



## **Convergence in Multidimensional, Interdisciplinary, and Inter-Organizational Approaches in B2B Sales Performance Evaluation Research: Systematic Literature Review**

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### **Abstract**

#### **Objective**

The aim of this study is to systematically study the research literature in the field of B2B sales performance, identify research gaps and propose suggestions accordingly. Nowadays, the evaluation of B2B sales performance as a valuable consequence of a job to achieve competitive advantage has been increasingly considered by researchers. In recent years, sales performance has become a systemic, multidimensional, and inter-organizational approach in terms of changing the nature of sales including the centralized and integrated long-term strategic areas of management and trans-organizational behavior. Sales performance has been proposed and various studies have been conducted in organizations to understand multidimensional phenomena related to seller performance, but there is no research to systematically review seller's performance based on different sales approaches and propose a comprehensive picture of the related literature. For this purpose, the literature and studies conducted in this field need to be evaluated and reviewed systematically.

## **Methodology**

This research is among secondary studies based on systematic review. The articles published between 1918 and the beginning of 2019 were analyzed. 514 articles were investigated through examining the keywords in the related databases and according to the predetermined criteria. Quick review of the abstracts of the target articles helped delete the irrelevant articles, and then the content of the articles was quickly reviewed, and finally the fulltext of 66 articles were selected to be reviewed. In the stage of extracting evidence, the contents of the articles were carefully studied and analyzed based on the research questions. In the end, in the analysis stage and based on each research question, the results of each article were summarized in tables and then each table was evaluated and classified. In order to confirm and complete the seller's performance literature and extract the dimensions, the antecedents and the consequences of the seller's performance as well as in-depth and semi-structured exploratory interviews with experts were also conducted.

## **Findings**

Since the 1910s, various studies have been conducted on the dimensions and components of the seller's performance, its antecedents and consequences on an individual and uni-dimensional level. Moreover, since the 1990s, researches have examined the antecedents and consequences of the seller's performance at various, multidimensional and inter-organizational levels and there is a convergence among the components of the seller's performance, measurement method, its antecedents and consequences in moving towards systemic, inter-disciplinary and inter-organizational thinking. In studies regarding sales performance since 1918, there have been four different approaches over time. The first approach is the uni-dimensional approach which considers the seller's performance at the individual level and focuses on the exchange that considers the performance of the result. The second approach is the uni-dimensional approach which is based on relationship sales and, in addition to the performance of the result, considers the relationship performance in the buyer-seller relationship. The purpose of sales in this approach is to communicate effectively with customers. The third approach is the strategic approach to sales performance which is based on participatory sales and the seller participates in the strategic decisions of the organization and acts as a consultant and guide to customers. The final approach is a multidimensional and holistic approach based on organizational sales, and the seller's performance is examined in creating shared value between different actors within the organization and outside the organization (not just customers) and inter-organizational coordination and behaviors.

## **Conclusion**

Through measuring sales performance simultaneously with the results of the sales organization, sales behaviors with internal and external actors and cultural evaluations, trust and shared interests in the organization's social and formal interactions are possible. Sales

performance is influenced by various factors such as role variables, motivation variables, competence and ability, individual characteristics, organizational variables, environmental variables, skill levels, seller's behaviors (adaptive sales, customer-centeredness, value-based sales, and ethical-based sales), sales technology, personality variables, inter-duty and inter-organizational activities of the seller, and the seller's attitude and knowledge. Among them, in recent years, personality variables, seller's understanding, sales technologies, shared value creation behaviors, coordination and inter-organizational relationships have attracted a lot of attention. It is important to know how different personality traits of salespersons and the required social and competitive intelligence in today's business environment affect sales performance. Research has shown that if sellers perform well, they will have more job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and loyalty to the organization, and their participation in the organization's strategic decisions will increase and they will be effective in creating a sales-based organizational culture. The selling performance and its measurement in a fixed and specific situation is very complex. Different sales positions should be considered in evaluation of performance, and it is likely that measuring performance in a particular situation may not be applicable to another situation.

**Keywords:** Seller performance, Sales performance, Mult-dimensional approach; Systematic review.

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