

ORGANISATIONAL IMAGE AS A MODERATOR OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PERSONALITY AND PERSONAL TRAITS AND SALES PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

The present study represent an attempt to explore the impact of sales personnel Characteristics (personal & personality) on sales performance with a moderator role of organizational image, the researchers aim is to find the relationship in the context of Pakistani market. The researchers used non probability sampling technique. The tool used for data gathering i.e. questionnaire has been distributed among 275 respondents within the domain of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Result of the study shows that personality & personal characteristics of sales personnel along with organizational image as moderator has a positive impact on sales performance.

Keywords: Personality characteristics, Personal Characteristics, Sales performance, Organization image

Introduction

It is critically important for organizations today to recruit high performing employees. One big question that organizations may find hard to answer is how to separate individuals who will perform well from those who will not. The answer may to some extent relate to the type of personality that one exhibit. Every firm focuses on profitability and increase in sales which depends on different factors. Those factors lie within the teams or may exist in an individual e.g. the individual characteristics i.e. personal characteristics and personality characteristics have enough contribution towards the sales performance of a firm. Individual salesperson and organization give significant importance to Improving sale performance and sales manager put considerable effort in recruiting, training and managing their sales personnel.

It is believed that improved sales skills of sales personnel brings a potential benefits for an organization, however to gain these potential benefits, it is required to invest in those skills and characteristics of sales personnel. The management of sales performance of sales personnel by an organization has a significant impact on overall success of that particular organization. Furthermore, organizations spend huge amounts on sales person's recruitment and on their training to increase their ability and skills to polish their abilities to perform at their best.

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Researchers struggled to identify different traits which can help an individual to improve sales performance, these traits include cooperativeness, competitiveness, persistence, enthusiasm and big five personality traits i.e. conscientiousness, openness, extraversion, neuroticism and agreeableness. Researchers also focused on different personal factors which include age, gender, height, education and race.

The main objective of this study is to investigate the impact of personal & personality characteristics on sales performance. After the detail analysis and applying many statistical tools it is proved that sales people's characteristics like age, gender, education, dressing and past experience affect sales performance and customer satisfaction. Similarly, personality characteristics like extrovert, openness, knowledge of job and social interaction increases the sales performance. Interpersonal skill is important for sales persons to perform in the fields. Organizational image help the sales persons while interacting with customers. Both the firm and the individual sales person works together for the interest of organizational success and on the other hand sales performance sometime depends on situational factor and organizational image which can moderate the sales performance. Situational factors include market condition, product types etc. In recent years consumers focuses more on branded rather than non branded products. Thus the study contributes in guiding the service and production organizations to understand which personal & personality characteristics of sales persons has impact on sales performance.

Literature Review

Sales performance is defined as quantity as well as quality of sales closed at a particular time period (Colleti & Tubridy, 1993). The Significance of Sales According to the Bureau of Labour Statistics BLS (2010) sales and related occupations are the second largest occupational group accounting for approximately 10% of the total number of employments in the US (US Department of Labour, 2010). Based on statistical data from BLS, organizations in the USA employ roughly 14 million workers within the occupation of sales (Farr & Tippins, 2010). More importantly, Farr and Tippins (2010) have addressed that sales occupations represent a significant portion of the total workforce in the world and that the success of businesses solely depend on their sales workers job performance. Previous research has shown that sales people

role has an impact over sales performance and without their efforts and characteristics customers cannot be satisfied and ultimate result i.e., sales performance cannot be achieved (Heiner Evanschitzky, 2012). Research in the past has shown that both sales peoples & customers have an adaptive way of dealing. Hence it can be stated that satisfied employee can easily satisfy a customer and can make him a client.

Mecloy, Campbell and Cudeck (1994) found that sales performance is about how well the individual mold their behavior to make it in line with the organization sales objective. (Ralph W. Giacobbe D. W., 2006) argues that since 1960 many factors are investigated which can measure the sales performance in an organization. However, despite of that much effort in this area there is need of more research on those factors which influence the sales performance. Personality characteristics include psychological characteristics which can enhance the ability of individual to perform (Charchil et al, 1985). Meanwhile, Wiley and Carolyn (1997) relate personality as one's ability to perform the task that he or she has the right personal characteristics, the right mental capabilities for selling.

Barrick et al (1991) state that it's very crucial now days for the organization to hire sale persons who have high performance attributes. Personal characteristics of sales persons may include age, height, weight, education, hobbies etc which will influence the consumer and sales performance (Lamont, 1977). Research has shown that the personality characteristics of a sale person are the prior predictor of sales performance (Barrick & Moamt, 1991). Colletti and Tubridy (1993) provided the following list of sales activities for successful salespeople: selling, working with distributors, entertainment, attending meetings, servicing products, working with orders, servicing accounts, travel, communication/information, training and recruiting. It is also cited that the performance measures taken at different times are not highly related and the relationships between different performance measures are not strong (Chonko, Roberts and Dubinsky, 2002).

The first theoretical framework of sales performance was published by Walker, Churchill and Ford (1977) suggesting the determinants of sales performance, followed by several attempt to investigate the hypothesized links between possible personality factors and sales performance. Maslow (1970), Dion, Easterling and Miller (1995), Hollenbeck, Williams and Klein (1988) and Wiley and Carolyn (1997)

have examined the relationship between personality and performance have generally exhibited numerous results. Personality is associated with three dimensions. The first dimension is related to an individual physical appearance such as height, weight or age. Second, personality that is the distinctive and attribute patterns of thought, emotion and behavior that define an individual's personal style and influence his or her interactions with the environment Atkinson, Smith and Bern, (1993). The third dimension is mental abilities such as verbal intelligence, mathematical ability and musical orientation and these are frequently referred to as achievement in psychology. Some of the personality characteristics associated with salespersons are empathy, ego, self-efficacy, locus of control, sociability and self-monitoring Bagozzi, (1978). Lamont and Lundstrom (1977) investigated the relationships between several personal factors and personality variables and sales performance of industrial salespeople. The result indicated that endurance and social recognition were significantly and positively related to performance while empathy and ego strength were found to be negatively related to performance.

Self-efficacy is one of the major personality characteristics being investigated in searching for criteria which is related to sales performance. Judge, Jackson, Shaw, Scott and Risk (2007) examined the unique contribution of self-efficacy to work-related performance and reported that the contribution is relatively small. The result was based on a meta-analysis of the relevant literatures. Bandura (1977) defined self-efficacy as individuals' beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance. Even in those studies that have found a significant relationship between performance and self-efficacy, the relationship has been weak (Ford, Smith, Weissbein, Gully and Salas, 1998).

The Vinchur et al. (1998) study was an important step in combining the results of sales performance validation studies conducted across the 20th century. However, limitations include: a) potential moderators were not included in the study, and b) only main effects of personality scales were studied, not combinations of scales. Warr, Bartram, and Martin (2005) addressed the issues regarding sales performance research to some degree with three small-sample studies. Although positive main effects were found for Openness to Experience and Conscientiousness,

and significant negative main effects for Agreeableness, no significant effects were found for situation (i.e., type of sales organization) as a moderator, or for combinations of scales (i.e., interactions).

Conceptual Framework

In the service industry sales person is very important. It has direct contact with customers and is responsible for customer satisfaction. Thus it is needed that they must understand customers mind, and act accordingly. Organizational image helps the sales person in the field and is reflected by its customer. Sales person affect the company sales. These Variables are interacted with each other. Sales person personal & personality characteristics affect the sales performance and organizational image support this relation positively.

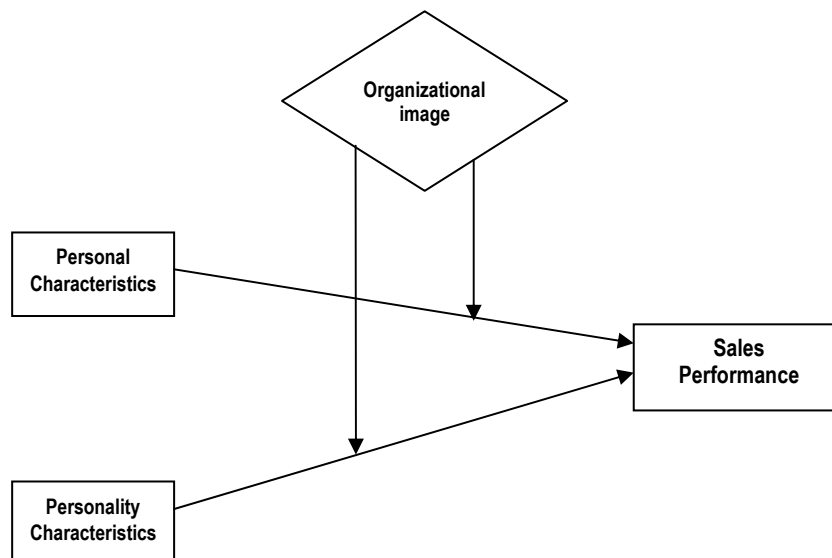


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Hypothesis

- H1: Personal characteristics have positive impact on sale performance.
- H2: Personality characteristics have positive impact on sale performance.
- H3: Organizational Image moderates the relationship between personal characteristics and Sale performance.
- H4: Organizational Image moderates the relationship between personality characteristics and Sale performance.

Research Methodology***Research Design***

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of personal and personality characteristics on sales performance with the moderation role of organizational image. In the service industry sales person have direct contact with customer that's why researchers select service industry to study the impact of above variables. The population of this research consists of the sales persons of service industry serving in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Researchers have used non probability convenient sampling technique. Researchers collect data that is easily available from those people who fulfill prescribed criteria. The Summary for responses is as below:

Table-1: Detail of Responses

Pre decided sample size	No. of questionnaire distributed	No. of filled questionnaire received	No. of Questionnaire Discarded	No. of Responses recorded	Response rate
300	275	257	7	250	97.27%

Nature of Data

Data is primary in nature because researchers collect it directly from sales persons of service industry.

Purpose of the Study

Purpose of study is descriptive.

Type of Investigation

Type of investigation is causal.

Time Horizon

Type of data is cross-sectional because this data is collected for one time and the respondents belong to different organizations and at different level.

Data Analysis

Researchers have used SPSS 17.0 and applied various statistical tools to analyze the questionnaire.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in this research is the Individual sales people of service industry.

Instrument Development

The data collection tool is the questionnaire for this study. The questionnaire was developed on five point likert scale.

Table-2: Linkert Scale

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Questionnaire

The questionnaire (annexure-I) is adapted to gather the information regarding the research topic. The researchers have used both online and printed questionnaires for recording the view of respondents. The data gathered could only be used for this research purpose and the researcher makes sure the no information is shared or distributed to others. The questionnaire includes the demographics i.e. gender, age, income level and education level. The rest of the questionnaire is comprised of 20 questions about different variables involved in this research. Simple closed ended questions have been used to make the questionnaire easy to understand for the respondents. Details are as follows:

Table-3: Questionnaire Detail

Sr. No.	Variable	Type of Variable	No. of Questions	Adapted Form
1	Personal Characteristics	Independent	05	(Lundstrom, 1977) (Doris Omerzel Gomezelj, 2013)
2	Personality characteristics	Independent	05	(Margaret Jenkins, 2004) (Lundstrom, 1977) (Victor P. Lau, 1999)
3	Organizational Image	Moderator	05	(Robert Inglis, 2006) (Supina, 2002)
4	Sales performance	Dependent	05	(Ralph W. Giacobbe, 2006) (Johlke, 2006)

Content Validity

The content validity of the adapted instrument is done by 3 marketing experts who have vast knowledge of the market trends and have experience of conducting market research.

Results and Discussion***Results*****Reliability**

To check the instrument reliability researchers have used the reliability test and find that instrument is reliable. It is measured separately for each variable and the acceptable value of Cronbach's α is greater than 0.650 (See Table 4).

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive analysis measures the central tendency and variability or dispersion. Measure of central tendency includes mean, median and mode whereas dispersion includes skewness, kurtosis, minimum and

maximum values of the variables. In Table 5, it is clear that all the values are between 1 and 5 which mean that there is no problem in data entry because all the values are within range. Mean statistic shows the mean value of all the respondents of a particular variable. Standard deviation shows the deviation of the data from the mean. Skewness and kurtosis are the measure of the normality of the data. Value of skewness and kurtosis should be between +1 to -1 to prove the normality of the data. In the table it is clear that all the values are within the range which proves the normality of the data.

Table-4: Reliability

Variable	Reliability	No. of Items
Personal Characteristics	0.824	5
Personality Characteristics	0.943	5
Organization Image	0.657	5
Sales Performance	0.753	5

Table-5: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mini- mum	Maxi- mum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
Personal characteristics	250	1.20	5.00	3.6480	1.03261	-.888	.154	-.527	.307
Personality characteristics	250	1.20	5.00	3.4952	1.04488	-.624	.154	-.919	.307
Organization image	250	1.40	5.00	3.5920	1.00358	-.835	.154	-.485	.307
Sales Performance	250	1.20	5.00	3.6488	.91363	-.544	.154	-.558	.307
Valid N (listwise)	250								

One Way ANOVA

Researchers apply one way ANOVA and takes sales performance as Dependent variable and experience as categorical variable to study the impact of experience on sales performance. In table 6 of ANOVA it is shown that people with different experience have different impact on sales performance. In table 7 it can be seen that as experience of sales person increases the sales performance also increases, thus there is a positive relationship between sales person experience and its sales performance. People with having more than 10 year experience have greater impact on sales performance in positive way and people with less than 2 year experience have less influence on sales performance.

Table-6: ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	153.726	3	51.242	232.924	.000
Within Groups	54.119	246	.220		
Total	207.845	249			

Table-7: Multiple Comparisons

(I) Experience	(J) Experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
< 2	2-5	-.81196*	.08109	.000	-1.0217	-.6022
	5-10	-1.79313*	.08316	.000	-2.0082	-1.5780
	>10	-2.14368*	.09674	.000	-2.3939	-1.8934
2-5	<2	.81196*	.08109	.000	.6022	1.0217
	5-10	-.98117*	.07597	.000	-1.1777	-.7847
	>10	-1.33173*	.09064	.000	-1.5662	-1.0973
5-10	<2	1.79313*	.08316	.000	1.5780	2.0082
	2-5	.98117*	.07597	.000	.7847	1.1777
	>10	-.35056*	.09250	.001	-.5898	-.1113
> 10	<2	2.14368*	.09674	.000	1.8934	2.3939
	2-5	1.33173*	.09064	.000	1.0973	1.5662
	5-10	.35056*	.09250	.001	.1113	.5898

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Assumptions of Regression

Normality of Data

To check for normality of data researchers looked at the values of skewness and kurtosis and its ranges from +1 to -1. Thus the data is normal and first assumption is full filled (see table 5).

Absence of Serial or Auto Correlation

The value of Durbin Watson is 1.987 and it is within range of 1.5 to 2.5 thus there is no auto correlation and this assumption is fulfilled (see table 8).

Linear Relationship with DV

Third assumption is that all variables have linear relationship with dependent variable. Personal characteristics and personality characteristics has strong relationship with dependent variable. And the moderator variable which is organization image has strong association with DV as well and its value is 0.795 (see table 9).

Table-8: Model Summary

Model	Durbin – Watson
1	1.987
a. Predictors: (Constant), Personality characteristics, Personal characteristics	
b. Dependent Variable: Sales Performance	

Table-9: Correlation

		Personal Characteristics	Personality Characteristics	Organization Image	Sales Performance
Personal Characteristics	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	250			
Personality Characteristics	Pearson Correlation	.474**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	250	250		
Organization Image	Pearson Correlation	.510**	.426**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
	N	250	250	250	
Sales Performance	Pearson Correlation	.738**	.756**	.795**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	250	250	250	250

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Absence of Multicollinearity

The forth assumption is that there is no multicollinearity in the data which means that there is no combined effect of variables on dependent variable. For this researchers check the value of tolerance and VIF. The range of tolerance is greater than 0.25 and value of VIF is less than 4. All values are within the range and this assumption is fulfilled (see Table 10).

Table-10: Coefficient a

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Personal characteristics	.775	1.290
Personality characteristics	.775	1.290

Regression

Researchers have concluded that the value of R is 0.87 and the relationship between independent and dependent variables is strong. A change in independent variable changes the dependent variable by 75.7% and the change in dependent variable due to the external factors is 45.20% as shown by Standard Error of estimate. Adjusted R square means if researchers take whole population as its sample than a change in

independent variable changes dependent variable by 75.55% (see Table 11). Results of ANOVA b shows that at least 1 independent variable has a relationship with the dependent variable hence researchers can precede with regression analysis. For reference see Table 11. Also Researchers have come to the conclusion that the value of dependent variable is equal to 0.468 if the independent variables are equal to zero. All hypotheses are accepted because personal & personality characteristics have significant relation with dependent variable. Personality characteristics changes the dependent variable by 43.3% and personal characteristics changes dependent variable by 45.8%, this is shown by value of B (beta) (see Table 11).

Table-11: Regression

	R	R. Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.	B	t	Sig.
	.870 ^a	.757	.755	.45207	385.013	.000 ^a			
(Constant)							.468	3.951	.000
Personal Characteristics							.433	13.736	.000
Personality Characteristics							.458	14.725	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Personality characteristics, Personal characteristics									
b. Dependent Variable: Sales Performance									

Moderator for Personal Characteristics

Researchers have concluded that the value of R is 0.738 and the relationship between Personal characteristics and dependent variable is strong. A change in Personal characteristics changes the dependent variable by 54.4% and the change in dependent variable due to the external factors is 61.823% as shown by Standard Error of estimate (see Table 12). In path two researchers have concluded that the value of R is 0.795 and the relationship between Personal characteristics and dependent variable is strong. A change in Organization image changes the dependent variable by 63.2% and the change in dependent variable due to the external factors is 55.55% as shown by Standard Error of estimate (see Table 12).

In path 3 researchers have concluded that the value of R is 0.873 and the relationship between product variable (Personal characteristics * Organization image) and dependent variable is strong. A change in product variable changes the dependent variable by 76.2% and the

change in DV due to the external factors is 44.627% as shown by Standard Error of estimate (see Table 12). In table 12 ANOVA is significant in all three paths so we conclude that organization image moderate the relationship between personal characteristics and sales performance. In path one researchers have come to the conclusion that the value of dependent variable is equal to 1.268 if the Personal characteristics are equal to zero. The hypotheses are accepted because personal characteristics have significant relation with dependent variable. Personal characteristics changes dependent variable by 65.8%, this is shown by value of B (beta) (see Table 12).

Table-12: Moderator for Personal Characteristics

	R	R. Square	Adjusted Square	R.	F	Sig.	B	t	Sig.
Personal Characteristics (IV) and Sales Performance (DV)									
	.738 ^a	.544	.542		295.800	.000 ^a			
(Constant)							1.268	8.818	.000
Personal Characteristics							.653	17.199	.000
Organization Image (IV) and Sales Performance (DV)									
	.795 ^a	.632	.630		425.366	.000 ^a			
(Constant)							1.050		8.024
Organization Image							.724		20.624
Product variable (Personal characteristics * Organization image) & Sales Performance (DV)									
	.873 ^a	.762	.761		795.604	.000 ^a			
(Constant)							1.873	27.158	.000
E							.130	28.206	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Personal characteristics									
a. Predictors: (Constant), Organization image									
a. Predictors: (Constant), E									
b. Dependent Variable: Sales Performance									

Moderator for Personality Characteristics

In path one researchers have concluded that the value of R is 0.756 and the relationship between Personality characteristics and dependent variable is strong. A change in Personality characteristics changes the DV by 57.2% and the change in DV due to the external factors is 59.91% as shown by Standard Error of estimate (See Table 13). In path two researchers have concluded that the value of R is 0.795 and the relationship between Personal characteristics and dependent variable is strong. A change in Organization image changes the dependent variable by 63.2% and the change in dependent variable due to the external

factors is 55.55% as shown by Standard Error of estimate (See Table 13). In path 3 researchers have concluded that the value of R is 0.91 and the relationship between product variable (Personality characteristics * Organization image) and dependent variable is strong. A change in product variable changes the DV by 82.7% and the change in DV due to the external factors is 38.04% as shown by Standard Error of estimate (See Table 13). In table 13 ANOVA is significant in all three path so we conclude that organization image moderate the relation between personal characteristics and sales performance.

Table-13: Moderator for Personality Characteristics

	R	R. Square	Adjusted Square	R.	F	Sig.	B	t	Sig.
Personality characteristics (IV) & Sales Performance (DV)									
	.756 ^a	.572	.570		330.931	.000 ^a			
(Constant)							1.338	10.096	.000
Personal Characteristics							.661	18.192	.000
Organization image (IV) & Sales Performance (DV)									
	.795 ^a	.632	.630		425.366	.000 ^a			
(Constant)							1.050		8.024
Organization Image							.724		20.624
Product variable (Personality characteristics * Organization image) & Sales Performance (DV)									
	.910 ^a	.827	.827		1188.068	.000 ^a			
(Constant)							1.864	32.652	.000
E							.137	34.468	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Personality characteristics									
a. Predictors: (Constant), Organization image									
a. Predictors: (Constant), F									
b. Dependent Variable: Sales Performance									

Conclusion

Organisations wants to enhance their sales performance but their focus always remains the same that they should stay one step ahead from their competitors specifically in terms of sales performance. Business needs some conditions and factors to cattier their desired situations i.e. to improve sales performance. The personal and personality characteristics are used as independent variables while sales performance as dependent variable and the organizational image is acting as a moderator between the personal and personality characteristics and sales performance relationship. The researchers studied different market identified factors such as personal characteristics, sales people's personality characteristics

and image of particular organization to investigate their impact on sales performance. The population of this research consists of the sales persons of service industry serving in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Researchers use non probability convenient sampling technique. Researchers collect data that is easily available from those people who fulfill prescribed criteria. The result of the research shows that both personal characteristics and personality characteristics have a strong relationship with sales performance. The respondents revealed that in spite of the above mentioned factors organizational image has also a major influence on sales performance, the more the organization is known to people the highest will be its sales percentage.

Implication

Personal and personality characteristics influence sales performance. Through the factors identified in this research the HR department can be aware of the importance of those factors and they can train and develop their sales force to align them with customer need. The research shows that organization image has a major influence over customer decision making. That's why the marketing department can start communicating their organization image to their customers to get benefit of it. This research can be a self assessment tool for the sales personnel, with the identified factors they can mold thier personality in accordance to the market and customer demand. This research is helpful for the students who are interested in research in particular areas. Through this research students can be aware about the factors which are helpful in the field of sales. That's why they can groom their selves before entering into the field.

Limitation and Future Direction

Researchers faced the time and resources constraints and the domain of the research was limited to the respondents of Islamabad and Rawalpindi thus, future research can focus on a broader sample in order to collect many indifferent viewpoints. This research is limited to service industry; future researches should target some other industries in order to get more precise and focused idea about the future for sales performance.

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