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Systematic review of determinants of sales performance:
Verbeke et al.'s (2011) classification extended[1]

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Abstract

Purpose – Considering recent changes in sales practices, such as the sales role becoming more strategic, increased reliance on technology for sales activities, increased stress from adding technological responsibilities to the sales role, and decreased avenues of social support (such as traditional forms of community) to cope with work-related stressors, there is a need to reconsider Verbeke *et al.*'s (2011) classification scheme of determinants of sales performance which was based on literature published before these critical changes became apparent. We therefore conducted a systematic review of sales performance research published during 1983–2018 to propose an extension to Verbeke *et al.*'s (2011) classification.

Design/methodology/approach – We followed a systematic approach to the literature review in five sequential steps—search, selection, quality control, extraction, and synthesis—as suggested by Tranfield *et al.* (2003). 261 peer-reviewed journal papers from 36 different journals were selected for extraction and synthesis.

Findings – Our findings make the following additions to the classification: (1) strategic and nonstrategic activities as a new category, (2) technological drivers of sales performance, and (3) job-related psychosocial factors as a broader category to replace role perceptions. Derived from job demand–control–support model, three subcategories within the category of job-related psychosocial factors are psychological demands (encompasses role perceptions and digital-age stressors such as technostress creators), job control, and work-related social support.

Research implications – We identify that manager's role in facilitating technology skills, providing informal social support to remote or virtual salespeople using technology, and encouraging strategic behaviors in salespeople are future research areas having good potential. Understanding and building positive psychology aspects in salespeople and their effect on sales performance is another promising area.

Practical implications – Newly added technological drivers draw attention of sales firms towards the influence of technology and its' skilful usage on salesperson performance. Newly added strategic activities makes a case for the importance of strategic participation in salesperson performance.

Originality/value – This review extends Verbeke *et al.'s* (2011) classification scheme to include recent changes that sales profession and literature have undergone.

Keywords – Salesperson performance; Sales management; Sales performance; Systematic Review; Sales

Paper type – Literature review

1. Introduction

The sales environment has witnessed unprecedented changes in the last decade due to changes in technology, competition and consumer preferences. Traditionally the sales process was linear, with buyers and sellers as stakeholders (Hartmann *et al.*, 2018), but changes in the sales environment have caused the process to become nonlinear as several stakeholders influence decisions and put pressure on the salesforce (Sheth and Sisodia, 2014). In recent times the sales function has developed its focus from value delivery to value creation (Zhang and Glynn, 2015). Crises have accentuated these changes by reducing the complexity of the sales process and adopting newer technology, selling remotely and decentralizing the selling function. Furthermore, information overload, complex operations, blurred role clarity and job insecurity have led to increased stress among the salesforce (Tarafdar *et al*., 2014). Long work hours have led to salespeople embracing spirituality (Chawla and Guda, 2017) and paying attention to their psychological wellbeing (Lyngdoh *et al*., 2018).

In the light of these changes, this paper explores whether earlier frameworks require some extension to make them more contemporary, specifically that of Verbeke *et al.* (2011) on sales performance (for both B2B and B2C contexts). Two major reasons were identified for extending the framework. Firstly, several scholars consider that the broad spectrum of components and encompassing variables identified in Verbeke *et al.'s* (2011) meta-analytic framework needs to be extended to reflect changes in the sales environment (Herjanto and Franklin, 2019; Lyngdoh and Guda, 2019; Rollins *et al*., 2014; Evans *et al.,* 2012). Secondly, changes in the sales environment have led to new variables influencing sales performance, notably technology skills, strategic activities, and work-related support systems. These do not

feature in Verbeke *et al.'s* classification into six categories ("aptitude," "environment," "motivation," "personal," "role perceptions" and "skills"), thus the necessity for additional variables.

Recently, Herjanto and Franklin (2019) reviewed the literature and proposed a framework with a focus on B2B, but they did not consider the changing nature of sales jobs from tactical to strategic, and the search for informal social support due to work-related stress and remote selling, while thematizing their collection of determinants from papers. Nevertheless, there is a significant body of research that can be added to their framework and this research paper is one such endeavor. This paper is a synthesis of systematically reviewed empirical evidence on the determinants of sales performance in B2B and B2C for the period 1983–2018. The results of this study extend Verbeke *et al.'s* framework with newer categories/sub-categories such as "technology factors," "work-related social support," "technology skills," and "strategic activities". These additions not only make Verbeke *et al.'s* framework contemporary and thus enliven the sales performance research, but also provide the scope for comprehensive managerial action by considering relevant contemporary influences on sales performance.

2. Sales performance

Sales performance has been defined in various ways. It is typically defined as effectiveness, referring to the evaluation of objective outcomes such as sales volume, market share, percentage of quota achieved, number of new customers added, and so on. A second line of thought defines sales performance as "behavior that has been evaluated in terms of its contribution to the goals of organization" (Walker *et al.,* 1979, pp. 33, 35). Researchers favoring this perspective argue that, since the achievement of the quantitative outcome depends upon certain factors outside the control of the salesperson (such as market-related factors), effectiveness may not be the right measure. Sales performance can be measured

using subjective self- or manager-reported behavior-based measures. A third line of thought conceptualizes sales performance as consisting of both effectiveness and behaviors (Anderson and Oliver, 1987). Our review study considered papers following any of the above approaches and thus brings a broader understanding of sales performance.

Our selected papers for this review contained a variety of sales performance measures that are organized using several criteria to provide a structured understanding. Some of the commonly used criteria are measurement method used: objective vs. subjective, self-report vs. manager-report, and single-item vs. multi-item, and sales type: relational vs. outcome. New criteria used in this study are performance orientation: internally oriented measures vs. market-based measures (e.g., sales volume and customer satisfaction, respectively, as measures used in Miao and Evans (2013)), comparison with peers: absolute measures with no peer comparison vs. relative (e.g., number of orders and overall rank in salesforce, respectively, as measures used in Pettijohn *et al*. (1999)), input (resources) use considered or not: effectiveness vs. efficiency (e.g., dollar sales and profit margins, respectively, as measures used in Groza *et al.* 2016)), time: short-term vs. long-term (e.g., quarterly profit and annual profit, respectively, as measures used in Matsuo and Kusumi (2002)), type of account sales: new vs. current account (e.g., Eggert and Serdaroglu (2011)), type of product sales: new vs. current (e.g., Panagopoulos and Ogilvie (2015)), and direction of change: positive vs. negative (e.g., number of new accounts obtained and accounts lost, respectively, as measures used in Avila and Fern (1986)). Different combinations of sales performance measures could be used if they suit a firm's context. For instance, a firm introducing a new product may want to use both current and new product sales along with objective measures such as sales volume or sales growth. With the advent of new technology and emerging mediums such as sales CRM tools and cloud-based applications (i.e., Salesforce) to capture the variety of performance

data, using multiple measures may become a popular and reliable way to study sales performance.

3. Methodology

We undertook a protocol-based (i.e., systematic) approach to the literature review in five sequential steps—search, selection, quality control, extraction, and synthesis—as suggested by Tranfield *et al.* (2003). This approach is expected to yield reproducible, objective, transparent, unbiased, and rigorous results.

Search

To assess and modify Verbeke *et al.'s* (2011) categorization in the light of recent changes in sales literature, we focused our search for research papers on salesperson performance from 1983–2018. The search excluded the following publication types: books, book reviews, conference papers, doctoral dissertations, unpublished working papers, special issue introductions, editorials, forewords, brief commentaries, and practitioner publications.

Databases for articles included ABIInform, Blackwell Synergy, Business Source Premier, EconLit, EBSCO JSTOR, Emerald, Google Scholar, PsychInfo, ScienceDirect, SwetsWise, Taylor and Francis, and Wiley. The keywords used for searching within the databases included "performance," "sales," "sales performance," "salesperson performance," "salesperson effectiveness," and "selling". We then moved on to extracting articles using the same keywords from 14 prominent marketing and sales journals that publish the majority of research in the sales area (William and Plouffe, 2007). These journals included: *European Journal of Marketing (EJM), International Journal of Research in Marketing (IJRM), Industrial Marketing Management (IMM), Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (JAMS), Journal of Business Ethics (JBE), Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*

(JBIM), Journal of Business Research (JBR), Journal of Marketing (JM), Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice (JMTP), Journal of Marketing Research (JMR), Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management (JPSSM), Journal of Retailing (JR), Marketing Letters (ML), Marketing Science (MS), and Psychology and Marketing (PM). Finally, we searched the citations of seminal papers on salesperson performance and included those that contained salesperson performance in their conceptual or empirical models.

The search process resulted in 485 peer reviewed journal articles.

Selection

261 out of 485 peer reviewed journal papers from 36 different journals qualified for further analysis. Two criteria were used: (1) the paper should be empirically based, measuring individual salesperson performance, (2) the paper should have reported at least one significant determinant of a salesperson's performance.

Strategies for quality assessment and data extraction

All the studies were published in double-blind peer review process driven journals. While all the 36 journals were in SCOPUS and EBSCO databases, 34 journals were listed in Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) rankings of management journals; thus, ensuring reasonable quality.

For data extraction, two of the authors designed a coding template in Excel as a method of documentation, with the following coding variables: author(s), year of publication, title, journal, article type, abstract, theoretical perspective, direct or indirect determinant(s), measure of salesperson performance used, etc. Figure 1 shows the timeline distribution of the selected 261 papers categorized by journal. At first glance the figure confirms our hunch that many of the papers published are in sales outlets like JPSSM and IMM, followed by marketing journals like JAMS, JMTP and JM.

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Figure 1

Synthesis

Determinants extracted via our coding scheme from 261 journal papers were grouped together into categories on the basis of conceptual similarities by one of the authors, who is an experienced researcher in the sales field. Another author scrutinized the same material and there were no major disagreements. Several steps were taken for the identified determinants to be placed into respective categories and further synthesis of the papers. Initially fitment of the determinants from papers into the categories and sub-categories was considered on the basis of classification given by Verbeke *et al.* (2011) (Table 1). As and when determinants not in fitment with any of the categories or sub-categories were found, a new category was created. For example, determinants like value-based selling and customer lifetime value orientation, having no fitment to any categories, were grouped into a new category— "strategic and non-strategic activities" (see Table 1). Similarly, skill-based determinants, such as sales technology orientation and technology-enabled innovation, went into a new sub-category—"technology skills" (see Table 1). In case the existing categories became expanded with new determinants, they were appended using appropriate theoretical frameworks. For example, Karasek's extended demands-control-support model was used to replace the "role perceptions" category with job-related psychosocial factors with three sub-categories: "psychological demands" (including role perceptions), "job control," and "work-related support". In case the sub-categories represented significantly disparate features, had overwhelming support of undergoing changes, or had a dependence relationship that impacted performance differently, they were placed into separate categories. For example, "external environment" and "internal environment" were put up as two separate categories,

owing to three factors: (1) the significantly different nature of the two forces, (2) dramatic changes in the customers, competitors, and ethical/legal environment for the former, and internal structures and processes in the latter (Jones *et al.,* 2005), and (3) dependency of the internal forces on external forces in order to adapt to the latter. Further, similar to Verbeke *et al.* (2011), if there was either no determinant from our extracted list or a conceptual overlap, the sub-category was deleted.

Table 1

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4. Findings

The systematic and objective approach to synthesis resulted in retaining four categories— "aptitude," "motivation," "personal factors," and "skill"—from Verbeke *et al.'s* (2011) classification. The synthesis also divides environmental factors into external environment and internal environment, replaces the "role perceptions" category with the new and broader category of "job-related psychosocial factors," and adds an eighth category—"strategic and non-strategic activities". The extended classification retains sub-categories in the following categories: "aptitude," "motivation," and "personal factors". While the extension also retains the sub-categories for "skill" and" internal environment factors" categories, it adds a new sub-category to each—namely, "technological skills" and "technological factors," respectively.

Table 1 highlights how sales literature has evolved post Verbeke *et al*. (2011). Table 1 helps establish the relevance of our classification. Table 2 presents the definitions of the categories and sub-categories under the extended classification scheme, along with a list of determinants classified under the categories and sub-categories. In the following section, we explain the

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classification scheme and how literature has evolved since the publication of Verbeke *et al.* (2011) with reference to the extended classification.

Table 2

Classification scheme

Aptitude. Out of Verbeke *et al.'s* (2011) four sub-categories; only three—"dispositional traits," "personal concerns" and "cognitive aptitudes"—had determinants and the fourth, "identity," had not featured any determinant. We make similar observations in this paper. Table 1 indicates that studying the effect of dispositional traits and cognitive aptitude on sales performance is not revived, although there has been a significant increase in studies investigating the relationships between personal concerns and sales performance. It implies that personality concepts contextualized in time, place and/or role such as motives, values, defense mechanisms, coping strategies, life tasks, and attachment styles, are increasingly being studied to help explain sales performance. Personal concerns speak to what people want, desire, and strive for, usually at specific stages of their lives or in particular domains of action, and what strategies or plans they make to get there or to avoid getting what they don't want (McAdams, 1995). Personality concepts like Machiavellianism, which requires manipulating others for one's own success, and self-monitoring, which involves engaging in impression management in social settings, have received attention recently.

External environment. Jaworski (1988) divided the environmental context of an organization into three factors: macro, operating and internal. Macro-environment represents the political, socio-cultural, legal, economic and technological conditions. Operating environment represents the customers, suppliers and interest groups with whom the firm directly deals.

Both the macro and the operating environment represent factors external to the organization, which together can be called the external environment. Determinants classified under the "external environment" category, as shown in Table 2, include broader environmental uncertainty concepts (such as environmental dynamism) than those that relate to a single force acting on the company (such as customer perceptions and attitudes towards the company's promotional programs).

The external environment has been changing dramatically with rapid advances in technology, significant shifts in buyer behavior, substantial changes in the legal-ethical environment, and digitization of industries and competition. These changes in the environment are posing challenges to sales organizations and testing salespeople's capacity to maintain and grow their sales performance more than ever. For instance, advances in communication technology have heightened customer expectations of salespeople's speed of response and thus overwhelm salespeople trying to balance the multitude of demands (Tarafdar *et al*., 2014). In addition, digitization has changed the purchase process with about 50-80% of B2B buyers' decisions being completed online even before contacting the salesperson (Gerard *et al*., 2012). This forces sales organizations to re-think their sales strategy. For example, strict legal regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), enforced in May 2018 by the European Parliament for data privacy and protection, has paralyzed outbound selling in Europe, thereby putting tremendous pressure on salespeople to re-think their ways of prospecting (Silva, 2018). It is because of the size of the impact that the external environment has on the organizations, and its capacity to force organizations to adjust their systems and processes, that it was carved out as a separate category.

Internal environment. Verbeke *et al*. (2011) divided internal environment into two sub-categories: the first includes firm level characteristics such as culture, identity and

capabilities, and the second includes managerial factors. We retain the first two sub-categories and add a third—"technology".

Table 1 shows that, while the interest of sales researchers in studying the effect of managerial control factors on sales performance has declined, the percentage of studies shows an upward trend for the effect of organizational culture-related determinants on sales performance. On further analyzing the latter trend, it was found that sales research on or before 2008 focused on examining the direct impact of firm-level cultural factors—ethical climate, market orientation and psychological climate—on sales performance. After 2008 the trend shifted to examining their indirect effect and the conditions under which these are effective predictors of performance. In addition, research in the current decade is mostly focused on multi-climate systems (e.g., sales vs. service climate) and the impact on sales performance.

Despite technology being a tool, it has a significant impact on the way in which sales function (Moncrief *et al*., 2015). Hence, we categorized "technology" as a separate sub-category. As we enter into an era of Alexa-driven marketing (Dawar and Bendle, 2018), the role of technologies like Big Data, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning and Blockchains have become almost impossible to ignore. For example, a survey by Smart Selling Tools on Salestech benchmark indicates that the average number of sales tools used by a typical B2B salesperson in the US is approximately five and the median is about nine. Arli *et al.* (2018) consider that this leverage of technologies is just the tip of the iceberg. AI has the power to radically change the way a salesperson and sales activities function (Herjanto and Franklin, 2019). Though it is argued that information technology (IT) infrastructure does not serve as a unique resource as it can be purchased by any player in the market, Bhardwaj (2000) argues that IT infrastructure can be leveraged for competitive advantage in conjunction with other resources. In the context of sales, IT infrastructure like

CRM software, when combined with a trained salesforce and management support, gives a sustainable competitive advantage.

The resource based-view of the firm posits that the firm attributes its superior financial performance to unique resources and capabilities, which refers to how an organization assembles, integrates and deploys its resources in combination or co-presence (Grant, 1991). Technological resources include IT infrastructure, technological capabilities that organizations mobilize and deploy, and organizational human IT resources such as IT training and support, management support for IT-based automation, and technical ability of the salesforce (Bharadwaj, 2000). Thus, the determinants of sales performance include salesforce automation (SFA), and digitized selling capabilities.

Job-related psychosocial factors. The term "psychosocial factors" has gained popularity due to rising psychological stress at workplaces presenting challenges to the mental health of workers. It refers to aspects of work and work conditions such as work roles, opportunity for workers to exercise control over aspects of their job, interpersonal relationships at work, etc. that lead to stress and associated health and safety problems (Sauter *et al.*, 1998). These factors are put into three sub-categories—"psychological demands," "job control," and "work-related social support," based on the extended demand-control model or the psychological strain model originally proposed by Karasek (1979) and Karasek *et al.* (1981). According to the extended model, the most adverse reactions occur when high psychological demands and low job control are combined with low social support at work (Johnson, 1986; Johnson and Hall, 1988).

Table 1 shows two noticeable changes. First, there is a decline in the sales performance research on the "psychological demands" sub-category, which includes classic forms of stressors such as role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, and so on. However, research on techno-stressors such as stress due to constant connectivity, additional tasks of customer data

entry and pipeline analysis, information overload, fear of being replaced by someone who is comfortable with technology, and so on (Tarafdar *et al*., 2014) is emerging and expected to pick up the pace. Second, there is a positive and large percentage change in sales performance research on the "work-related social support" sub-category, the objective of which is stress reduction. Salespeople are increasingly under stress due to hyper-competitive markets, expectations that they will do more in less time, the shift from a transaction-oriented to a knowledge broker role requiring a deep understanding of customers, their industry and markets (Kraft *et al*., 2019), and continual technological relearning and consequent job insecurities (Tarafdar *et al*., 2014). This, combined with a decline in traditional forms of community, is causing salespeople to search for social support at work (Chawla and Guda, 2013; 2017), and hence the sub-category "work-related social support" is receiving more attention in sales research.

Work-related social support, along the lines of the concept of social support, refers to both the existence and quantity of social relationships (the structural component), and informal social support from these relationships (the functional component) that help to reduce work-related stress (Johnson and Hall, 1988; French *et al*., 2018). Informal social support comes from a variety of sources including supervisor, colleagues, contacts outside the organization, family, and so on (Ford *et al*., 2007). The content of the informal social support can be emotional (e.g., offering love, care, trust), instrumental (e.g., offering resources such as providing time off to a salesperson to attend to a family exigency), and/or informational (e.g., offering advice or feedback) to help improve the individual's circumstances (French *et al*., 2018). It is, therefore, different from the formal support, for example, rewards, technical information, and training provided by the supervisor, which comes under the "managerial factors" sub-category of the internal environment.

Motivation. Verbeke *et al*. (2011) used Kanfer's (1990) triadic taxonomy of motivation to develop sub-categories; they also added two additional sub-categories of motivation representing motivation-related research in the domains of selling, which fall beyond the scope of Kanfer's (1990) model. Kanfer (1990) grouped motivation into three sub-categories: (1) "needs-motive-value," highlighting the role of personality, needs, and value in behavioral variability; (2) "cognitive choice," emphasizing the cognitive processes involved in decision making and choice; and (3) "self-regulation meta-cognition," focusing on attention given to the meta-cognitive or executive processes related to self-systems. Two sub-categories added by Verbeke *et al*. (2011) are "goal orientations" and "work engagement". As "needs-motive-value" is included in our "aptitude" category, we exclude this sub-category from motivation.

Table 1 suggests that the percentage of articles studying the effect of motivation-based determinants on sales performance has remained largely unchanged in the last decade. However, we note a couple of noteworthy developments from Table 2. First, in the "work engagement" sub-category with reference to the period before Verbeke's study, the sales literature focused on studying concepts like job design, task enjoyment, and job involvement, which were related to what the job involves and how it is done. In the later phase, scholars focused on why the job is done, such as finding meaning or purpose in work by making a difference in the lives of customers. Second, in the "self-regulation metacognition" sub-category, sales literature before Verbeke's paper focused largely on self-goal setting (for example. setting challenging and specific goals) as a mechanism to regulate one's behavior and achieve performance goals. In the recent past researchers have shown an interest in studying how constructive thought pattern strategies (such as positive self-talk, mental imagery and related concepts like spirituality) can help to achieve performance goals.

Personal factors. Ford *et al*. (1987) distinguished performance-related personal determinants into two sub-areas: biographical and psychological. While the biographical sub-area contains

a variety of personal history or background concepts such as age, gender, family history, childhood activities, experiences, sources of derived satisfactions and dissatisfactions, academic and work experiences, attitudes and interests, and self-descriptions and evaluations (Taylor and Ellison, 1967), the psychological sub-area includes various aptitudes or mental abilities, personality traits, and learned skills and proficiencies. As learned skills and proficiencies fall into the "skills" category, we deleted it from Ford *et al.'s* (1987) model. "Aptitude," however, is included as a separate category in our determinant classification scheme, and we therefore removed "aptitude" from Ford *et al.*'s (1987) categories of personal antecedents. As Verbeke *et al.*'s (2011) model of aptitude has "dispositional traits" as a sub-category, we deleted personality traits as psychological antecedents from Ford *et al.*'s (1987) model. Therefore, the personal factors in our proposed classification represent only biographical factors.

The percentage change in studies before and after Verbeke's paper shows a huge drop in interest in studying the effect of biographical factors on sales performance. The reason for the greater number of studies between 1983 and 2008 was that this period reported a significant increase in the number of minorities and women being employed in the sales profession (McKay *et al.*, 2008; Moncrief *et al.*, 2000); therefore, there was an interest in investigating the effect of these demographic changes in the workplace. However, there is the possibility of a revival of interest in the topic as there is a huge diversity of generations in the salesforce with critical differences in their workplace and technology preferences (Gannage and Talbert, 2018).

Skills. Rentz *et al.* (2002) categorized salespeople's skills into micro-skill and macro-skill research streams. The micro-skill stream focuses on individual sales skills and includes two types of skills: interpersonal and salesmanship. The macro-skill stream focuses on the mental processes and knowledge possessed by salespeople and includes "selling-related knowledge"

as a skill, which represents the idea that salespeople not only possess knowledge about products and markets, but also that they possess knowledge needed for recognizing customer types, needs, the sales situation, and what types of selling methods or strategies should be used in specific situations (Verbeke *et al.*, 2011). However, possession of this knowledge itself is not enough and requires fitting mental processes of salespeople to process such knowledge for decision making (Verbeke *et al.*, 2008). Thus, we broaden the scope of selling-related knowledge to include the latter.

Sales technologies are dramatically changing the sales function (Hunter and Perreault, Jr., 2007). As argued earlier in other categories, the need to view "technology" as a rapid and incumbent transformer of sales process and the "technological skills" under "macro-skills" need to be viewed as a separate sub-category. Broadly, technological skills include the knowledge and use of IT tools for customer relationship management.

Table 1 shows that the percentage change in sales research for all four types of skills is positive. The highest degree of change is seen in salesmanship skills, which has a strong focus on adaptive selling. Since adaptive selling has been found in numerous studies (e.g., Franke and Park, 2006; Park and Holloway, 2003) to strongly impact sales performance, the percentage of studies investigating determinants of sales performance through adaptive selling as mediator is on the rise. Sales performance research on technology skills before Verbeke's paper focused on knowledge and usage of salesforce automation tools (Park *et al.*, 2010) and salespeople's analytical proficiency and propensity to use information technologies in general (Hunter and Perreault, Jr., 2007). After 2011, the focus of sales research shifted to examine specific technology skills such as knowledge and usage of social media (Rodriguez *et al.*, 2012) and technology-enabled innovation in selling (Tarafdar *et al.*, 2014). With more advanced information technology tools such as AI and machine learning around the corner, a rise in social selling and an increase in millennials in the sales profession, research on the

topic is expected to surge. Sales performance research before Verbeke's paper focused on interpersonal skills with reference to customers. However, research after Verbeke's paper has taken an interesting turn towards understanding salespeople's interpersonal skills within their sales teams and professional networks and how they impact performance. Sales performance research on interpersonal skills is growing. Lastly, research on determinants belonging to the "selling-related knowledge" sub-category and their effect on sales performance has shown only a marginal increase, with recent research focusing on newer types of knowledge beyond products and customers (such as salespeople's competitive intelligence) and different styles of mental processing of knowledge (i.e., thinking styles) (see Table 2).

Strategic and non-strategic activities. This is a new category added as a result of the review done. Data from Table 1 help to validate the inclusion of this new category as it shows a 14% increase in sales research on this category after Verbeke *et al.'s* (2011) paper.

The extant literature emphasizes sales as a tactical activity. However, its role has been touted to be more than tactical and in fact central to marketing practice (Haas *et al.* 2012; Storbacka *et al.*, 2009). In several contexts, as Storbacka *et al.* (2011) argue, sales function drives strategic initiatives towards customers and the organization (Storbacka *et al.*, 2009; 2011).

Strategy is a broad pattern in a stream of actions that is developed out of a continuous learning process involving executives across the whole organization (Mintzberg, 1990). It involves actions, activities and cognitions. To perform these, skills and knowledge are required. Traditionally, salespeople have not been considered to be part of the strategy process. However, evidence has started to emerge on how salespeople influence the strategic thought and action within an organization. Sales managers and salespeople in an organization coordinate their everyday activities with their verticals so as to achieve the objectives. In that sense they influence both the top managers and the executives on the frontline.

Floyd and Wooldridge (1992) developed a typology on the basis of action and cognition. Based on Miles and Snow's strategy structure theory, they arrive at four types of managerial strategic involvement: championing alternatives and synthesizing information, representing managerial involvement in their upward channels of command, and facilitating adaptability and implementing deliberate strategy, constituting involvement in the downward channels of command. Applying the same framework of Miles and Snow, Slater and Olson (2000) explored the sales activity and its contribution to successful implementation of the strategy. They concluded that different strategy types require different profiles of sales management practices if effectiveness is to be achieved.

Floyd and Wooldridge (1992) contend that, besides information, the strategy process is influenced by an infusion of meaningful information through evaluation, advice and interpretation. They extend this logic to their other paper in 2000, wherein they define salespeople's strategic activities as behaviors that help grow new ideas, synthesize strategic information, integrate strategic initiatives and implement strategy.

Using Social Exchange theory, Pappas and Flaherty (2008) examined the dyadic relationship between supervisor and salesperson to explore salesforce participation in the strategic process. They found that information sharing and communication acted as moderators between trust and strategic activities. If salesforce involvement in strategic activities is high, their managers rate their performance highly. As boundary-spanners and customer-contact force they gather information about market trends and preferences, customer problems and challenges, competitor moves, external events, and so on. They serve the top management with this information and influence the strategic thought (Flaherty and Pappas, 2009).

Panagopoulos and Avlonitis (2010) considered sales strategy to be a multidimensional construct with four dimensions: customer segmentation, customer targeting, developing sales models and using routes or sales channels. They used a resource-based view of the firm and

industrial organizational theory to test the relationship between strategy and performance. They used transformation leadership, customer orientation and demand uncertainty as moderators. They advanced the sales research, which was considered to be tactical. They considered sales strategy as activities and decisions related to the allocation of scarce resources of sales for better customer relationships.

Terho *et al*. (2015) considered selling as a strategic, analytical and top management-focused activity. Selling activities have migrated from merely providing services and products to driving strategic initiatives towards customers and organizations. Providing solutions, relationship nurturing and service behaviors are now regarded as important. Part of this list is provided in the Table 2.

Customer lifetime value (CLV) has emerged as a key metric to help implement sales strategy and measure salespeople's activities. Thus, salespeople's value-based selling is a strategic activity that helps translate the customer segmentation and prioritization dimensions of sales strategy into performance (Terho *et al*., 2015). Acquisition and retention allocation emerged as another metric to identify the effectiveness of sales strategy execution by the salesforce. It is the proportion of salespeople's time allocated to acquisition versus retention activities. Salespeople are generally required to make time-allocation decisions as per the firm-level acquisition allocation strategy, thereby helping to implement the firm's strategy (Carter *et al*., 2014).

Non-strategic activities consist of behaviors that fall into a traditional salesperson's role, wherein the salesperson is not seen as a strategic entity. Activities such as sales planning, attention to personal details, cross-selling, up-selling, routing, time scheduling, etc., are typical sales activities that are non-strategic in nature. These are more like hygiene activities that are conducted in a salesperson's role on a day-to-day basis without any strategic intent. It is to be noted that these non-strategic activities (behaviors) are unlike skills, as per Baldauf

and Cravens (2002) and Cravens *et al*. (1993), in the sense that they are not proficiencies developed through training or experience that describe how something needs to be done, but are displays of behavior that describe what needs to be done. These activities may help to achieve individual or group-level goals, but do not contribute to the strategic functioning of a sales organization.

5. Discussion

This study involves a systematic review of over 261 research publications on sales performance in a bid to extend the framework by Verbeke *et al*. (2011). We were able to identify at least two new categories and sub-categories each and presented our results (Table 1 summarizes them). We do not emphasize AI applications under technology factors as we believe that Herjanto and Franklin (2019) have recently discussed their importance while providing future research directions. In this section we present a few unique contributions to the existing sales literature under the newly added categories and sub-categories.

Technology influences the sales function in a significant manner (Moncrief *et al*., 2015), especially helping to make the job easier (Colon, 1998), enhancing communication and reducing the cycle time (Thetgyi, 2000). Hence, we proposed to add a sub-category—"technology skills" that help the salesforce to streamline their selling processes and improve their productivity. Equipped with technology and related skills like data analytics, social media and so on, a salesperson can do more in less time. Though there was an emphasis on and necessity for sales organizations to focus on technology-related skills (Leigh and Tanner, 2004), it was not captured in Verbeke's framework. This study has included it as an important sub-category. The recent emergence of technologies and data analytical tools are impossible to ignore (Dawar and Bendle, 2018) and we have just begun to see their true potential (Herjanto and Franklin 2019; Arli *et al*. 2018). Research on the relationship between salesforce and technology/data analytical skills is growing. At this point, we can only

speculate that this skill may itself be the biggest differentiator between a successful and an unsuccessful salesperson. Among the several research questions to ponder over are how technology skills enhance sales performance and the role of the manager/leader in facilitating the absorption of these skills. Furthermore, the salesforce's technology skills and its competitive advantage to the firm could be another interesting area for future research.

Apart from technology skills, deriving value from technologies such as social media requires salespeople to develop and use social media-based networking skills (an interpersonal skill), since social media gives salespeople access to potential prospects and influencers. Although sales research on networking skills and social networks has recently drawn researchers' attention, such research has only been carried out in the face-to-face context of interactions (Ahearne *et al.*, 2013; Macintosh and Krush, 2017). This research can be extended to the social media context. Specifically, the following research questions would be relevant to investigate: how should a salesperson network effectively through social media? what are the value of such networks and how to capture it? and how the networking skills of salespeople differ between face-to-face and social media contexts?

Salesmanship skills (adaptability) sub-category has received huge attention among researchers as it saw the highest increase in research post-Verbeke *et al.* (2011) as compared to other sub-categories of "Skills" category. Research on identifying the technology-based antecedents of adaptive selling is on the rise. Before Verbeke *et al.* (2011), such research focused on whether the use of technologies such as SFA, CRM, and social media influence adaptive selling. Whereas recent research is more in-depth and focused on understanding how the use of technologies facilitates adaptive selling? What are the mediators? E.g., Park *et al.* (2010) found that SFA usage helps in processing market information, thereby empowering salespeople to practice adaptive selling strategies. Similarly, Itani *et al.* (2017) found that social media usage helps salespeople collect competitive intelligence, thereby enabling them

to practice adaptive selling. However, such research is still in the nascent stages. Some of the mediators which could be investigated for the effect of social media or CRM usage on adaptive selling could include understanding buyer persona, buyer type (self-oriented vs. task-oriented vs. interaction-oriented), buyer's social style, and detecting buyer cues, etc. The research could also be done on the moderators for the effect of technologies use on adaptive selling such as characteristics of the customer's buying task (buying center size, buying task – straight rebuy, modified rebuy, new buy), customer-salesperson relationship, and customer perception of salesperson relationship investment, etc. E.g., investigating the effect of social media usage on adaptive selling in the condition when the buying center is spread out versus small may be relevant as it could help salespeople adjust their social media usage accordingly.

Another category we added to Verbeke's framework was "job-related psychosocial factors". By psychosocial factors we refer to work conditions, work roles, job-related interpersonal relationships and so on, leading to stress and health disorders. Broadly three sub-categories were identified in the paper—"psychological demands," "job control," and "work-related social support". There is clear evidence that the lack of these factors is forcing the salesforce to embrace spirituality and positivity (Chawla and Guda, 2010; Guda and Teidor, 2017). Hence, we propose that there should be a stream of research scholars in the sales management domain exploring the facets of positive psychology, which deals with the study of positive emotions, positive character traits, and enabling institutions (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Most of the positive psychology aspects, such as expansive and encompassing admiration, altruism, contentment, courage, flow, forgiveness, gratitude, happiness, hope, joy, love, perseverance, pleasure, pride, responsibility, tolerance, vocation, wisdom, etc. (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) have not been researched in the sales context. The other area for future research relates to identifying ways to provide informal social support to

salespeople working from remote offices near customer locations. Since this trend is predominant in sales as it is both cost-effective and beneficial to customers (Mulki and Jaramillo, 2011), it becomes important for sales researchers to investigate effective electronic methods that could help provide support and a sense of belonging to remote salespeople. Researching the virtual arrangements of social support makes even more sense in the current health crisis due to COVID-19, when offices are shut down, job anxieties are high, and salespeople are working using virtual devices from home.

"Strategic activities" is another new category added as a result of the review. Based on Floyd and Wooldridge's (2000) classification scheme, we found both top-down and bottom-up strategic behaviors in the sales literature and combined them under the term strategic activities. The strategic role of sales cannot be denied (Hass *et al*., 2012; Storbacka *et al*., 2011). Being the front-line force, salespeople will provide the boundaries for the firm, build relationships with the customers, collect and disseminate information—all strategic activities for a firm (Flaherty and Pappas, 2009). The salesforce is no longer an order taker and stock mover but instead brings the company and customers together, provides solutions to problems and builds a competitive advantage (Panagopoulos and Avlonitis, 2010). Value-oriented selling has been found to have a strong impact on sales performance. Salespeople co-create value and tailor offerings, thus improving the firm's performance and service to customers (Blocker *et al*. 2012; Terho *et al*. 2012). One of the conclusions of a meta-analysis performed by Zablah *et al*. (2012) is that value-based selling promotes a customer orientation, which is an essential work value providing direction to salespeople's behavior on the job. It also helps them perform well in their sales role. To enable value-based selling, salespeople should develop a micro-perspective of the company's customer base, segment and target them with precision (Terho *et al*., 2015). However, the sub-category is still under-researched. Among the several lines of thought aboutthe role of middle managers in top-

down and bottom-up behaviors in enhancing the salesforce, productivity is prominent. Furthermore, the role of moderators like demographics, nature of companies and culture could add depth to studies.

Managerial Implications

We also make a few proposals that have managerial implications. The role of AI and other technologies is going to be a critical factor for the future. The COVID-19 pandemic has accentuated the role of technology. Technology has also altered the way consumers behave and thus implies that the role of the salesforce will be in for a transition. For example, the SARS epidemic in 2002 is believed to have brought about a huge change in the behavior of Chinese consumers as they migrated to online purchases on a large scale. Hence, organizations need to be proactive in building the efficiency of their salesforce by appropriate training interventions related to technology. Organizations may also like to invest in technologies that help the salesforce perform better and thus retain their competitive advantage in the market. Managers can help the salesforce to be technology-ready or recruit people who have a good technology quotient.

Mounting stress levels release oxytocin (a neuro-hormone) which motivates people to seek support (Taylor, 2011)—that is, to open up about their feelings, rather than bottling them up. As found in our review, there has been increased evidence of salespeople seeking informal social support through supervisors, colleagues, contacts outside the department and organization, etc. due to rising stress. Hence, sales managers need to cultivate a socially supportive environment, for instance, by giving opportunities to salespeople to "bond" outside the workplace in informal social settings, events or gatherings so that they develop relationships that otherwise would not have been possible in work settings. Another method is through developing family-type ties with salespeople, however, the effectiveness of this has not been yet investigated.

This study identifies a scholarship interest since the year 2000 on the positive relationship between externally oriented organizational culture (such as market orientation, customer orientation, etc.) and sales performance. B2B buyers in today's digital and hyper-competitive age self-educate and evaluate their options well before contacting salespeople, according to a buyer experience survey conducted by International Data Corporation (IDC) in 2012. Hence, a culture rooted in underlying assumptions about putting customers first, followed by aligned espoused values and practiced behaviors, should be embraced by sales organizations.

Fredrickson (2013) identified improvements in individuals' wellbeing brought about through positive interventions. Chawla and Guda (2013) and Guda and Teidor (2017) found that spirituality and happiness help salespeople to improve their performance. They posited that positive emotions help build flexibility in thinking and help salespeople to be innovative, adaptive and customer-centric. Growing competition and demanding consumers, along with quota pressure, make the sales ecosystem highly stressful for a salesperson. If managers could identify ways and means of interventions to build positivity, the salesforce may be less stressed and perform better. Salespeople with a greater sense of life satisfaction are more likely to have greater mental flexibility (Kahn and Isen, 1993). The overall wellbeing of the salesforce is a good investment in building sales performance, as it helps them develop their focus on their sales goals and ethics (Guda and Teidor, 2017).

Since selling practices in B2B firms are moving away from an operational focus to a strategic one (Terho *et al*., 2015), the role of salespeople as a strategic entity contributing to firm-level strategy, as well as in implementing sales strategy in the field, has become more critical. In line with this, after analyzing the recent literature, the authors of this paper have identified salespeople's strategic activities as comprising both bottom-up and top-down strategic behaviors. Bottom-up strategic behaviors include synthesizing diverse information related to evolving customer needs or possible product improvements to impact the strategic thought of

the firm, while top-down strategic behaviors include value-based selling, which translates a firm's sales strategy into performance. "Strategic activities" comprise another category of determinants affecting sales performance. Thus, we suggest that sales leaders encourage salespeople's participation in these strategic activities by adjusting incentive structures.

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* indicates that the paper is one among the 261 studies in this review.

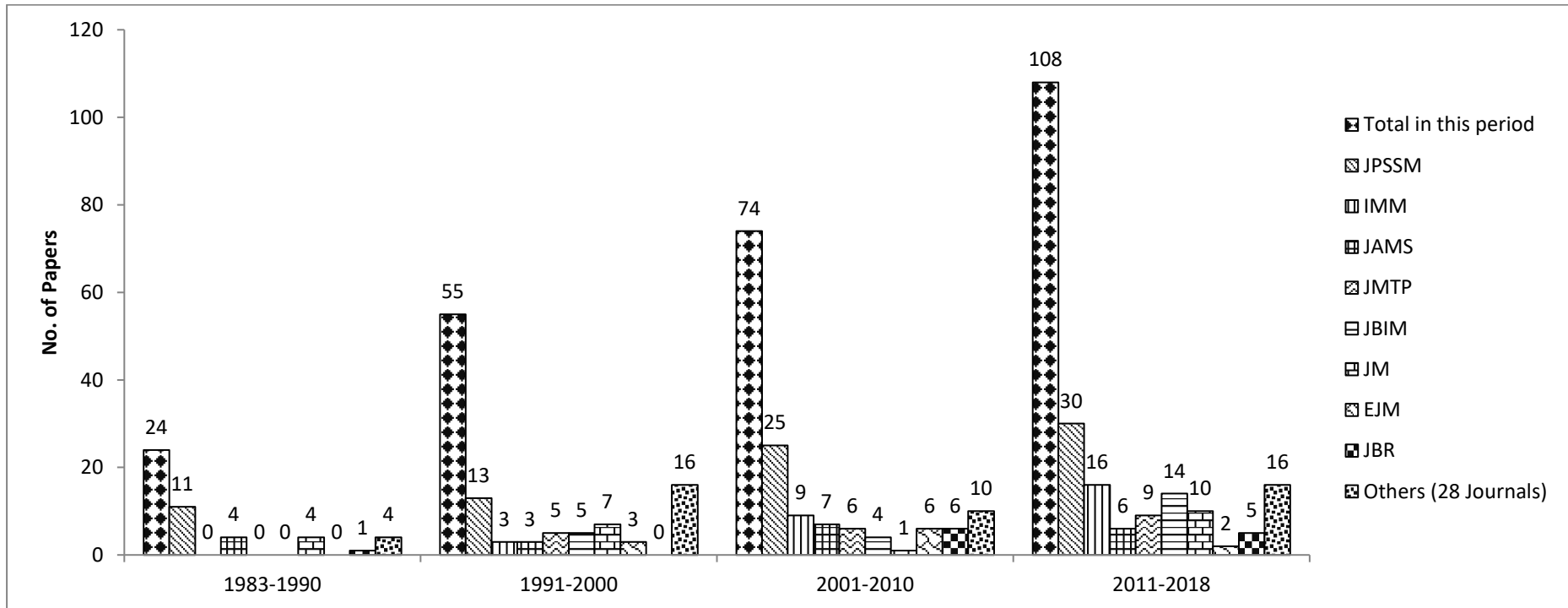**Figure 1: Timeline and journal-wise distribution of 261 selected papers**

Table 1: Extended classification comparison and research interest at categories/sub-categories level pre- and post-Verbeke's paper

Verbeke *et al.* (2011)		Proposed extended categorization in this paper		Frequency of studies at the level of categories and sub-categories (pre and post Verbeke *et al.*(2011))	
Categories	**Subcategories**	**Categories**	**Subcategories**	**1983-2008***	**2009-2018**
Aptitude	Dispositional traits	Aptitude	Dispositional traits	1 (1%)**	3 (3%)
	Personal concerns		Personal concerns	29 (20%)	34 (29%)
	Identity		***Removed***		
	Cognitive		Cognitive	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
Environmental factors	External environment	External environment	Macro and operating environment factors	3 (2%)	2 (2%)
	Internal environment	Internal environment	Internal culture and identity	5 (3%)	15 (13%)
	Supervisory leadership		Managerial factors	32 (22%)	21 (18%)
			Technological factors (new)	9 (6%)	7 (6%)
Motivation	Cognitive choice	Motivation	Cognitive choice	14 (10%)	5 (4%)
	Self-Regulation metacognition		Self-regulation metacognition	8 (6%)	6 (5%)
	Goal orientation		Goal orientation	9 (6%)	5 (4%)
	Work engagement		Work engagement	13 (9%)	12 (10%)
Personal factors	Biographical factors	Personal factors	Biographical factors	21 (15%)	4 (3%)
Role perceptions	Role conflict	***Job-related psychosocial factors (new and broader in scope)***	Psychological demand (includes role perceptions, burnout, etc.)	17 (12%)	11 (9%)
	Role ambiguity				
	Role overload				
	Burnout				
			Job-control (new)	2 (1%)	2 (2%)
			Work-related social support (new)	9 (6%)	16 (14%)
Skills	Selling-Related knowledge	Skills	Selling-related knowledge	14 (10%)	13 (11%)
	Salesmanship skills (adaptability)		Salesmanship skills (adaptability)	16 (11%)	23 (20%)
	Inter-Personal skills		Inter-personal skills	7 (5%)	11 (9%)
			Technological skills (new)	3 (2%)	7 (6%)
		Strategic & non-strategic activities (new)	Salesperson's strategic & non-strategic behaviors	18 (12%)	30 (26%)
		Total		**144**	**117**

*Verbeke et al. (2011) considered papers published till 2008.   **(x%) represents percentage of papers out of total in that period

Table 2: Salesperson's performance determinants classified under categories and sub-categories

Categories (with definitions)	Sub-categories (with definitions)	Determinants	Sample References
Aptitude: *Native abilities and enduring personal traits relevant to the performance of job activities* (Walker *et al.*, 1977)	I. Dispositional traits: *Non-conditional, decontextualized, dimensions of personality such as extraversion, dominance, and neuroticism* (McAdams, 1995)	Dependability; [1]Extraversion; Personality traits	[1]Yang *et al.*, 2011
	II. Personal concerns: *Personality constructs which are contextualized in time, place and/or role* (McAdams, 1995)	Affective orientation; Androgyny; Cold calling propensity; Concern for mistakes; Dispositional affectivity; Elaboration for potential outcomes; [2]Emotional intelligence; Empathy; Ethics (Ethical conflict, Unethical intent, Moral judgment); General Self-Efficacy; Instrumentality/expressive personality traits; [3]Interpersonal mentalizing; Job resourcefulness; Locus of control; Lone wolf tendencies; Machiavellianism; Multi-tasking; [4]Need for Cognition; Playfulness; Polychronicity; Proactiveness; [5]Relational communication traits; Sales closing propensity; [6]Salesperson coachability; Self-monitoring; Social comparison; Social values (achievement dimension); Tenacity; [6]Trait competitiveness; [7]Type A behavior pattern (achievement striving and impatience-irritability)	[2]Kadic-Maglajlic *et al.*, 2016; [3]Chakrabarty *et al.*, 2014; [4]Deeter-Schmelz and Sojka, 2007; [5]Boorom *et al.*, 1998; [6]Shannahan *et al.*, 2013; [7]Bartkus *et al.*, 2011
	III. Cognitive aptitudes: *"Measures of a general factor of mental ability, verbal ability and quantitative ability"* (Vinchur et al., 1998, p. 589)	[8]General mental ability	[8]Verbeke *et al.*, 2008
External environment: *Macro-environment (such as political, economic, social, technological etc.) and operating environment (such as customers, suppliers) faced by firm* (Jaworski, 1988)		Construed customer attitude towards cause-related campaign; Customer type; Customer OCB; [9]Environmental dynamism; [9]Environmental heterogeneity; Perceived market competition; Perceptions of brand advertising quality and quantity in market	[9]Sohi, 1996
Internal environment: *Deals with aspects inside the firm* (Verbeke *et al.*, 2011)	I. Internal culture and identity: *A broad range of organization-level characteristics such as culture, identity etc.* (Verbeke et al., 2011)	Centralization; [10]Market orientation; Company customer orientation; Competitive psychological climate; [11]Ethical climate; Organization identity comparison; Organizational trust; Organizational entrepreneurial orientation; Positive organizational support; Sales process capability; [12]Sales vs. service climate; Salespeople's negative headquarters stereotypes	[10]Wang and Miao, 2015; [11]Jaramillo *et al.*, 2006; [12]Ogilvie *et al.*, 2017

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Table 2 (continued): Salesperson's performance determinants classified under categories and sub-categories

Categories (with definitions)	Sub-categories (with definitions)	Determinants	Sample References
	II. Managerial factors: *The extent of sales manager's planning, staffing, training, directing and evaluating activities* (Futrell, 2006)	Bonus payments; Budget; Coaching; [13]Compensation sales policies; Consulting-oriented sales force programs; [13]Control sales policies; Control system fit; Empowering leadership; Ethics training; Feedback on interpersonal facilitation and job dedication; [14]Individualized incentive scheme; Leader behaviors; Leadership propensity; Manager's communication skills; Manager's motivational skills; Material, Equipment Support; Negative compensation changes; Participative vs. instrumental leadership style; Performance appraisals/evaluation; Performance rewards; Positive behavioral feedback; Positive output feedback; Professional controls; Quotas; Realistic job previews; [15]Role-Modelling behavior; Manager's Ethical leadership;[16]Sales strategy dimensions (segmentation, customer prioritization, selling models);Sales training;[17]Servant leadership; Specialized personal incentives; Supervisor behavior; Supervisor learning orientation; Supervisor performance; Supervisor person and process feedback; Supervisory orientations; [18]Supervisory control (output, activity and capability control); Territory characteristic (design, difficulty, situation etc.); [19]Transformational and Transactional Leadership	[13]Küster and Canales, 2011; [14]Bommaraju and Hohenberg, 2018; [15]Rich, 1997; [16]Terho *et al.*, 2015; [17]Schwepker and Schultz, 2015; [18]Challagalla and Shervani, 1996; [19]MacKenzie *et al.*, 2001
	III. Technological factors: *Technological resources and capabilities of the sales organization*	Commitment to technological change; Digitized selling capability; Internal technology support; Sales force technology usage (SFA and CRM Use); SFA and User training; [20]Social media technology usage	[20]Ogilvie *et al.*, 2018
Job-related psychosocial Factors: *Factors in the work environment which in combination determine the extent of job strain* (Johnson and Hall, 1988)	I. Psychological demands: *"how hard workers work (mental workload), organizational constraints on task completion, and conflicting demands"* (Karasek *et al.*, 1998, p. 323)	Boundary-spanning task overload; Burnout; Emotional exhaustion; Felt stress; Information overload; Internal task complexity; No. of product lines handled; [21]Role ambiguity; Role overload; [22]Role conflict; Supervisor and customer role ambiguity; Task clarity; [23]Technostress creators	[21]Chonko *et al.*, 1986; [22]MacKenzie *et al.*, 1998; [23]Tarafdar *et al.*, 2014
	II. Job-control: *"The extent to which an employee has authority to make decisions and utilize skills concerning the job"* (Dawson *et al.*, 2015, p. 2).	[24]Autonomy	[24]Wang and Netemeyer, 2002

Categories (with definitions)	Sub-categories (with definitions)	Determinants	Sample References
	III. Work-related social support: *includes informal support from co-worker and supervisor* (Karasek, 1979)	Agent's feedback; Collaboration (External and internal; inter and intra department); Connectedness with co-workers; [25]Interpersonal conflict; Intra-organization relationships; LMX; Manager-subordinate type of relationship; Misfit with co-worker's customer orientation; Peer mentoring; Person-organization fit; Satisfaction with supervisor; [26]Social capital; Supervisee trust; Supervisor liking; Supervisor support ambiguity; Supportive work environment; [27]Work-group socialization; Workplace isolation; Worker relationship quality	[25]Mulki *et al.*, 2015; [26]Gonzalez *et al.*, 2014; [27]Schwepker, Jr., 2015;
Motivation: *"The amount of effort the salesperson desires to expend on a particular task associated with his or her job"*(Walker *et al.* 1977, p. 26)	I. Cognitive choice: *emphasizes cognitive processes involved in decision making and choice* (Kanfer, 1990)	[28]Effort on a selling task; Time calling on established accounts; Effort in selling new products	[28]Brown and Peterson, 1994
	II. Self-regulation metacognition: *focuses on attention given to the meta-cognition or executive processes related to self-systems* (Kanfer, 1990)	[29]Goal acceptance; Goal clarity; Goal congruence; Goal difficulty; Goal participation; Goal specificity; Natural rewards strategy; [30]Personal stakes, goal-directed emotions, volitions & behavior; Self-set goal and pre-set goals; Task-specific and behavioral self-efficacy; Task-specific self-esteem; [31]Thought self-leadership strategies	[29]Amyx *et al.*, 2014; [30]Brown *et al.*,1997; [31]Panagopoulos and Ogilvie, 2015
	III. Goal orientation: *"Underlying goals that people pursue in achievement situations"* (Sujan *et al.*, 1994, p. 39)	Compensation orientation; Entrepreneurial motivation; [32]Learning (Challenge) orientation & behavior; [33]Performance orientation; Performance-prove & performance-avoid goal orientation; Recognition orientation	[32]Park and Holloway, 2003; [33]Kohli *et al.*, 1998
	IV. Work engagement: *Persistent positive affective-cognitive motivational state of fulfillment* (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002)	Career commitment; [34]Citizenship behaviors; Cognitive identification; Commitment to superior customer value; External customer mindset; Job & life satisfaction; Job commitment; Job dimensions (skill and variety, importance, task identity); Job image; [35]Job involvement; [36]Optimism; Organizational Commitment; Organizational identification; Prosocial organizational behavior; Resilience; [37]Selling confidence; Task enjoyment; Exploratory navigation	[34]MacKenzie *et al.*, 1993; [35]Holmes and Srivastava, 2002; [36]Rich, 1999; [37]Larson *et al.*, 2008
Personal factors: *Intra-individual factors that affect salesperson performance and that are not part of aptitude, personality traits, and learned skills and proficiencies.*	Biographical factors: *contain a variety of personal history or background variables.*	Accent; [38]Career stages; Education; Experience; Gender; No. of residential moves; Physical attractiveness; [39]Racial similarity; Racial-ethnic differences	[38]Cron and Slocum, Jr., 1986; [39]Martin, 2005

Table 2 (continued): Salesperson's performance determinants classified under categories and sub-categories

Categories (with definitions)	Sub-categories (with definitions)	Determinants	Sample References
Skills: *Learned proficiency at performing necessary tasks for the sales job* (Ford *et al.*, 1983)	I. Selling-related knowledge: Knowledge of product features, types of prospects and sales situations, types of sales strategies appropriate to different sales situations and different ways in which this knowledge is processed for decision-making	Deliberative accuracy and Intuitive accuracy; Expertise; Impression and strategy formation; [40]Individual Competitive Intelligence; Industry knowledge; [41]Knowledge bases; Procedural knowledge; Regulatory knowledge; [42]Salesperson knowledge distinctions; Targeting skills; Technical knowledge; [43]Thinking styles	[40]Mariadoss *et al.*, 2014; [41]Leong *et al.*, 1989; [42]Leigh *et al.*, 2014; [43]Groza *et al.*, 2016
	II. Salesmanship skills: *Knowing how to make a presentation and close a sale* (Rentz *et al.*, 2002)	[44]Adaptive selling; Creative selling; [45]Presentation skill; Sales consulting	[44]Park and Holloway, 2003; [45]Johlke, 2006
	III. Inter-personal skills: *"Knowing how to cope with and resolve conflicts"* (Rentz *et al.*, 2002, p. 13)	Cue perception; [46]Effective listening; Humour usage; Influence tactics; Networking behavior; Nonverbal immediacy; [47]Political skill; Social competence; Supervisor focused tactics; Intrapreneurial ability	[46]Shepherd *et al.*, 1997; [47]Bolander *et al.*, 2015
	IV. Technological skills: Skills possessed by firm's salespeople that are needed to use sales technologies to perform tasks in a sales role.	Adoption of sales automation tools; IT acceptance; Sales technology Orientation; Sales technology infusion; [48]Social media usage; [49]Technology-enabled innovation	[48]Rodriguez *et al.* 2012; [49]Tarafdar *et al.*, 2014
Strategic activities: *They help implement sales strategy of management, champion new ideas and initiatives, synthesize strategic information and integrate strategic initiatives* (Floyd and Wooldridge, 2000).		Acquisition allocation; Championing new ideas; [50]CLV orientation; [51]Customer orientation; Customer service; Facilitating adaptability; Idea transfer; Implementing behaviors for sales strategy process; Individual market orientation; Relationship building; Relationship selling behaviors; Salesperson solution involvement; Service behaviors; Strategic ability; Synthesizing information; [52]Value-based selling	[50]Valenzuela *et al.*, 2014; [51]Keillor *et al.*, 2000; [52]Terho *et al.*, 2015
Non-strategic activities: *behaviors that fall into a traditional salesperson's role; they do not have any strategic intent attached to them.*		[53]Attention to personal details; Cross-selling; Ethical behavior; Exploratory and exploitative learning behaviors; Persistence; [54]Sales planning; Time scheduling; Up-selling	[53]Ahearne *et al.*, 2008; [54]Baldauf and Cravens, 2002

Web Appendix (Papers included in review, but not cited in the manuscript)

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