly relates to subjective aspects), and secondly, supervisors rate the PER of salespeople by comparison, which thing normally considered an objective aspect of measuring the PER.

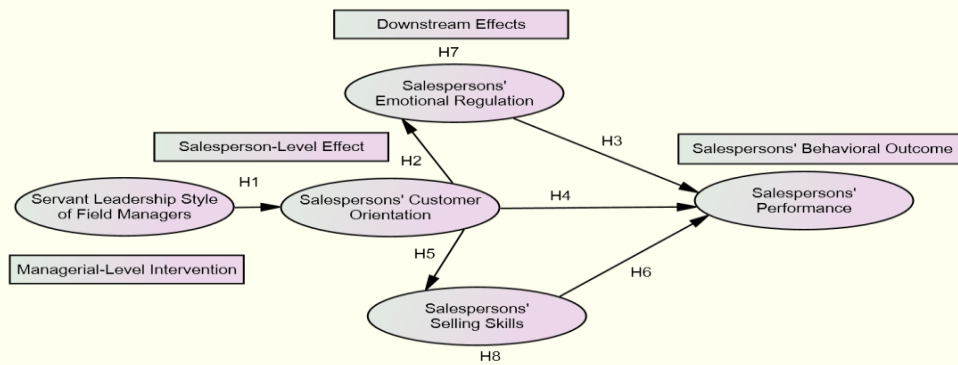
The scale of measuring the PER of salespeople in service-oriented organizations is different, salespeople's ability to perform their assigned tasks during their job is always a matter of interest for the top management/employers, Researchers believed that salespeople's PER in the B2B market is altogether different as compared to the salespeople's PER with direct consumers B2C because customer expectations and preferences are different in two different market situations. While examining the relationship between salespeople's CO and sales PER, many researchers suggest different variables that influence the relationship of both these two variables, salesperson's behavior and salesperson's ER are also important variables that affect the overall PER of an individual (Alnakhli et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2023). Salespeople consider supervisors, as a source of support, knowledge, etc., so their relationship is highly influenced by the PER of salespeople, a study found that more than 40% of job satisfaction depends on the relationship between salespeople and their supervisors (Kerr & Marcos-Cuevas, 2022). For many years, researchers have aimed at finding new ways/of modern selling, its procedures, activities, and of course its impact on PER, but researchers still have very limited knowledge, because less than 4% of scholarly articles are related to salesperson's PER, rest of the articles are mainly focused on marketing and other issues, although some researchers understand the importance of

salesforce PER but still very limited knowledge is available in this field (Rodriguez et al., 2023).

### 3. Research Model and Hypotheses

Figure 1 shows the study research model designed by the authors, and the hypotheses are stated thereafter.

**Figure 1: Authors' Research Model**



**H<sub>1</sub>:** SWS positively affects the salesforce CO.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** The salesforce's CO positively influences their ER.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** The salesforce's ER positively influences their PER.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** The salesforce's CO positively influences their PER.

**H<sub>5</sub>:** The salesforce's CO positively influences their SS.

**H<sub>6</sub>:** The salesforce's SS positively influences their PER.

**H<sub>7</sub>:** The salesforce's ER mediates the relationship between their CO and PER.

**H<sub>8</sub>:** The salesforce's SS mediates the relationship between their CO and PER.

### 4. Research Methodology

The pharmaceutical industry is a collection of National and Multinational firms. According to the Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Association (PPMA) data, there are about eight hundred pharmaceutical companies with proper marketing setups operating in the country. Data was collected from the pharmaceutical company's salespeople (cross-sectional). Deductive research with a quantitative approach and positivism paradigm was used to answer the research questions. Items for SWS were adopted from the study of Mulki et al. (2015) study. Items related to CO, ER, and SS were adopted from Singh and Venugopal's (2015) study. Items for salesperson's PER adopted from Behrman and Perreault's (1982) study. The questionnaire was distributed to salespersons of pharmaceutical firms based on stratified random sampling.

### 5. Normality Checks

Missing values and outliers were checked after the compilation of the data. The plot box technique was used to identify outliers. Furthermore, QQ plots were generated for cross-checking. The results of skewness and kurtosis also show that the data was normally distributed. Bivariate correlation values range from 0.39 to 0.78 for all four variables which refute the issue of multicollinearity among variables. In general, Validity indicates how sound the research was being conducted; face validity and content validity of the data are also examined in this research study. KMO and Bartlett's test is used to measure of sampling adequacy and suitability of the data. Researchers also found that KMO and Bartlett's values must be between the ranges of 0.6 to 1.0. All the KMO and Bartlett's values for SWS were 0.87, CO was 0.78, ER was 0.85, SS was 0.90, and PER was 0.62 respectively, which were acceptable.

**Table 1: Normality Statistics (N=256)**

Constructs	Min	Max	Skewness	SE	Kurtosis	SE	Tolerance	VIF
SWS	1.00	5.00	0.07	0.16	0.11	0.33	0.51	1.74
CO	1.17	5.00	0.40	0.16	0.92	0.33	0.72	1.26
ER	1.50	5.00	-0.59	0.16	0.85	0.33	0.53	1.62
SS	1.00	5.00	-0.44	0.16	0.35	0.33	0.51	1.65
PER	1.50	5.00	0.06	0.16	0.39	0.33	Dependent Variable	

**Notes:** SWS=Satisfaction with Supervisor; CO= Customer Orientation; ER= Emotional Regulation; SS= Sales Skills; PER= Performance.

Mean values of all the variables are positive ranging from 2.78 to 3.92. The standard deviation of SS is 0.77, which shows more variation in a data set of SS. The standard deviation of PER is 0.58 which indicates the consistency in data. Skewness shows how the distribution is symmetrical, while kurtosis tells us the sharpness and height of the peak related to the data. The above table presents; all the variables show that overall data is normal and the values of skewness and kurtosis are acceptable. Table 1 also presents the minimum and maximum values, Skewness, and kurtosis.

**Table 2: Discriminant Validity (N=256)**

Correlations					
	SWS	CO	ER	SS	PER
SWS	<b>0.78†</b>	0.52**	0.39**	0.51**	0.71**
CO		<b>0.79†</b>	0.53**	0.37**	0.78**
ER			<b>0.70†</b>	0.57**	0.65**
SS				<b>0.77†</b>	0.76**
PER					<b>0.79†</b>

**Notes:** SWS=Satisfaction with Supervisor; CO= Customer Orientation; ER= Emotional Regulation; SS= Sales Skills; PER= Performance; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; †√ (AVE) Values in the Diagonal

Table 2 shows a correlation of 0.52 between SWS and CO, a correlation of 0.53 between CO and ER is 0.53, and a correlation of 0.37 between CO and SS; the correlation between ER and PER is 0.65; a correlation between SS and PER is 0.76, hence above table shows a relationship between all the variables have a positive correlation.

**5.1 Measures Assessment (Confirmatory Factor Analysis)**

As shown in Table 3, values of CFA and factor loadings are satisfactorily high and significant, with a high model fit. Cronbach’s alpha for all the constructs exceeds the threshold value of 0.70, thus indicating good internal consistency and reliability.

**Table 3: Individual and Nested CFA Results (N=256)**

Individual Models		Unidimensionality					Convergent Validity			Reliability	
Constructs	Items	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	CFI	RMR	RMSEA	NFI	FL [min-max]	AVE	$\alpha$	CR
SWS	6	1.81	0.98	0.99	0.04	0.05	0.98	[0.75-0.88]	0.54	0.86	0.78
CO	6	1.85	0.98	0.99	0.04	0.05	0.98	[0.84-0.89]	0.58	0.84	0.86
ER	6	1.65	0.98	0.99	0.06	0.05	0.99	[0.65-0.78]	0.61	0.89	0.86
SS	6	2.92	0.98	0.99	0.05	0.08	0.98	[0.81-0.89]	0.63	0.93	0.90
PER	6	2.52	0.98	0.99	0.05	0.07	0.99	[0.64-0.71]	0.52	0.75	0.82
Nested Model		2.24	0.97	0.92	0.04	0.06	0.91	[0.68-0.79]	0.67	0.82	0.68



**Notes:** SWS=Satisfaction with Supervisor; CO= Customer Orientation; ER= Emotional Regulation; SS= Sales Skills; PER= Performance; GFI = Goodness of fit index; NFI = Normed fit index; CFI = Comparative fit index; RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation

Table 3 represents the constructs’ loading and model fit indices. Cronbach’s Alpha is the most common measure of internal consistency. Table 2 presents the reliability of statistics of variables that were included in the research instrument. The value of SWS and Cronbach’s Alpha is 0.86, which shows the internal consistency in scale. The value shows that the CO scale is reliable for research because its Cronbach’s Alpha is 0.75. The value of ER and Cronbach’s Alpha is 0.84 which shows the internal consistency in scale. The value of SS and Cronbach’s Alpha is 0.89 which shows the internal consistency in scale. Similarly, Cronbach’s Alpha value of PER is 0.93 which is quite acceptable and shows the internal consistency in scale.

**5.2 Descriptive of Demographics**

For quantitative analysis, the data has been collected from salespersons of different pharmaceutical firms. In this research, 256 questionnaires were used for analysis. All the 256 respondents were male. Results show 25.8% of respondents aged between 20-25 years. 26-30 i.e., 51.6%, and 31-40 years of range were 19.5%. More than 40 years were only 3.1%. Respondents had F.A., 69.1% respondents had a bachelor’s degree, 24.6% respondents had master’s degree holders, and 3.1% respondents were from other disciplines. Similarly, in this research study, 60% of respondents had experience of fewer than 5 years, 37.9% of respondents had experience between 6-15 years, and 5% of respondents had experience of 16-25 years.

**6. Hypotheses Testing**

Hypothesis 1 states that SWS has a positive effect on the salesperson’s CO. On the basis of the regression output presented in Table 4, the formulation is accepted.

**Table 4: Regression Output of CO w.r.t SWS (N=256)**

Variables	B	S. E	$\beta$	t	R <sup>2</sup>	F
Constant	1.52	0.13		11.117	0.27	96.44**
SWS	0.46	0.04	0.52	9.82**		

\*\* $p < .001$  SWS= Satisfaction with Supervisor

The output of Model<sub>2</sub> in Table 5 shows (F=100.52,  $\beta$ =0.53,  $p < 0.001$ , R<sup>2</sup>=0.28), while Model 3 also shows statistically significant results (F=188.97,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\beta$ = 0.65, R<sup>2</sup>=0.42). Hypothesis 4 states that CO positively influences salesperson PER. The Model<sub>1</sub> output in Table 5 confirms the influence of CO on salesperson’s PER (F=414.52,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\beta$ = 0.78, R<sup>2</sup>=0.62). Hypothesis 7 states that ER mediates the relationship between CO and PER.

**Table 5: Mediation of ER upon CO-PER Nexus (N=256)**

Model	IV	DV	B	SE	$\beta$	t	R <sup>2</sup>	F
Model <sub>1</sub>	CO	PER	0.74	0.03	0.78	8.75**	0.62	414.52**
Model <sub>2</sub>	CO	ER	0.52	0.05	0.53	16.12**	0.28	100.52**
Model <sub>3</sub>	ER	PER	0.62	0.04	0.65	3.15**	0.42	188.97**
Model <sub>4</sub>	CO	PER	0.58	0.03	0.61	14.99*	0.61	414.5**
	ER		0.31	0.03	0.32	7.97**		

\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.001$ . CO= Customer Orientation, PER= Performance, ER= Emotional Regulation

Mediation of ER on the nexus of CO and PER is confirmed by employing Baron and Kenny's (1986) approach. When CO and ER are regressed on PER, beta reduces from 0.78 to 0.61 but remains significant and R<sup>2</sup> increases from 0.62 to 0.69, showing that ER partially mediates the relationship of CO and PER. Hence hypothesis 7 is confirmed.

**Table 6: Mediation of SS on CO-PER Nexus (N=256)**

Model	IV	DV	B	SE	$\beta$	t	R <sup>2</sup>	F
Model <sub>1</sub>	CO	PER	0.74	0.03	0.78	8.75**	0.62	414.52**
Model <sub>2</sub>	CO	SS	0.46	0.07	0.37	10.68**	0.13	40.32**
Model <sub>3</sub>	SS	PER	0.58	0.03	0.76	8.72**	0.58	537.18**
Model <sub>4</sub>	CO	PER	0.55	0.02	0.58	24.86*	0.62	414.52**
	SS		0.41	0.01	0.54	23.31**	0.87	

\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < 0.001$ . CO= Customer Orientation, PER= Performance, SS= Sales Skills

In hypothesis 6 we predicted that SS has a positive effect on the salesperson's PER. Table 6 with the outcome of Model 3 presents statistically significant effects of SS (F=537.18,  $\beta$ =0.76,  $p < 0.001$ , R<sup>2</sup>=0.58) by SS. So, H<sub>6</sub> is accepted (F: 414.528,  $p < .01$ , beta: 0.78, R<sup>2</sup>: 0.62). When CO and SS are regressed on PER, beta reduces from 0.78 to 0.58 but remains significant and R square increases from 0.62 to 0.87 showing that SS partially mediates the relationship of CO and PER. Hence hypothesis 8 is also accepted.

**7. Conclusion**

At the organizational level, the customer is the focal point of all the marketing strategies that are established to maintain long-term relationships between firms and customers. In a sales context, salespeople are those, who take the responsibility to implement all marketing-related strategies and have a direct relationship with the customer, Salespeople are not only a source of increasing revenue but also serve as a bridge between the company and its clients because they have a complete knowledge about customer preferences and changing trends. Since many companies are doing business in the market embracing technological advancement and dynamic market trends, a firm need to make strategies according to market demand. According to the marketing concept, firms try to satisfy the needs and want of the customer and it is only possible by having a skillful salesforce that enables them to meet the challenges of the market. In our study, we thoroughly discussed the role of supervisors/managers in sales-oriented organizations and how they can impact the process of CO.

The role of a manager is very important especially for sales-oriented organizations because a supervisor is not only a source of knowledge and motivation but he/she also gives feedback to the higher management. This study delineated the fact, that CO in salespeople helps them to understand customer needs and their satisfaction level and enables them to provide those services that are best suited for them. Among many other factors, customer-oriented salespeople are more sensitive to controlling and managing their emotions, findings suggest that more customer-oriented salespeople have strong ER and have a greater ability to understand customers' emotions. Findings also suggest that SWS correlates 0.52 with CO, in other words, the efficiency of CO highly depends on the relationship of salespersons with their supervisors. It is suggested in our study, that customer-orientation enhanced SS, and the correlation between CO and SS is 0.37, which shows that customer-oriented salespeople are more knowledgeable and more skillful in their sales job, and they can better understand the customers' requirements. The process of CO enables the salespersons to improve their SS; similarly, customer orientation also enables salespeople to control his/her own emotions and customers as well, however, customer-oriented salespeople invest more efforts in understanding

customers' emotions and try to respond to their emotions positively, that helps them to successfully negotiate and close the sales call. Our finding also indicates that CO correlates 0.53 with ER, which shows a significant relationship between CO and ER. Our results also indicate that these two factors partially mediate between CO and the PER of salespeople.

## **8. Practical Implications**

Salesforce plays a key role in implementing business strategies; therefore, if any organization wants to grow in their business, they have to invest an amount in training and development of their salesforce to make strategies that lead towards the best interest of customers. In this inflexible competition, firms need to make strategies well-suited to customers; therefore, organizations need to know about the following questions: what are the preferences of customers? How the customers' wants can be satisfied? How do salespeople successfully serve as a bridge between customers and companies? What are the expectations of customers toward salespeople, and how they (salespeople) can achieve those expectations? What could be the best strategies that sales managers need to follow to make a strong relationship between their salesforce and supervisors? Is ER playing any role during a sales call? Whether SS improves the PER of salespeople? How does CO help to control emotions and improve SS during the sales process? Is a customer-oriented or sales-oriented approach suitable?

This study thoroughly answered all these questions for sales executives, supervisors, and management of the firms. This study helps sales managers to recruit the best salesforce that can meet the customers' expectations and organizational requirements as well. This study also suggested that sales managers not only evaluate the PER of their salesforce by measuring sales outcomes, but it can also be possible by knowing customers' feedback, satisfaction level of customers, loyalty of the customers, etc.

## **9. Study Limitations and Future Research Directions**

In terms of the sample size, twenty firms were contacted to measure the constructs, so the results should be carefully considered while interpreting, and applying to other contexts. This research study is cross-sectional, so future studies could well investigate and examine the hypothesized relationships and constructs in a longitudinal setting. Furthermore, there are so many other factors that may well influence the PER, and future research might add more variables to the model tested in this study.

## **References**

- Alnakhli, H., Inyang, A. E., & Itani, O. S. (2021). The Role of Salespeople in Value Co-Creation and Its Impact on Sales Performance. *Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing*, 28(4), 347-367. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1051712X.2021.2012079>
- Baber, R., Kaurav, R. P. S., & Paul, J. (2020). Impact of individual market orientation on selling and customer orientation. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 28(4), 288-303. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254X.2018.1489880>
- Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(6), 1173.
- Behrman, D. N., & Perreault Jr, W. D. (1982). Measuring the performance of industrial salespersons. *Journal of Business Research*, 10(3), 355-370. doi:[http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0148-2963\(82\)90039-X](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0148-2963(82)90039-X)
- Ben Amor, N. E. H. (2019). What Skills Make a Salesperson Effective? An Exploratory Comparative Study among Car Sales Professionals. *International Business Research*, 12(11), 76.

<https://doi.org/10.5539/ibr.v12n11p76>

- Bidisha Banerjee & Sudin Bag. (2022). Relationship between creativity, adaptive selling, and sales performance: The moderating role of job satisfaction. *Asian Academy of Management Journal*, 27(2). <https://doi.org/10.21315/aamj2022.27.2.5>
- Cavazos-Arroyo, J., & Puente-Diaz, R. (2023). Antecedents and Consequences of Three Selling Strategies in Social Enterprises. *Review of Business Management*, 25(1), 2-17. <https://doi.org/10.7819/rbgn.v25i1.4210>
- Chang, W.-P., & Wang, C.-H. (2023). Factors Related to Nurse Satisfaction with Supervisor Leadership. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(5), 3933. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20053933>
- Conde, R., Prybutok, V., & Thompson, K. (2022). Bringing theory to practice: Examining the role of pay for performance, intrinsic motivation, and culture on sales agent tenure. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 30(3), 374-393.
- Danish Habib, M., & Attiq, S. (2020). A model and empirical examination of influencing factors of customer satisfaction and service performance through interactional quality. *Business & Economic Review*, 12(1), 119-138. <https://doi.org/10.22547/BER/12.1.6>
- Dugan, R., Ubal, V. O., & Scott, M. L. (2022). Sales well-being: a salesperson-focused framework for individual, organizational, and societal well-being. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 1-19.
- Good, V., Hughes, D. E., Kirca, A. H., & McGrath, S. (2022). A self-determination theory-based meta-analysis on the differential effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on salesperson performance. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 50(3), 586-614.
- Grant, K., Nasution, H., & Pickett, B. (2020). Customer Orientation's Vital Importance to Achieve Sales Effectiveness: *Proceedings of the International Conference on Business and Management Research (ICBMR 2020)*. The International Conference on Business and Management Research (ICBMR 2020), Depok, West Java, Indonesia. <https://doi.org/10.2991/aebmr.k.201222.010>
- Hamzah, N., Maelah, R., & Saleh, O. M. (2022). The Moderating Effect of Human Capital on the Relationship between Enterprise Risk Management and Organization Performance. *International Journal of Business and Society*, 23(1), 614-632.
- Hamzah, M. I., Othman, A. K., & Hassan, F. (2016). Moderating Role of Customer Orientation on the Link between Market Oriented Behaviors and Proactive Service Performance among Relationship Managers in the Business Banking Industry. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 224, 109-116. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.05.412>
- Hermawan, A. A., Bachtiar, E., Wicaksono, P. T., & Sari, N. P. (2021). Levers of Control and Managerial Performance: The Importance of Belief Systems. *Gadjah Mada International Journal of Business*, 23(3), 237. <https://doi.org/10.22146/gamaijb.62612>
- Høgevold, N., Rodriguez, R., Svensson, G., & Otero-Neira, C. (2023). Salespeople's sales performance skills in B2B of services firms – a cross-industrial study. *European Business Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-03-2023-0089>
- Hu, M., Khan, F. A., Quddoos, M. U., Wu, X., & Rafique, A. (2024). The interplay between behavior-based salesforce control systems and salesperson's creative performance: A closer look at salesperson's work engagement. *Current Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-05591-0>
- Kerr, P. D., & Marcos-Cuevas, J. (2022). The interplay between objective and subjective measures of salesperson performance: Towards an integrated approach. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 42(3), 225-242. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08853134.2022.2044344>
- Khan, F. A., Ahmad, M., & Saeed, T. (2023). A new perspective on behavior-based sales control system and salespersons' job outcomes: An outbound pharmaceutical sales perspective. *International*

*Journal of Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Marketing*, 17(4), 450-475.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPHM-08-2022-0084>

- Khan, F. A., Quddoos, M. U., Baloch, N. I., Adeel, M., Siddiqi, A. A., & Amin, M. S. (2024). Does Field Managers' Interactional Monitoring Style Asphyxiate or Stimulate Salespersons' Performance? An Explanation Through Dual Mediation Process. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 1-28.
- Kidwell, B., Hasford, J., Turner, B., Hardesty, D. M., & Zablah, A. R. (2021). Emotional Calibration and Salesperson Performance. *Journal of Marketing*, 85(6), 141-161. doi:10.1177/0022242921999603
- Leonidou, L. C., Aykol, B., Fotiadis, T. A., Zeriti, A., & Christodoulides, P. (2019). The Role of Exporters' Emotional Intelligence in Building Foreign Customer Relationships. *Journal of International Marketing*, 27(4), 58-80. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069031X19876642>
- Limbu, Y. B., & Huhmann, B. A. (2022). Ethical Issues in Pharmaceutical Marketing: A Systematic Review and Future Research Agenda. *Journal of Global Marketing*, 35(1), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08911762.2021.1949084>
- Mallin, M. L., Hancock, T. D., Pullins, E. B., & Gammoh, B. S. (2022). Salesperson's perceived personal identification with supervisor and the relationship with turnover intention and performance: a mediated motivation model. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 1-22.
- Malek, S. L., Sarin, S., & Jaworski, B. J. (2022). A measurement model of the dimensions and types of informal organizational control: An empirical test in a B2B sales context. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 39(2), 415-442.
- Morgan, C., & Zane, D. M. (2022). Practitioner Perspectives on Key Challenges in Pharmaceutical Marketing and Future Research Opportunities. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 41(4), 368-382. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07439156221112304>
- Mulki, J. P., Caemmerer, B., & Heggde, G. S. (2015). Leadership style, salesperson's work effort and job performance: the influence of power distance. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 35(1), 3-22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08853134.2014.958157>
- Oliveira Santini, F., Vieira, V. A., Ladeira, W. J., & Sampaio, C. H. (2019). Behaviour-Based and Outcome-Based Control Systems: A Meta-Analytic Study. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences / Revue Canadienne Des Sciences de l'Administration*, 36(2), 149-162. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cjas.1486>
- Pap, Z., Vîrgă, D., & Notelaers, G. (2021). Perceptions of Customer Incivility, Job Satisfaction, Supervisor Support, and Participative Climate: A Multi-level Approach. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 713953. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.713953>
- Qureshi, M. A. (2017). Impact of Supervisor Support on Job Satisfaction: A Moderating Role of Fairness Perception. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 7(3).
- R.M., H., Sivakumaran, B., & Jacob, J. (2019). The moderating role of sales experience in adaptive selling, customer orientation, and job satisfaction in a unionized setting. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 34(8), 1724-1735. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JBIM-08-2018-0233>
- Rodriguez, R., Høgevold, N.M., Otero-Neira, C. and Svensson, G. (2023), "The direct effect of B2B sellers' skills on relative and absolute sales performance: a dual measurement approach", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 36 No. 1, pp. 64-85. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-03-2022-0083>
- Salonen, A., Terho, H., Böhm, E., Virtanen, A., & Rajala, R. (2021). Engaging a product-focused sales force in solution selling: Interplay of individual- and organizational-level conditions. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 49(1), 139-163. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-020-00729-z>
- Sindi, Y., & Hamas, Y. (2020). SALESPERSON SKILLS IN BEAUTY STORES FROM CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION.
- Singh, R., & Venugopal, P. (2015). The impact of salesperson customer orientation on sales performance via mediating mechanism. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 30(5), 594-607.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/JBIM-08-2012-0141>

Tevfik, U., & Guven, O. (2017). The mediating role of job satisfaction on the relationship between teachers' perceptions of supervisor support and job performances. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 9(7), 84-90. <https://doi.org/10.5897/IJEAPS2017.0519>

Vieira, V. A., Jones, E., Faia, V. d., Silva, J. D., & Negreiros, L. F. (2022). The moderating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between control systems and sales performance. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 1-22.

Wierzbiński, B., Zaborek, P., Wosiek, M., & Surmacz, T. (2023). Knowledge management orientation as a driver of competitive performance: Evidence from Polish SMEs in the aviation industry. *Entrepreneurial Business and Economics Review*, 11(1), 93-112. <https://doi.org/10.15678/EBER.2023.110105>

Windon, S. R. (2020). The Relationship between Satisfaction with Supervisor and Demographic Variables among Extension Program Assistants. *Journal of Human Sciences and Extension*. <https://doi.org/10.54718/XQGQ5060>

Wisker, Z. L., & Poulis, A. (2014). Emotional Intelligence – Sales Performance Relationship: A Mediating Role of Adaptive Selling Behaviour. *International Journal of Management and Economics*, 43(1), 32-52. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijme-2015-0002>

Wisker, Z. L., & Poulis, A. (2017). EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SALES PERFORMANCE. A MYTH OR REALITY? *International Journal of Business and Society*, 16(2). <https://doi.org/10.33736/ijbs.563.2015>

Yeo, C., Hur, C., & Ji, S. (2019). The Customer Orientation of Salesperson for Performance in Korean Market Case: A Relationship between Customer Orientation and Adaptive Selling. *Sustainability*, 11(21), 6115. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11216115>

Yoon, J.-H., Jeung, D., & Chang, S.-J. (2016). Does High Emotional Demand with Low Job Control Relate to Suicidal Ideation among Service and Sales Workers in Korea? *Journal of Korean Medical Science*, 31(7), 1042. <https://doi.org/10.3346/jkms.2016.31.7.1042>

**Appendix-1**

**Survey Questionnaire**

		2	3	4	5			
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>		<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>			
SWS1	1	My supervisor/manager has always been fair in dealing with me.		1	2	3	4	5
SWS2	2	I give suggestions and ideas to my supervisor/manager during decision-making.		1	2	3	4	5
SWS3	3	My supervisor appreciates my better performance.		1	2	3	4	5
SWS4	4	My supervisor fulfills his promises.		1	2	3	4	5
SWS5	5	My supervisor guides us, on how tasks should be carried out.		1	2	3	4	5
SWS6	6	My supervisor has some definite standards of performance.		1	2	3	4	5

CO1	1	Customer Satisfaction is my priority, I try to achieve my goal by satisfying customer		1	2	3	4	5
CO2	2	I try to find out customer’s needs during my sales call.		1	2	3	4	5
CO3	3	I offer my product that is best suited to the customer’s problem.		1	2	3	4	5
CO4	4	I try to find out what kind of products will be most helpful to the customer.		1	2	3	4	5
CO5	5	As a salesperson, I try to have a customer’s best interest in mind.		1	2	3	4	5

CO6	6	I try to correctly answer a customer's questions regarding my products.	1	2	3	4	5
-----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

ER1	1	I have control over my emotions during the sales call.	1	2	3	4	5
ER2	2	I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others.	1	2	3	4	5
ER3	3	When I am in a positive mood, I can come up with new ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
ER4	4	I can understand the facial expressions of others.	1	2	3	4	5
ER5	5	I leave the difficult tasks due to the chances of failure.	1	2	3	4	5
ER6	6	I can understand the feelings of others just by looking at them.	1	2	3	4	5

SS1	1	I can fulfill customer's needs.	1	2	3	4	5
SS2	2	I can maintain good relationships with customers.	1	2	3	4	5
SS3	3	I have excellent product knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5
SS4	4	I can close the sales call successfully.	1	2	3	4	5
SS5	5	I have a good knowledge of customer's profile.	1	2	3	4	5
SS6	6	I have an excellent knowledge of competitors' products and their sales policies	1	2	3	4	5

PER1	1	I can generate higher revenue in my territory.	1	2	3	4	5
PER2	2	I can quickly generate sales of a new company product.	1	2	3	4	5
PER3	3	I can increase the market share of the company in my territory.	1	2	3	4	5
PER4	4	I can successfully achieve my sales target.	1	2	3	4	5
PER5	5	I can identify and sell products to major customers in my territory.	1	2	3	4	5
PER6	6	I responsibly use the company's resources (Gifting, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5