



Adaptive Selling Behavior and Salesperson Performance in the Ugandan Insurance Industry: An Empirical Study

Richard Mwesige *

Makerere University Business School, Kampala, Uganda/Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya

*Corresponding Author: rmwesige@mubs.ac.ug

Ronald Bonuke

Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya

Claire Situma

Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya

Abstract

Despite extensive research on salesperson performance, insurance salespersons continue to report low performance, which has attracted the attention of scholars, practitioners, and policymakers. This research presents empirical data that promises to resolve the conundrum surrounding the debate on whether salespeople who exhibit adaptive selling behavior can perform better. The study investigated the association between salesperson adaptive selling behavior and salesperson performance among salespeople in the insurance industry in Uganda, using adaptive selling behavior and expectancy theories as theoretical foundations. It employs a positivistic paradigm and an explanatory design. Primary data were obtained via a questionnaire, from a sample of 328 licensed insurance salespersons using a proportionate stratified simple random technique. The study reveals a positive and statistically substantial link between salesperson adaptive selling behavior and salesperson performance and concludes that the improved performance of salespeople is influenced by possession of adaptive selling behavior. It suggests extensive interviews and evaluations conducted by insurance companies in order to identify and select sales representatives who possess the ability to discern and comprehend customer requirements, adapt their communication techniques, and tailor sales strategies in accordance with the unique preferences and circumstances of each customer and. Forthcoming studies ought test proposed model in a different country with a mixed-methods approach with a longitudinal design to verify the results.

Keywords: Salesperson performance, Salesperson adaptive selling behaviors, Ugandan insurance companies

1. Introduction

The inexorable drive to enhance a salesperson's performance is exerting pressure on sales managers and capturing the interest of researchers and academics (Abu ELSamen and Akroush, 2018). Salesperson performance is considered a vital aspect of any organization and crucial for business success and expansion. This directly impacts a company's ability to sell more in a specified period. Various sales performance metrics and KPIs are used to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of account executives and sales development representatives, various sales performance metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) are used (Gleeson, 2019). According to Abu and Akroush (2018), salespersons' performance is not only a measure of their cognitive abilities but also a means of achieving organizational growth and development. The primary responsibility of salespeople is to generate healthy sales, making them crucial for organizations seeking to boost their sales performance. In addition, salespeople play a vital role in acquiring and retaining new accounts, acting as activists and influencers of sales performance (Tesfaye 2018; Basir et al. 2010). They are also key players in a company's marketing communication process (Kotler, 2012) and have direct contact with customers (Aqmala & Ardyan, 2019; Novitasari et al., 2022). Furthermore, salespeople may possess a deeper understanding of emerging trends, which explains why some businesses use them to forecast or estimate future sales. Performance of salespeople is not only beneficial for the organization, but can also bring personal benefits in the form of commissions earned, which motivates salespeople to stay relevant in their field. Despite these efforts, the outcomes of insurance sales have not improved, as indicated by the low uptake of insurance products, which is reflected in the small number of new accounts. The insurance penetration rate in Uganda is only 0.8% in 2022, which is significantly lower than Kenya's rate of 6%, Rwanda's rate of 9%, and Tanzania's rate of 15% (Agaba,2022). Furthermore, in 2021, the non-life market share accounted for 59.55% of the total industry written premiums, a decline of 2.86% from the previous year. Additionally, the written premiums for Health Membership Organizations decreased by 36.13%, from US\$ 75.56 billion in 2020 to US\$ 48.26 billion in 2021, according to the IRA Annual Insurance Market report (2021). The necessity for special investigations arises from the attention given to the salesperson performance of these insurance companies.

Several works established a connection between a salesmen's adaptive selling behavior and salesperson performance. Hu et al. (1986) argue that adaptive selling behavior is a crucial element in enhancing a

salesperson's performance and involves tailoring selling strategies to satisfy the distinctive needs and preferences of individuals. The viewpoint is shared by Porter, Wiener, and Frankwick (2003), who stress the importance of salespeople being able to adjust their approach in response to changes in the customer environment. Udayana et al. (2019) underscores the significance of this adaptability in achieving superior sales outcomes.

However, some studies report contrasting results regarding the linkage between adaptive selling behavior and salesperson performance. Abed & Haghghi (2009), Markose (2011), Bolander et al. (2015), Keillor et al. (2000), Ahearne et al. (2005), and Pettijohn et al. (2000) found no significant association between these two variables. Limbu et al. (2016) discovered that adaptive selling behavior positively impacts the kind of the rapport exhibited by the salesperson and customer but doesn't essentially lead to improved salesperson performance. Ahearne et al. (2005) also find that adaptive selling behaviors don't have a significant influence on a salesperson's output, as determined by the sales target realized. Similarly, Pettijohn et al. (2000) reported that Adaptive selling tactics are only associated with salespersons' performance as judged by them and by their customers, but not by their objective performance, which is determined by the volume of sales.

This study yields mixed and inconsistent findings, primarily focusing on developing economies. Unlike previous research conducted in developed economies, this study's contextual implications are significant because it was conducted in Uganda for all the variables and relationships. This adds value to the research, as it examines how salesperson adaptive selling behavior can be impacted by organizational, technological, and societal factors, which can vary significantly between economies and influence the relationship and results. It is important to remember that this study features a salesperson who is innately adaptive, whereas the majority of salespeople currently employed in Uganda lack this adaptive quality and rely on on-the-job experience to acquire it (Jobber et al., 2019). It is crucial to evaluate the potential of a salesperson who already exhibits adaptive selling behavior during the recruitment process, as this reduces organizational training costs (Bolander et al., 2014) and decreases the number of salespeople who may never become adaptive. Furthermore, the Ugandan insurance sector has not yet been adequately explored in the literature regarding this important aspect.

Vroom's expectancy theory (1964) has been proposed as an explanation for salespeople's performance. This theory posits that performance is influenced by an individual's expectations, such as the need to achieve higher sales to receive a commission. In turn, the commission earned by salespeople is the primary motivator that influences their performance. However, this theory does not provide a strong explanation for how salespeople can improve their performance in dynamic environments that require flexibility. To rectify this limitation, the adaptive selling behavior theory focuses on performance centered on a salesperson's capability to comprehend the customer's culture and environment and to adjust their selling style accordingly (Weitz et al., 1986). This can improve sales performance. Thus, this study used both Vroom's expectancy together with adaptive selling behavior theories to explain salesperson performance, representing a significant input to the arena.

This study contributes to bridging the gap between the literature, theory, and context by examining how salesperson effectiveness is affected by adaptive selling behavior in the Ugandan insurance sector context.

The sections that follow in this paper cover the literature review, methodology, results, discussions, conclusions, and implications of this study.

Originality: This study presents empirical data that aims to resolve the conundrum surrounding a weather salesperson that needs to change styles depending on the selling situation to improve sales performance.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Foundation

The study is grounded in Vroom's expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), which posits that a salesperson's tendency to act in a particular manner is contingent upon their belief in the potential outcome of their actions. In line with this theory, a person's motivation to perform depends on three elements: the existence and attainability of rewards, the personal value and desirability of those rewards, and the individual's confidence in receiving the rewards if they are earned. Vroom's original concept focuses on estimating the level of effort that employees would exert on different tasks based on their motivation. It is worth noting that while commissions can enhance performance, adaptive selling behavior theory of Weitz et al. (1986) emphasizes the importance of salespeople's ability to adjust their selling style in response to the complexity and uncertainty of sales encounters.

2.2. Empirical Review

2.2.1. Salesperson Performance (SP)

According to Firew (2022), salesperson performance is characterized by the extent to which salespersons contribute to the attainment of their organization's sales objectives. Zhou (2020) defines salesperson performance as the sales outcomes achieved through the efforts and skills of salespeople. In addition, salesperson performance is assessed by evaluating the behavior of salespeople, which results in the successful accomplishment of organizational goals (Basir et al., 2010). Similarly, Djoni et al. (2016) defined salesperson performance as the positive attitude, conduct, and work culture exhibited by salespeople, which are influenced by their strategic role. Day (2011) defines salesperson performance as the level of excellence and quantity of deals closed within a specific period. The performance of a salesperson is typically evaluated based on the sales they make and their relationship with customers (Colletti & Tubridy, 2013). A range of sales actions, including closing deals, interacting with distributors, providing entertainment, retaining customers, attending meetings, maintaining products, providing services, and communicating or exchanging information, can be used to assess a salesperson's effectiveness (Colletti & Tubridy, 2013). In addition to these measures, sales volume, sales in dollars, management appraisal, and self-report measures of self-efficiency can be used to gauge the success of a salesperson (Yang et al., 2011).

2.2.2. Salesperson Adaptive Selling Behavior (SPASB)

Adaptive selling behavior is widely regarded as a critical skill for salespeople to master, involving the modification of selling styles in response to changing circumstances (Udayana et al., 2019; Weitz, Sujan & Sujan, 1986). Weitz et al. (1986) define adaptive selling behavior as "the adjustment of sales practices throughout or between consumer contacts according to facts gleaned from the selling scenario." Salespeople who rely on standardized or campaigned presentations used in every sales interaction typically demonstrate slight levels of adaptive selling, conversely, individuals who people customize their displays to the specific needs of each customer exhibit a higher degree of adaptiveness (Spiro & Weitz, 1990).

A salesperson must recognize that each customer has distinct requirements and convictions (Spiro & Weitz, 1990) and must employ an appropriate strategy to cater to customers' needs to achieve a successful sale.

Similarly, customers possess their own distinct features and individuality that salespeople should consider (Chai et al.2012) to have a favourable effect on sales performance. Sales adaptability enables salespeople to personalize products to align with customer requirements and favourites (Singh & Das, 2013). Favourable opinions of consumers flexible selling practices can enhance their assurance (Guenzi et al.2016). Thus, adaptive selling behavior should also involve demonstrating empathy towards customers, wherein a salesperson needs to be sensitive to and react accordingly. to their needs (Limbu et al., 2016). For adaptive selling to be used successfully, a salesman must be able to recognize customers personality traits, attitudes, information requirements, and hazard tolerance, and then modify selling plans to align with specific requirements of clients (Porter, Wiener, & Frankwick, 2003).

2.2.3. The Relationship Between SPASB and SP

Based on the adaptive selling behavior theory Weitz et al. (1986), a clear relationship exists between Adaptive selling strategies and sales representative effectiveness. salespeople with the capacity to employ various selling approaches based on customers' changing environments tend to achieve better sales outcomes. Numerous studies have provided data demonstrating a favorable correlation between the performance of salespeople and adaptive selling behavior. For example, Udayana et al. (2019), Porter (1998), Ahearne et al. (2008), Spiro and Weitz (1990), Zhou and Charoensukmongkol, (2020), Zallocco et al. (2009), Franke & Park (2006), Jaramillo & Grisaffe, (2009), Román & Iacobucci (2010), Singh & Das (2013), Itani et al. (2017), Chen et al. (2018), Giacobbe et al. (2006), and Verbeke, Dietz & Verwaal (2011) have all demonstrated significant positive relationships between adaptive selling behavior and salesperson performance.

According to Spiro and Weitz (1990), The performance of salespeople is positively correlated with adaptive selling behavior. Those who can adjust easily while fulfilling their sales responsibilities tend to perform better (Udayana et al., 2019). Additionally, Singh and Das (2013) find that the performance of salespeople is positively impacted by adaptive selling conduct. The framework for adaptable selling suggests that effective use of a flexible approach to selling is imperative for salesperson effectiveness (Porter, 1998). Furthermore, simple adaptations in sales interactions, such as responding to questions, comments, and body language, can improve rapport and reduce objections (Spiro and Weitz, 1990). Pahlevi et al. (2019) found that performance of salespeople is positively impacted by adaptive selling conduct. Similarly, Limbu

et al. (2016) discovered that salespeople that utilize adaptive selling techniques do better in the marketplace because they are aware of the demands and expectations of their clients and are attentive observing their responses during the communication process.

In a meta-analysis conducted by Franke and Park, (2006), the impact of adaptive selling behavior on salesperson performance was examined by analyzing previous research findings. The outcomes of their study showed that the adaptive selling behaviors of native English-speaking sales forces have a direct influence on metrics of a salesperson's performance that are objective, manager-rated, and self-rated. In spite of these findings, when Kaynak et al. (2016) compared sales success and adaptive selling practices across national borders, they discovered a substantial relationship between the two variables in a sample of Macau-based salespeople. Similarly, Itani et al. (2017) find that sales performance in a variety of Indian businesses is positively correlated with the adaptive selling practices of B2B salespeople. Adaptive selling involves a salesperson paying great attention to the customer's response during the communication procedure in order to determine the wants and expectations of the customer (Weitz et al., 1986). On the one hand, they modify their communication approach to make their style of presentation friendlier and more palatable to clients. However, in order to satisfy clients' requirements and expectations, they can also offer products or services that are specifically tailored to their needs (Román & Iacobucci, 2010). As a result, the client is pleased with the salesman's offering due to their adaptive selling behavior, which raises the likelihood of a deal being closed (Román & Iacobucci, 2010). For instance, in export sales, salespeople must make a greater effort to understand and meet the expectations of foreign customer's due to significant barriers related to both geographic distance and cultural differences. This is because individuals from distinct cultures frequently have unique needs and preferences (Chen et al. 2012). Selling performance is likely to be enhanced by a salesperson's capacity for adaptation and customer interaction (Yilmaz, 2002).

Some studies report no relationship between salesperson effectiveness and adaptable selling practices (Abed & Haghighi, 2009; Markose, 2011; Bolander et al., 2015; Keillor et al., 2000; Ahearne et al, 2005; Pettijohn et al., 2000). Limbu et al. (2016) discovered that, while adaptive selling improved quality of the customer relationship, it did not enhance salesperson outcome performance. Moreover, Ahearne et al. (2005) found that there was no discernible correlation between the degree of sales quota reached and the adaptive selling practices of salespeople. Additionally, Pettijohn et al. (2000) discovered that adaptive

selling behavior had no relationship to salespeople's objective performance as determined by sales volume, but rather to their self-rated performance and customer-rated performance. The sales environment explains the inconsistent findings about how adaptive selling conduct affects salesperson performance. According to Keillor et al. (2000), sales situation may have a significant impact on the degree to which adaptive selling improves salesperson effectiveness. This implies that there may be discrepancies in the way salesperson performance and adaptive selling behavior interact.

$$Y = \beta_0 + C \text{ (control variable)} + \beta_1 X + \varepsilon \text{ (Testing effect of SPASB on SP)} \dots\dots\dots \text{Ho1}$$

This explains the changes in (R2) which was explained by introducing the variable SPAB as an independent variable while holding other factors constant.

Where;

Y= SP (the dependent variable)

X= SPASB (Independent variable)

ε = error term in the equation

Therefore, the following hypothesis was derived

Ho1: *SPASB is not positively and significantly associated with SP*

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The study employed a positivist paradigm and a quantitative explanatory methodology. The target population consisted of 3278 salespersons working in insurance companies in Uganda, including life, non-life, and health membership organizations, among others. The method used to estimate the sample size was the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table, which indicates 346 salespeople from a total population of 3278. To choose the responders, proportionate stratified and basic random sampling techniques were used. Of the 328 salespersons selected, 328 responded, resulting in a 95% response rate. A self-administered structured questionnaire, which employed a 5-point scale, was used to gather data directly from salespeople.

3.2. Measurement of Variables

3.2.1. Salesperson Performance

Drawing from previous literature, this study used eight items that were modified and used to measure salesperson performance (Behrman & Perreault 1982; Verbeke et al., 2011). Among the measuring items were statements such as, "I generate higher sales volume at every end of quarter assessment" "I can quickly sell goods with a significant profit margin" "I can swiftly generate deals of new products for the company" and "I always exceed most sales targets".

3.2.2. Adaptive Selling Behavior

The tool was developed from the studies of Sipro and Weitz (1990), and consisted of seven (7 items) to be adapted for use in this study. Items adopted a 5-point Likert scale, used to obtain a response indicating a score of 1=Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree. Statements like "I always change my approach to sales depending on the circumstance " were included in the instrument. "I basically use the same approach with most customers," "I am very flexible in the selling approach I use." "I enjoy experimenting with various methods of selling." "I pretty much treat every customer the same way." " I can quickly move to another sales strategy if they think this one isn't working." "I make an effort to comprehend the differences amongst my customers".

3.2.3. Control Variables

Research has identified certain distinct characteristics of salespersons associated with adaptive selling behavior, as reported in a study by Weitz et al. (1986). This study controlled for five variables: sex, age, education level, and time spent working. Gender is measured as either male or female, and literature suggests that gender may affect salesperson performance. Despite the fact that numerous studies have not discovered a discernible difference between male and female salespeople's self-reported sales performance, this remains a relevant variable for consideration. Age is measured in terms of the number of years since the salesperson was born, while education level is measured by academic papers obtained through studying, with uncertain effects on sales performance. Finally, time spent working as a salesperson is based on the number of years the individual has been working in the role.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Age} + \beta_2 \text{Gender} + \beta_3 \text{Educ level} + \dots + \epsilon$$

This Equation is used to establish the variance (R²) of the dependent variables explained by the control variables.

Where;

Y= Salesperson performance (the dependent variable)

Age, Gender, Education.....= control variables

ε= error term in the equation

4. Results

4.1. Response Rate

Three forty-six (346) questionnaires were issued to the respondents; only 330 were filled and returned, but only 328 questionnaires were used since they were correctly filled. For comparison, two (2) questionnaires that were partially filled questionnaires were excluded from the analysis. The overall survey response rate was 95%.

4.2. Common Method Bias (CBM) Assessment

Podsakoff et al. (2003) defined it as systematic inflation or deflation of relationships between constructs as a result of how the variables are measured and by obtaining data on all study variables from the same respondent or using the same instrument. This study used the single-factor test suggestions made by Fuller et al. (2016), Harman, to evaluate the potential for common method bias. A factor analysis was carried by utilizing all study variables with Harman's single-factor test to determine if the variation clarified by a single factor was less than 50%. It was concluded that no single factor emerged, suggesting the absence of a common method bias. Our findings imply that this study was unaffected by common technique bias, as the variance expounded by a single factor was 21.302%, which was less than 50%. Furthermore, this study also used the recommendation of Campbell (1959), who argued that once the validity test is passed, there is no CBM.

4.3. Reliability and Validity

Cronbach alpha values for the SPAB and SP were 0.810 and 0.702, respectively (Table 1). Reliability values less than 0.95, but at least 0.7, are ideal. Hair et al. (2019). Consequently, the constructs were accurately measured.

Table 1. Reliability Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Average variance extracted
SPAB	0.810	0.692
SP	0.702	0.833

Source: Primary data, 2023

Table 2 illustrates all item loadings on the underlying constructs with 0.7 at least. The average variances extracted (AVE) for SP were 0.833 and 0.692 for SPASB and, respectively. Hair et al. (2019) argued that convergent validity is acceptable if the average variance recovered for each concept is at least 0.5. As a

result, this study's average variance extraction and item loadings demonstrated satisfactory convergent validity.

Table 2. Factor Loadings

Items	Statement	Factor Loading
B3SPASB1	Every situation requires a different sales approach from me	0.708
B3SPASB2	I have an extremely adaptable selling strategy	0.631
B3SPASB3	With most of my customers, I essentially employ the same strategy	0.609
B3SPASB4	I enjoy experimenting with various sales strategies	0.781
B3SPASB5	I treat all the customers pretty much the same	0.720
B3SPASB6	If they believe that the sales strategy isn't working, I can quickly switch to a different one	0.597
B3SPASB7	I make an effort to comprehend the differences between each consumer	0.804
SP1	I contribute to producing a high market share in this firm	0.812
SP2	I generate higher sales volume at every end of quarter assessment	0.720
SP3	I can quickly sell high profit-margin products	0.971
SP4	I can quickly make sales of new products for the company	0.929
SP5	I always exceed most sales targets	0.891
SP6	I bring in a new account at least every week	0.812
SP7	The qualified leads I get everyday has amplified	0.627
SP8	My rate of customer retention has gone up over the previous year.	0.907

Source: Primary data, 2023

4.4. Discriminant Validity

The heterotrait-to-monotrait correlation ratio (HTMT) and the Fornell-Larcker criteria were used to evaluate discriminant validity. According to Hair et al. (2019), an HTMT ratio of less than 0.90 suggests the presence of good discriminant validity. In the present investigation, the HTMT ratio was 0.521. The Fornell-Larcker criterion reveals that the SPASB and SP square roots of the average variances extracted are 0.823 and 0.837, respectively, which are less than the SPASB and SP correlation of 0.625 (Table 3). The findings of the HTMT and Fornell-Larcker criteria demonstrate that the measuring model in this study has satisfactory discriminant validity, indicating that salesperson performance and salesperson lead qualifications differ.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity Results

	SPASB	SP
SPASB	0.823	
SP	0.671	0.837

Source: Primary data, 2023

4.5. Descriptive Results

The mean values for the SPASB and SP were 3.0018 and 2.5190, respectively. The means were higher than the midpoint of 2.5, indicating that salespeople had positive opinions on the latent items related to SP and SPASB. The standard deviations for SPASB and SP were .3713 and .2150, respectively, indicating high variability in salesperson performance among salespersons in the insurance sector in Uganda.

Table 4. Aggregate Descriptive Statistics for The Variables

Variables	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
SP	2.04	3.20	2.3190	0.2150	-0.031	-0.224
SPASB	2.32	3.99	3.0018	0.3713	0.046	-0.211
Valid N (listwise)						

Source: Research data, 2023

4.6. Correlation Results

Our study explored the link between SPASB and SP through a Pearson rank correlation.

Table 5 presents the results of the SPASB; salesperson education level, tenure with the company, and age are positively correlated with SP. The results in Table5 indicate that A noteworthy positive correlation has been observed between the SPASB and SP of insurance sales representatives in Uganda ($\beta=0.473$; $t > 1.96$; $P < 0.00$). This suggests that any positive change in the SPASB results in a positive change in the SP. The findings also indicate that, among all the control variables, only salespersons' age and education level have a positive and significant relationship with SPASB and SP. This also implies that tenure with company, age, and education levels of salespersons have a favorable and noteworthy contribution to the variation in the study variables, while other control variables have a negative and non-significant relationship with both SP and SPASB.

Table 5. Correlation Results

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gender (1)	1						
Age (2)	.050	1					
Education (3)	.023	.352**	1				
Tenure with the company (4)	.005	.152	-.080	1			
Tenure with the sector (5)	.091	.040	.061	.059	1		
SPASB (6)	.121	.170	.281**	.106	.108	1	
SP (7)	.002	.218**	.226**	.201	.020	.473**	1

** . At the 2-tailed 0.01 significance level, there is a correlation.

*. At the 0.05 level (2-tailed), correlation is significant.

Source: Research data, 2023

4.7. Regression Results

In regression model 1 (Table 6), all five control variables (Age, Gender, Education, tenure in the sector, and tenure in the company) were regressed to ascertain the variance that was explained by the control variables. The regression results in table 6 indicate that tenure with the company, education level, and age are the only significant predictors of SP, while gender and tenure with the sector are insignificant predictors of the dependent variable. Overall, the model explains an R-squared of 0.080, signifying that the covariates explain approximately 8.0% of the change in SP, as indicated in model 1. Additionally, table 6 in Model 2 shows that while controlling covariates, SPASB was entered into the model to determine its impact on SP (H01). Furthermore, the results in table 6 indicate that only education, tenure with a company, and age remained significant. The results also indicated that SPASB significantly and positively predicts SP ($\hat{I}^2 = 0.609$, $t = 14.701$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that higher SPASB levels of SPASB associated with improved SP. The findings also indicated that the additional SPASB in model 2 accounted for an extra 37.2% (R Square change = .372) of the variations in SP. Therefore, H01 was declined, and the substitute suggests that SPASB has a positive significant effect on SP.

Table 6. Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Salesperson Performance

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	T	sig	β	T	Sig
Constant	3.202	33.00	0.000	1.301	5.921	0.000
Gender	0.010	0.212	0.200	-0.002	-0.120	0.520
Age	0.141	2.421	0.000	0.031	1.920	0.343
Education level	0.145	4.729	0.000	0.122	3.813	0.000
Tenure with the company	0.127	2.014	0.000	0.105	4.187	0.524
Tenure with the sector	0.011	0.501	0.411	0.025	0.910	0.209
SPASB				0.609	14.701	0.000
Model Summary Statistics						
R		.301 ^a			.503 ^b	
R2		0.080			0.521	
AdjR2		0.071			0.542	
R2- Change		0.080			0.372	
F- Change		6.491			198.214	
Sig. F- Change		0.000			0.000	

*a. Dependent Variable: Salesperson's performance, *** Significant at .001*

5. Discussion

Data from 328 salespersons in Uganda's insurance sector were collected using a self-administered questionnaire, followed by hypothesis testing, which posited that there is no positive and noteworthy association between SPASB and SP in the insurance sector in Uganda. However, the findings revealed that the data were normally distributed, and performance and adaptive selling behavior were correlated. This suggests that as adaptive selling behavior increases, salesperson performance also increases. These results are at odds with our research hypothesis, which assumes a positive and significant relationship between SPASB and SP, thus leading to rejection of the null hypothesis.

Sales people who accurately identify their customers' origins and cultural backgrounds as well as adapt their selling styles in response to changing customer needs are more likely to achieve higher sales goals. This involves recognizing the different types of clients and their corresponding product and purchasing requirements and tailoring one's sales approach accordingly. Our research findings align with those of Zhou and Charoensukmongkol (2020) and Udayana et al. (2019), who found out sales persons that modify

their selling styles outperform their competitors in the marketplace because they can modify their communication style to better meet the demands and expectations of their clients. Those who are flexible in their selling approach and willing to experiment with various sales techniques, while also providing excellent customer service, are likely to outperform their peers and achieve greater sales success.

This study uses two theoretical frameworks: Vroom's expectancy theory and adaptive selling behavior. Vroom's expectancy theory, first introduced in 1964, suggests that motivation is a crucial factor for achieving successful outcomes. Specifically, when individuals are rewarded for specific actions, and rewards are deemed meaningful and expected, they are more likely to be motivated to perform. In the context of sales, the prospect of earning higher commissions by increasing sales can motivate salespeople to adapt their selling approach, leading to increased sales performance. According to adaptive selling behavior theory, certain characteristics have been found to be associated with this behavior (Park, 2010). Therefore, in support of this study, these theories demonstrate how salesperson accomplishment and adaptive selling behavior are related.

This study also has several practical implications. According to research findings, insurance companies should consider hiring salespeople who demonstrate adaptive selling behavior because they improve salesperson performance. This conclusion is based on the understanding that it is crucial for salespeople to alter their selling methods to meet the requirements of their patrons to achieve improved sales (Pandey and Charoensukmongkol,2019).

5.1. Conclusion

These study results indicate that the examined variable quantity exhibited optimistic associations. Considering the competitive and rapidly changing business environment, it is essential for salespeople to be flexible in their sales approach to achieve better sales results. These research findings align with the existing body of knowledge and practices and demonstrate that salespeople who can effectively understand the social and environmental setting they operate in and adapt their selling style can achieve successful sales outcomes. Additionally, the study results revealed that adaptive selling behavior is critical to sales performance, particularly in developing countries such as Uganda. Therefore, it is crucial to employ salespeople with the ability to modify their approach to suit the current situation. Lastly, the study utilized theories of adaptive selling behavior and expectancy theory to explain salesperson performance.

6. Limitation and Future Direction

Despite the significant contributions of our investigation to the body of knowledge and practical implications, it is not without its limitations. One of these limitations is that the findings may not be generalizable to other countries because of differences in national laws, levels of development, and cultural traditions. Another limitation is that our study focuses specifically on salespeople in the insurance industry, and it is possible that the challenges faced by salespeople in other sectors may differ.

Therefore, we recommend several areas of future research. First, it would be advantageous to carry out cross-country studies to explore the effect of adaptable selling techniques on salespeople's output in another developing country. Second, future studies could investigate the results of flexible selling techniques in other sectors to validate our findings. Finally, a longitudinal study should be conducted to assess whether salespeople who are already adept at adaptive selling continue to perform well over time without additional training.

Funding: No external funding was received for this study.

Acknowledgments: We acknowledge that there was no outside funding support, and that each author contributed appropriately to every section.

Conflict of Interest: Writers have disclosed that they don't have any competing interests.

References

- Abed, G. M., & Haghghi, M. (2009). The effect of selling strategies on sales performance. *Business Strategy Series*, 10, 266-228.
- Abu ELSamen, A., & Akroush, M. N. (2018). How customer orientation enhances salespeople's performance? A case study from an international market. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, 25(7), 2460-2477.
- Agaba, B. (2022). *Factors influencing adoption of agricultural insurance as a climate change adaptation strategy by cattle producers in the cattle corridor of Uganda* (Doctoral dissertation, Makerere University).
- Ahearne, M., Hughes, D. E., & Schillewaert, N. (2007). Why sales reps should welcome information technology: Measuring the impact of CRM-based IT on sales.
- Ahearne, M., Jones, E., Rapp, A., & Mathieu, J. (2008). High touch through high tech: The impact of salesperson technology usage on sales performance via mediating mechanisms. *Management Science*, 54(4), 671-685.
- Aqmala, D., & Ardyan, E. (2019). How does a salesperson improve their performance? The important role of their customer smart response capability. *Gadjah Mada International Journal of Business*, 21(2), 223-241.
- Basir, M. S., Ahmad, S. Z., & Kitchen, P. J. (2010). The relationship between sales skills and salesperson performance: An empirical study in the Malaysia Telecommunications Company. *International Journal of Management and Marketing Research*, 3(1), 51-73.
- Behrman, D. N., & Perreault Jr, W. D. (1982). Measuring the performance of industrial salespersons. *Journal of Business Research*, 10(3), 355-370.
- Bolander, W., Bonney, L., & Saturnino, C. (2014). Sales education efficacy: Examining the relationship between sales education and sales success. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 36(2), 169-181.
- Bolander, W., Saturnino, C. B., Hughes, D. E., & Ferris, G. R. (2015). Social Networks Within Sales Organizations: Their Development and Importance for Salesperson Performance. *Journal of Marketing*, 79, 1-16
- Boorum, M. L., Goolsby, J. R., & Ramsey, R. P. (1998). Relational communication traits and their effect on adaptiveness and sales performance. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 26(1), 16-30.
- Campbell, D. T., & Fiske, D. W. (1959). Convergent and discriminant validation by the multitrait-multimethod matrix. *Psychological Bulletin*, 56, 81-105.
- Chai, J., Zhao, G., & Babin, B. J. (2012). An empirical study on the impact of two types of goal orientation and salesperson perceived obsolescence on adaptive selling. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 32(2), 261-273.
- Colletti, J., & Tubridy, G., (2013). *Reinventing the Sales Organization*, Scottsdale, AZ: Alexander Group
- Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psychometrika*, 16(3), 297-334. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02310555>
- Day, G. S. (2011). Closing the marketing capabilities gap. *Journal of marketing*, 75(4), 183-195.
- Djoni, D., Oktaviani, R., & Kirbrandoko, K. (2016). Factors affecting the sales performance of PT SKP: A case study of sales force of Moorlife Indonesia in Jabodetabek. *Indonesian Journal of Business and Entrepreneurship*, 2(2), 122-122.
- Firew, B. (2022). *Factors affecting salesperson performance: The case of Hidasie Telecom*. Unpublished Dissertation St. Mary's University.

- Franke, G. R., & Park, J. E. (2006). Salesperson adaptive selling behavior and customer orientation: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 43(4), 693–702.
- Fuller, C. M., Simmering, M. J., Atinc, G., Atinc, Y., & Babin, B. J. (2016). Common methods variance detection in business research. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(8), 3192–3198. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.12.008>.
- Giacobbe, R. W., Jackson Jr, D. W., Crosby, L. A., & Bridges, C. M. (2006). A contingency approach to adaptive selling behavior and sales performance: Selling situations and salesperson characteristics. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 26(2), 115-142.
- Gleeson, P. (2019). How Do I Develop Key Performance Indicators? Chron Newsletter February 05, 2019
- Guenzi, P., De Luca, L. M., & Spiro, R. (2016). The combined effect of customer perceptions about a salesperson's adaptive selling and selling orientation on customer trust in the salesperson: A contingency perspective. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 31(4), 553-564.
- Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLSSEM. *European Business Review*, 31(1), 2–24.
- Hansen, J. D., Singh, T., Weilbaker, D. C., & Guesalaga, R. (2011). Cultural intelligence in cross-cultural selling: Propositions and directions for future research. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 31(3), 243-254.
- Hu, H. C, Chuang S. H & Lin, S. (2021)"How Adaptive Selling Behavior Influences Performance", International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction. Insurance Industry Annual Report 2021.
- Itani, O. S., Agnihotri, R., & Dingus, R. (2017). Social media use in B2b sales and its impact on competitive intelligence collection and adaptive selling: Examining the role of learning orientation as an enabler. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 66, 64-79.
- Jobber, D., Lancaster, G., & Le Meunier-FitzHugh, K. (2019). *Selling and sales management*. Pearson UK.
- Joseph F. Hair, Marko Sarstedt, T. M. P. and C. M. R. (2012). *Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) Using R*. Classroom Companion: Business. Springer Cham.
- Kaynak, E., Kara, A., Chow, C. S., & Laukkanen, T. (2016). Role of adaptive selling and customer orientation on salesperson performance: Evidence from two distinct markets of Europe and Asia. *Journal of Transnational Management*, 21(2), 62-83.
- Keillor, B. D., Stephen Parker, R., & Pettijohn, C. E. (2000). Relationship-oriented characteristics and individual salesperson performance. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 15(1), 7-22.
- Kotler, P. (2012). *Kotler on marketing*. Simon and Schuster.
- Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30(3), 607–610.
- Limbu, Y. B., Jayachandran, C., Babin, B. J., & Peterson, R. T. (2016). Empathy, nonverbal immediacy, and salesperson performance: The mediating role of adaptive selling behavior. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 31(5), 654-667.
- MacKenzie, S. B., Podsakoff, P. M., & Fetter, R. (1993). The impact of organizational citizenship behavior on evaluations of salesperson performance. *The Journal of Marketing*, 57(1), 70-80.
- Magatef, S and Momani, R (2016). Impact of internal marketing on employees' performance: A study of private Jordanian hospitals sector. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 11(3):129
- Mann, W.-R. (2000). *The discovery of things: Aristotle's categories and their context*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

- Markose, B. (2011). Influence of Moderators in the Relationship of Supervisory Feedback with Goal Orientation of Salespeople – An Empirical Study. *International Journal of Business Insights and Transformation*, 4(2), 53-66.
- Martey, E.M (2014). The impact of internal marketing on employee performance: A case of Ghana insurance industry. *International Journal of Research*, 13(2): 31-48.
- Novitasari, D., Napitupulu, B. B. J., Abadiyah, S., Silitonga, N., & Asbari, M. (2022). Linking between Brand Leadership, Customer Satisfaction, and Repurchase Intention in the E-commerce Industry. *International Journal of Social and Management Studies*, 3(1), 280-289.
- Pandey, A. Charoensukmongkol. P, (2019). "Contribution of cultural intelligence to adaptive selling and customer-oriented selling of salespeople at international trade shows: does cultural similarity matter?", *Journal of Asia Business Studies*.
- Park, J. E. (2010) "How does sales force automation influence relationship quality and performance? The mediating roles of learning and selling behaviors" , *Industrial Marketing Management*.
- Pettijohn, C. E., Pettijohn, L. S., & Taylor, A. J. (2007). Does salesperson perception of the importance of sales skills improve sales performance, customer orientation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, and reduce turnover? *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 27(1), 75-88.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y [Jeong-Yeon], & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(5), 879–903.
- Porter, S. S., Wiener, J. L., & Frankwick, G. L. (2003). The moderating effect of selling situation on the adaptive selling strategy–selling effectiveness relationship. *Journal of Business Research*, 56(4), 275-281.
- Román, S., & Iacobucci, D. (2010). Antecedents and consequences of adaptive selling confidence and behavior: A dyadic analysis of salespeople and their customers. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 38(3), 363-382.
- Román, S., & Rodríguez, R. (2015). The influence of sales force technology use on outcome performance. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 30(6), 771- 783.
- Roman, S., Ruiz, S. and Munuera, J. (2002), "The effects of sales training on sales force activity", *European Journal of Marketing*, 36 (11/12), pp. 1344-66.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. H. I. L. I. P., & Thornhill, A. D. R. I. A. N. (2007). *Research methods*. Business Students 4th edition Pearson Education Limited, England
- Singh, R. and Das, G. (2013), "The impact of job satisfaction, adaptive selling behaviors and customer orientation on salesperson's performance: exploring the moderating role of selling experience", *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 28 (7), 554-564
- Spiro, R. L., & Weitz, B. A. (1990). Adaptive selling: Conceptualization, measurement, and nomological validity. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 27(1), 61-69.
- Sujan, H., Weitz, B. A., & Kumar, N. (1994). Learning orientation, working smart, and effective selling. *Journal of Marketing*, 58(3), 39-52.
- Sujan, H., Weitz, B. A., & Sujan, M. (1988). Increasing sales productivity by getting salespeople to work smarter. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 8(2), 9-19.
- Szymanski, D. and Churchill, G. (1990), "Client evaluation cues: a comparison of successful and unsuccessful salespeople", *Journal of Marketing Research*, 27, 163-74.
- Szymanski, D. M. (1988). Determinants of selling effectiveness: The importance of declarative knowledge

- to the personal selling concept. *The Journal of Marketing*, 52(1), 64-77.
- Tesfaye Sahle (2018), The effects of sales training practice on sales performance: The Case of Yes Food and Beverage Plc.
- Udayana, I.B, Prayekti, Eliya Ardyan (2019). Factors that Influence the Relationship between Customer Information Quality and Salesperson Performance. *Market-Tržište*, 31 (2).
- Verbeke, W., Belschak, F., & Bagozzi, R. P. (2004). The adaptive consequences of pride in personal selling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 32(4), 386-400
- Verbeke, W., Dietz, B., & Verwaal, E. (2011). Drivers of sales performance: a contemporary meta-analysis. Have salespeople become knowledge brokers? *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39(3), 407-428.
- Vroom, V. H. (1964). *Work and motivation*. Wiley
- Weitz, B. A., Sujan, H., & Sujan, M. (1986). Knowledge, motivation, and adaptive behavior: A framework for improving selling effectiveness. *The Journal of Marketing*, 50(4), 174-191.
- Yang, B., Kim, Y., & McFarland, R. G. (2011). Individual differences and sales performance: A distal-proximal mediation model of self-efficacy, conscientiousness, and extraversion. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 31(4), 371-381.
- Yilmaz, C. (2002), "Salesperson Performance and Job Attitudes Revisited: An Extended Model and Effects of Potential Moderators," *European Journal of Marketing*, 36 (11-12), 1389-1414.
- Zallocco, R., Bolman Pullins, E., & Mallin, M. L. (2009). A re-examination of B2B sales performance. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 24(8), 598-610
- Zhou, J. and Charoensukmongkol. P. (2020). *The effect of social media use on customer qualification skills and adaptive selling behaviors of export salespeople in China*. Emerald Publishing Limited, ISSN 1558-7894 *Journal of Asia Business Studies*.