

Do Job Resources Matter for The Sales Force? Enhancing Sales Force Performance and Adaptive Selling Behavior

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INFO

Article History

Received:

2023-12-08

Revised:

2023-12-24

Accepted:

2023-12-28

ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to examine the influence of emotional regulation as an individual's personal resource on the sales force performance by considering the mediating role of adaptive selling behavior and the moderating role of perceived job autonomy. Using a quantitative approach, data were obtained from 135 sales forces in the banking services industry in DKI Jakarta and Bandung City, selected using a purposive sampling method. The data obtained were then processed using structural equation modeling with partial least squares. The findings of this study empirically confirm the conservation of resources theory in terms of sales force performance, as emotional regulation acts as the personal resource that can, directly and indirectly, affect sales force performance through adaptive selling behavior. In addition, perceived job autonomy acts as the external resource that can strengthen the influence of emotional regulation on adaptive selling behavior, as well as adaptive selling behavior on sales force performance. The findings of this study also emphasize the need for management, especially sales managers, to ensure that their salespeople have a customer orientation and are willing to dedicate the energy and resources they possess to meet customer requests or needs.



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Keywords: Adaptive Selling Behavior; Emotional Regulation; Perceived Job Autonomy; Sales Force Performance

INTRODUCTION

Salesforce plays a significant role in bridging the gap between customers and the firm. The job of the sales force is full of pressure as it is directly related to competition in the industry and the dynamics of customer preferences (Chen & Wang, 2019). In conducting their work, the sales force is required to be able to sell the products or services offered by the company, and the compensation they receive is also often measured by their performance in selling these products or services (Epler et al., 2023; Kegui et al., 2020). Sales forces are also tasked with developing and providing more value for customers. This direct relationship with one of the external stakeholders is very crucial as it can determine the sustainability and success of an organization (Amenuvor, Yi, et al., 2022). In this uncertain and rapidly changing era, the sales force needs

to be more flexible and adaptive in interacting with customers who have their own characteristics and preferences (Bowen et al., 2021; Guenzi & Habel, 2020).

The concept of adaptive selling is not a new notion in marketing literature. This concept has been around for at least the last 40 years (Bowen et al., 2021) but is still being studied and is deemed relevant to be explored in more depth. This concept originates from the view that selling is a complex activity, where no one sales situation and method of selling is the same (T.-T.-L. Nguyen et al., 2022); thus, sales forces who carry out adaptive selling will adapt their methods and approaches to each situation and different customers. With the increasing competition and customer demand for customized products and services, the concept of adaptive selling is still being adopted to build long-term relationships with customers (Amenuvor, Basilisco, et al., 2022; T. D. Nguyen et al., 2018). This is because adaptive selling has been proven to be able to provide various positive outcomes for firms, including increasing sales (Kaynak et al., 2016; Zheng et al., 2023), sales force performance (Inyang & Jaramillo, 2020; Kuo et al., 2023), to purchase intention (Majeed et al., 2023).

As parties who interact directly with customers, the sales force is often faced with difficult situations. They sometimes face complicated sales situations, resistance from customers, and the need to understand customers' different preferences and communication styles (Yi & Amenuvor, 2023). They also need to show positive emotions, perceive and empathize with customers' emotions, and manage their own emotions to ensure that customers feel satisfied, respected, and appreciated (Miao et al., 2021). This condition makes the sales force need to have effective emotional regulation to carry out their work and provide better service to customers (Kuo et al., 2023; Singh & Singh, 2019).

In several works of literature, emotional regulation is seen as an aspect that can have a positive impact on both individuals and organizations, such as increasing performance, reducing stress or burnout levels, and minimizing turnover (Gautam & Gautam, 2022; Hung et al., 2022; Hur et al., 2022). This concept has also begun to receive attention in sales management literature and practice in recent years (Schlegel et al., 2018). This is because the sales force performs jobs that relate to their interpersonal skills, and these jobs sometimes require negotiation or problem-solving skills. For this reason, emotional regulation is also needed for the sales force to enable them to communicate effectively with customers (Kuo et al., 2023; Singh & Singh, 2019) so that good relationships between salespeople and customers can be maintained.

So far, emotional regulation, which is a component of emotional intelligence, has been proven to improve performance (Alonazi, 2020; Miao et al., 2021). However, there has not been much research highlighting how salespeople regulate their emotions to improve adaptive selling and their performance (Kuo et al., 2023). In addition, existing research on adaptive selling has not considered much of the interactions that exist between individual and organizational antecedent factors (Zheng et al., 2023). Most literature tends to view the antecedents of adaptive selling from individual-level characteristics (Lam et al., 2019; T.-T.-L. Nguyen et al., 2022), neglecting organizational factors. Therefore, there are limitations in existing studies regarding the interaction of individual characteristics (emotional regulation) and organizational factors

(e.g., perceived job autonomy) to form adaptive selling behavior and improve sales force performance.

Based on this research gap, this study is conducted to examine when and how emotional regulation can influence the performance of salespeople in the banking industry both directly and indirectly through the mediating role of adaptive selling behavior. Then, this study also looks at the mechanisms underlying the strong or weak relationship between emotional regulation, adaptive selling behavior, and sales force performance by considering the moderating role of perceived job autonomy as an organizational characteristic. Previous scholars (Yagil & Oren, 2021; Yucel, 2019) have proven that job autonomy can lead to positive outcomes such as employee performance or positive behavior. Hence, this study expands the existing literature by showing that when the level of job autonomy possessed by the sales force is high, positive behavior and performance will increase better than when job autonomy is low. Based on the conservation of resources theory, emotional regulation and perceived job autonomy are seen as two aspects that become sales force resources and enable them to demonstrate adaptive selling behavior and superior performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conservation of Resources Theory

Conservation of resources theory (COR), developed by Hobfoll (1989), is a commonly used theory in organizations to understand how the preservation and acquisition of resources by individuals can provide positive outcomes such as increased performance. This theory posits that individuals strive to obtain, maintain, and protect valuable resources, and efforts to conserve these resources play a key role in their well-being and performance in organizational contexts (Hobfoll, 1989; Sungu et al., 2020). Based on this theory, individuals have various resources (social, mental, and physical) that will help them to handle the pressures and demands of work.

Several studies have highlighted emotional intelligence, one of which components is emotional regulation, as a personal resource that helps individuals manage stress and demands in their work (Choi et al., 2019; Lee & Ok, 2014; Miao et al., 2021). Apart from that, several literatures also see job autonomy as a resource that can encourage individuals to demonstrate their performance (Meyer et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2020). Essentially, COR theory provides insight into how individuals in organizations are driven to maintain and acquire resources and how this can impact their performance. Management and utilization of these resources ultimately result in positive outcomes such as improved work performance and overall individual well-being (Hobfoll, 1989; Miao et al., 2021).

Hypotheses Development

Emotion regulation is one dimension of the emotional intelligence construct, which refers to the ability to identify the emotions of individuals and other people and use this as a basis for drawing conclusions, solving problems, and improving the completion of cognitive tasks (Mayer et al., 2001; Zafar et al., 2020). Emotion regulation is also one of the core components of emotional intelligence, which has a stronger influence on producing various positive

outcomes for individuals and organizations compared to other components, such as emotion recognition, emotion facilitation, and emotion understanding. By definition, Kuo et al. (2023) and Mayer et al. (2001) stated that emotional regulation is the procedure needed to regulate emotions and recognize when and how the best time to express or experience these emotions.

Sales force performance indicates the extent to which a salesperson's targets have been achieved, which is usually reflected in the contribution of each individual to set goals previously. Several experts view the performance of salespeople from their ability to exceed sales targets, expand market share, increase revenue, provide services, and carry out identification or sales (Ahmad et al., 2022; Singh & Singh, 2019). In this study, based on COR theory, emotional regulation is seen as a personal resource that individuals can utilize to improve their performance, in this case, the sales force performance. Individuals' ability to manage their emotions through cognitive processes can motivate them to achieve goals, including improving performance (Goleman et al., 2013). Several studies have also emphasized the importance of emotional intelligence, which includes emotional regulation, as an important aspect of encouraging individual performance (Alonazi, 2020; N. N. Nguyen et al., 2019). In line with this, Miao et al. (2021), in their meta-analysis, also prove the positive influence of emotional regulation on performance. Therefore, the hypothesis proposed is as follows:

H1: Emotional regulation has a positive influence on sales force performance.

Emotion regulation can help the sales force demonstrate adaptive selling behavior by adapting their approach to the sales context and customer type (Kuo et al., 2023; Singh & Singh, 2019). This is because the sales force's ability to regulate emotions will allow them to perceive their own emotions and others, such as customers (Kadic-Maglajlic et al., 2017). In addition, sales forces who can regulate their emotions tend to be better able to understand and pay attention to customers (Kuo et al., 2023; Schwepker & Good, 2011). In his study, Alonazi (2020) stated that emotional intelligence, which includes emotional regulation, is essential for employees or individuals who interact directly with clients, including customers, so that they can carry out their work functions more effectively.

This ability is relevant to adaptive selling behavior, which requires the sales force to be flexible in responding to sales situations and dealing with customers (Amenuvor, Yi, et al., 2022; Majeed et al., 2023). Salesforce regulates their emotions by managing these emotions and giving a positive impression by recognizing emotions from the customer's facial expressions, then adjusting their response to the situation. Chen and Wang (2019) and Choi et al. (2019) stated that emotional regulation is a predictor of positive individual outcomes in organizations. Individuals who can regulate their emotions can coordinate with other parties more intensively, as they can recognize and utilize their thoughts or sentiments (Gautam & Gautam, 2022; Hung et al., 2022). In this study, salespeople's emotional regulation will enable them to understand the selling conditions and situations they face, as well as change their sales approach when necessary. Thus, the hypothesis put forward is as follows:

H2: Emotional regulation has a positive influence on adaptive selling behavior.

Adaptive selling is a behavior demonstrated by a sales force to understand and meet customer demands. This behavior is a sales practice that is oriented toward customer or consumer service. According to Bowen et al. (2021) and Spiro and Weitz (1990), adaptive selling is the extent to which salespeople alter their behavior during interactions with customers, which is based on information about the customer and the selling situation. This concept emphasizes that no customer is exactly the same; thus, the sales force must be flexible in choosing their approach. Individuals who practice this behavior will serve their customers by adapting their sales methods to diverse types of consumers or situations and contexts (Kuo et al., 2023; Zheng et al., 2023). Through adaptive selling, the sales force will be able to form more targeted offers, build better relationships with customers, and increase customer satisfaction (Amenuvor, Basilisco, et al., 2022; T.-T.-L. Nguyen et al., 2022).

Several studies have shown that sales forces who are customer-oriented and show behavior such as adaptive selling behavior tend to be able to form a satisfied and loyal customer base, thereby increasing sales for the firms (Amenuvor, Basilisco, et al., 2022; Amenuvor, Yi, et al., 2022). Apart from that, adaptive selling behavior has also been proven to increase the likelihood of customers purchasing and repeat purchasing (Majeed et al., 2023; Rippé et al., 2016), which also contributes to boosting sales force performance. Adaptive selling behavior is the key to improving the performance of the sales force due to their capability to adapt in interacting with customers (Charoensukmongkol & Suthatorn, 2021; Udayana & Ardyan, 2019). Sales forces can modify sales strategies, appearance, and tactics when they master adaptive selling (Amenuvor, Yi, et al., 2022; Wisker & Poulis, 2015). Hence, the hypothesis suggested is as follows:

H3: Adaptive selling behavior has a positive influence on sales force performance.

One of the main roles of a sales force is to build effective interactions with existing and potential customers. This interaction, according to Johnston and Marshall (2021), consists of three tasks, namely prospecting new customers, making sales to existing and potential customers, and serving customers. Currently, the sales force is required to take more initiative in building interactions with customers so they do not just wait for requests from customers and follow directions from their supervisors (Bowen et al., 2021). A sales force that implements adaptive selling behavior will utilize the knowledge they have to deal with different sales situations and customer segments by implementing sales strategies and tactics that they know (T.-T.-L. Nguyen et al., 2022; Weitz et al., 1986). They can change behavior in the sales process flexibly when interacting with customers based on the information they know about the situation. Adaptive selling is a sales strategy that helps the sales force adjust their messages and behavior to fit customer needs and preferences (Kuo et al., 2023). This strategy also allows them to provide personalized messages to different types of customers (Amenuvor, Yi, et al., 2022).

With adaptive selling, the sales force will direct their focus on customer preferences and needs. They will also use their best efforts to design sales plans for each customer and meet existing requests or demands. The ability to regulate and manage emotions will lead the sales force to become more adaptive, where they utilize existing information about customers,

competitors, and the sales techniques they have mastered effectively and efficiently (Zheng et al., 2023). Sales forces who can manage their emotions will be more sensitive and empathetic in viewing sales situations and adapt their behavioral patterns to respond to these conditions, thereby improving sales performance (Limbu et al., 2016). On the other hand, sales forces who are unable to regulate their emotions tend to have more difficulty behaving adaptively and will apply the same sales methods or strategies to various types of customers (Amenuvor, Yi, et al., 2022; Spiro & Weitz, 1990). In line with COR theory, a sales force's emotional regulation can be a resource for them to develop positive behavior and outcomes such as adaptive selling behavior and performance. Therefore, the hypothesis derived is as follows:

H4: Emotional regulation has a positive influence on sales force performance through adaptive selling behavior.

Job autonomy is the ability perceived by an individual to determine how he or she regulates the rhythm and completion of the work for which he or she is responsible (Vui-Yee & Yen-Hwa, 2020). Individuals who feel they have autonomy in their work will be able to utilize the knowledge and skills they have without being controlled or hindered by other parties. High job autonomy is consistent with increasing resources given to individuals to complete work according to their method, pace, and effort (Yagil & Oren, 2021).

In the context of the sales force, the job autonomy they have allows them to regulate the way they sell or offer products and services to customers, solve problems, and take action (Amenuvor, Basilisco, et al., 2022). Several studies indicate that individuals' perceptions of the control they have or autonomy in work can give rise to a sense of responsibility for performance achievements and pride in work (Vui-Yee & Yen-Hwa, 2020; Yagil & Oren, 2021). With job autonomy, the sales force will be able to respond to customer needs and solve problems more agilely and effectively because they are given freedom and do not need to refer every existing issue to management in the company. Individuals who feel their company has given them job autonomy perceive that management has trust and provides encouragement for them to take the best action (Guenzi et al., 2014; Yucel, 2019). This can provide a stimulus for salespeople to involve themselves in positive sales behavior, such as adaptive selling behavior, to increase performance. A number of studies have confirmed the moderating role of job autonomy (Vui-Yee & Yen-Hwa, 2020; Yagil & Oren, 2021; Yucel, 2019).

Based on COR theory, job autonomy is included in the resources that individuals in organizations can utilize to achieve their goals (Demerouti et al., 2001). In this study, this freedom in determining how to work can encourage increased personal growth, learning and self-development in the sales force, which ultimately leads them to generate positive behavior and outcomes in the firm. The research model is shown in Figure 1.

H5a: Perceived job autonomy moderates the influence of emotional regulation on adaptive selling behavior, by which the influence will be stronger when perceived job autonomy is high rather than low.

H5b: Perceived job autonomy moderates the influence of adaptive selling behavior on sales force performance, by which the influence will be stronger when perceived job autonomy is high rather than low.

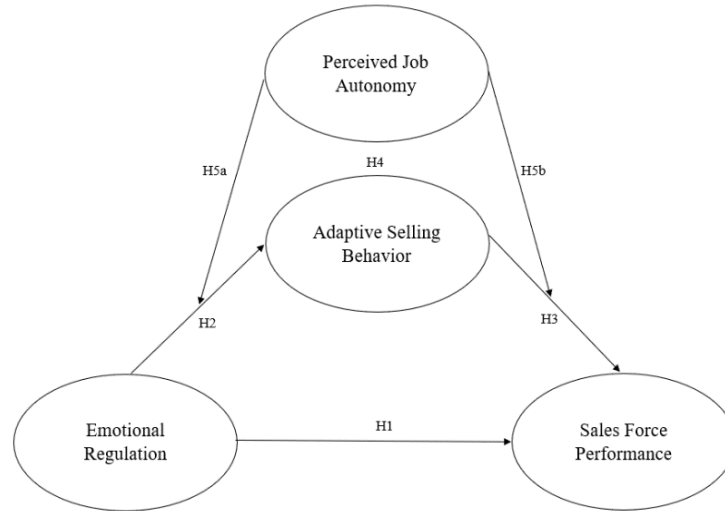


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a quantitative approach to investigate the relationship between emotional regulation, adaptive selling behavior, sales force performance, and perceived job autonomy in the context of the sales force of state-owned banks in DKI Jakarta and Bandung. Purposive sampling was employed to determine individuals who would be the samples for the research. The sample criteria were (1) bank employees with at least two years of Salesforce experience and (2) bank employees who had maintained a relationship with the customer for at least one year. Based on these criteria, the number of samples obtained was 135 respondents.

Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires to respondents using Google Forms. Respondents were asked to rate each statement using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 means "strongly disagree" and 5 represents "strongly agree." Prior to data collection, the statement items in the questionnaire also underwent thorough validity and reliability testing to ensure that the instrument was valid and reliable. Then, all data collected from respondents was analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares (PLS) as the modeling technique. Data was analyzed utilizing SmartPLS software by looking at the outer model and inner model evaluations.

Measurement

Emotional regulation was measured with three items using a scale from Amenuvor, Yi, et al. (2022) and Goleman (1995). An example of a measurement item is "I try to calm myself down when I feel bad." Adaptive selling behavior was measured using a scale adapted from Bowen et al. (2021) and Robinson et al. (2002), consisting of five items. An example of a measurement item is "When I feel that my sales approach is not effective, I can replace it with another approach." Sales force performance was measured using a scale adapted from Bowen et al. (2021) and Homburg et al. (2011), comprising six items. An example of a measurement item is "I exceeded assigned sales goals and objectives." Finally, perceived job autonomy was

measured with nine statement items developed by (Breugh, 1999), with an example item as follows, "I am allowed to decide how to complete the job (the method used)."

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' Profile

In this study, respondents were dominated by men, with a total of 72 respondents (53%). Based on age category, the highest number of respondents were in the 26–30-year age range, with 39 respondents (28%), and the fewest were respondents aged more than 40 years (8%). Then, most respondents had a bachelor's degree level of education, as many as 96 respondents (71%). Finally, the majority of respondents in this study had worked for 1-3 years, amounting to 32% (Table 1).

Table 1. Respondents' Characteristics

Respondents	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	72	53%
Female	63	47%
Age		
21-25 years old	37	28%
26-30 years old	39	29%
31-35 years old	23	17%
36-40 years old	24	18%
> 40 years old	12	8%
Education		
Bachelor's degree	96	71%
Master degree	39	29%
Working Time		
1-3 years	43	32%
4-6 years	38	28%
7-9 years	39	29%
>9 years	15	11%

Outer Model Evaluation

The reliability of the model to be studied was tested using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) (Urbach and Ahlemann, 2010). The recommended limit value for AVE is > 0.5, while for Cronbach's alpha and CR, it is > 0.7 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Chin, 1998). Table 2 summarizes the reliability test results, where the minimum values for each test were Cronbach's Alpha (0.787), Composite Reliability (0.832), and AVE (0.551), thus, it can be ensured that all the variables used in this research were reliable.

Table 2. Construct Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Adaptive Selling Behavior	0.877	0.883	0.911	0.672
Emotional Regulation	0.787	0.767	0.832	0.633
Perceived Job Autonomy	0.894	0.899	0.914	0.551
Sales Force Performance	0.871	0.879	0.903	0.609

The quality of the measurement model was then tested with the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) according to Table 3, with a recommended value < 5, so that it met the requirements suggested by Kock and Lynn (2012).

Table 3. Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Construct and Item	Factor Loading	VIF
Adaptive Selling Behavior (ASB)		
ASB1	0.713	2.126
ASB2	0.850	3.022
ASB3	0.853	4.178
ASB4	0.843	3.725
ASB5	0.831	2.033
Emotional Regulation (ER)		
ER1	0.734	1.147
ER2	0.926	2.536
ER3	0.870	2.318
Perceived Job Autonomy (PJA)		
PJA1	0.783	1.594
PJA2	0.753	1.768
PJA3	0.746	1.661
PJA4	0.768	2.604
PJA5	0.792	4.289
PJA6	0.809	4.657
PJA7	0.843	2.200
PJA8	0.819	2.752
PJA9	0.858	2.522
Sales Force Performance (SFP)		
SFP1	0.716	2.052
SFP2	0.799	2.531
SFP3	0.772	2.537
SFP4	0.830	2.200
SFP5	0.774	2.752
SFP6	0.786	2.522

Moreover, discriminant validity is the ability of a construct or variable to differentiate itself from other variables within the conceptual framework used in research. Discriminant validity was tested by comparing the square root value of AVE with the correlation value of each construct. As in Table 3, the square root values of AVE were all greater than the correlation values with other constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Apart from that, assessing discriminant validity can also be done by examining the HTMT correlation ratio (Henseler et al., 2014). Based on the data presented in Table 4, the HTMT value was below the threshold of 0.85, thus indicating satisfactory discriminant validity.

Table 4. Results of Discriminant Validity

	Fornell-Larcker Criterion				Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)			
	ASB	ER	PJA	SFP	ASB	ER	PJA	SFP
ASB	0.820				ASB			
ER	0.530	0.796			ER	0.675		
PJA	0.598	0.455	0.742		PJA	0.613	0.533	
SFP	0.806	0.478	0.608	0.780	SFP	0.749	0.621	0.627

Furthermore, the measurement model from the research can be seen in Figure 2. The predictive power of the model was evaluated with the R2 score, namely 0.493 for Adaptive Selling Behavior and 0.763 for Sales Force Performance.

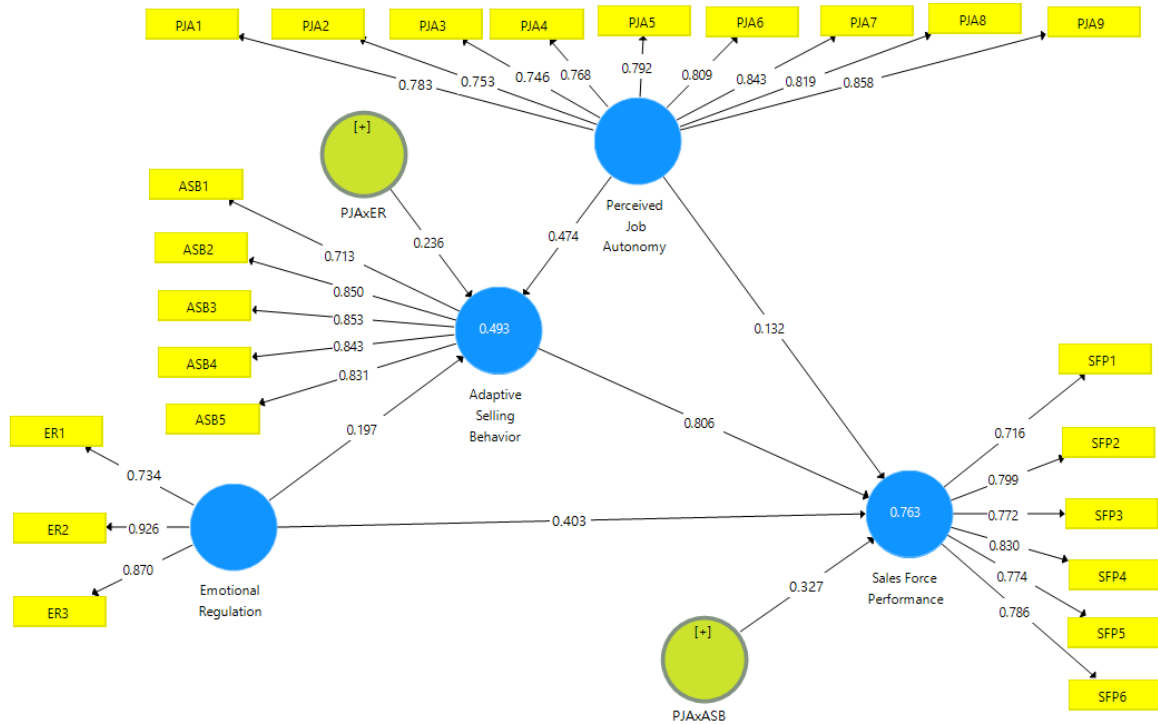


Figure 2. Path Coefficient Model

Structural Model Evaluation

The hypothesis test was carried out using bootstrapping techniques using 500 subsamples. Table 4 summarizes the complete results of the model path analysis. It was performed to test the hypotheses from H1 to H5b.

1. Emotional regulation ($\beta = 0.403$; $t = 4.517$; $p\text{-values} = 0.000$) positively influenced sales force performance; thus, hypothesis 1 was accepted.
2. Emotional regulation ($\beta = 0.197$; $t = 2.365$; $p\text{-values} = 0.018$) positively influenced adaptive selling behavior; thus, hypothesis 2 was accepted.
3. Adaptive selling behavior ($\beta = 0.806$; $t = 13.410$; $p\text{-values} = 0.000$) positively influenced sales force performance; thus, hypothesis 3 was accepted.
4. Adaptive selling behavior as a mediator ($\beta = 0.158$; $t = 2.223$; $p\text{-values} = 0.027$) had a positive influence on the relationship between emotional regulation and sales force performance; thus, hypothesis 4 was accepted.
5. Perceived job autonomy as moderator ($\beta = 2.785$; $p\text{-values} = 0.006$) had a positive influence on the relationship between emotional regulation and adaptive selling behavior; thus, hypothesis 5a was accepted.

6. Perceived job autonomy as moderator ($\beta = 0.327$; $t = 5.357$; p -values = 0.000) had a positive influence on the relationship between adaptive selling behavior and sales force performance; thus, hypothesis 5b was accepted (Table 5).

Table 5. Results of Path Coefficient

	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Std. Deviation	T Statistics	P Values	Support
ER → SFP (H1)	0.403	0.421	0.089	4.517	0.000	Yes
ER → ASB (H2)	0.197	0.206	0.083	2.365	0.018	Yes
ASB → SFP (H3)	0.806	0.810	0.060	13.410	0.000	Yes
ER → ASB → SFP (H4)	0.158	0.168	0.071	2.223	0.027	Yes
PJAxER → ASB (H5a)	0.236	0.225	0.085	2.785	0.006	Yes
PJAxASB → SFP (H5b)	0.327	0.339	0.061	5.357	0.000	Yes

Discussion

The importance of the role of the sales force in determining the success of a firm means this study was conducted to identify various factors that could influence the performance of the sales force in the context of the banking industry in Indonesia. Based on the literature review carried out, this study looks at emotional regulation, adaptive selling behavior, and perceived job autonomy as factors that can improve the performance of salespeople using the COR theoretical framework (Hobfoll, 1989).

From the data obtained and analyzed, this study provides several findings regarding emotional regulation as a predictor of sales force performance, both directly and indirectly, through adaptive selling behavior. Emotion regulation, which is one component of emotional intelligence, has been proven to influence salesperson performance (H1 was accepted). These findings empirically confirm the COR theory by showing that the resources possessed by individuals can be utilized and directed towards achieving positive outcomes such as performance. This aligns with several studies conducted previously (Alonazi, 2020; Kuo et al., 2023; Miao et al., 2021), which emphasize that emotional regulation is a valuable ability that individuals need to master, even considered more important than cognitive or technical skills (Alonazi, 2020). Based on these findings, it is ascertained that emotional regulation can help salespeople manage emotions when carrying out difficult jobs, as well as provide positive and appropriate responses to each customer by perceiving their emotions.

Emotional regulation has also been evidenced to influence increasing adaptive selling behavior (H2 was accepted), which refers to the ability of the sales force to adapt their approach and communication style to meet the needs and preferences of different customers (N. N. Nguyen et al., 2019). As a personal resource, emotional regulation can help the sales force manage stress and keep them calm or rational in the face of changing situations. The findings of this study are consistent with Chen and Wang (2019), Choi et al. (2019), and Majeed et al. (2023), which proves the positive influence of emotional regulation on adaptive selling behavior. A sales force that can regulate their emotions will be better able to adapt to changes in the sales process, such as changes in customer preferences, complaints, or other unexpected

challenges. They can change strategies and responses to customers without feeling frustrated or confrontational.

Apart from that, this study also confirms the positive influence of adaptive selling behavior on sales force performance (H3 was accepted), which is in line with a number of previous studies (Amenuvor, Basilisco, et al., 2022; Amenuvor, Yi, et al., 2022; Majeed et al., 2023; T.-T.-L. Nguyen et al., 2022). Adaptive selling allows the sales force to build deeper and more personal relationships with customers. Customers who feel that their individual needs are being met are more likely to be involved in the sales process and make purchases, thereby improving sales force performance. Apart from that, adaptive selling also helps the sales force to anticipate and overcome customer objections and concerns proactively. This reduces complaints from customers, making it easier to close sales and achieve targets.

The results of the fourth hypothesis test verify the mediating role of adaptive selling behavior, where emotional regulation could have an indirect effect on salesperson performance through adaptive selling behavior (H4 was accepted). This mediating influence was included in partial mediation, as emotional regulation could also influence the performance of the sales force directly. These findings support several studies conducted (Zheng et al., 2023; Amenuvor et al., 2022; Bowen et al., 2021). This study proves that for salespeople, emotional regulation is a vital component of adaptive selling behavior, which directly contributes to increased performance. Sales forces who can manage their emotions effectively are better equipped to build relationships, adapt to customer needs, resolve problems, and maintain a consistent, credible, and resilient sales approach, ultimately resulting in higher sales performance.

Finally, this study establishes that perceived job autonomy is proven to function as a moderator in the influence of emotional regulation on adaptive selling behavior, as well as the influence of adaptive selling behavior on salesperson performance. This is in line with several previous studies that considered perceived job autonomy as a moderator (Vui-Yee & Yen-Hwa, 2020; Yagil & Oren, 2021; Yucel, 2019). So far, the existing literature tends to ignore the possibilities that exist in this entire relationship, especially regarding how strong or weak the influence of emotional regulation is on adaptive selling behavior and salesperson performance. The results of this study demonstrate that when the sales force in the banking industry feels that they have job autonomy, it can strengthen themselves in regulating their emotions to direct them towards adaptive selling behavior. These sales forces perceive that they have the freedom to organize their work rhythm, communicate with customers, and take action quickly. Thus, they are also able to strengthen the influence of adaptive selling behavior on their performance.

CONCLUSION

As one of the parties who deal directly with customers, salespeople have a crucial role in the firm. This study highlights the multifaceted relationship between emotional regulation, adaptive selling behavior, perceived job autonomy, and sales force performance in the context of the banking industry in Indonesia using the lens of COR theory. These findings underscore the critical role of salespeople in organizational success, especially in customer-oriented industries such as banking. This study indicates that emotional regulation is an important factor

influencing salesperson performance. A salesperson's ability to manage emotions has a direct impact on his or her adaptive selling behavior. This allows them to understand better and connect with customers, leading to improved relationships and superior sales results. In addition, adaptive selling behavior as a mediating variable is proven to be a bridge between emotional regulation and sales force performance. The adaptive nature of the sales approach also allows the sales force to respond to each customer's unique needs and preferences, ultimately driving improved performance.

Furthermore, the moderating role of perceived job autonomy highlights the contextual aspects of this relationship. In the dynamic and competitive banking industry in Indonesia, job autonomy can increase or inhibit the influence of emotional regulation on adaptive selling behavior and sales force performance. This study contributes to the literature and practice regarding sales force strategy in the Indonesian banking industry by providing empirical evidence regarding factors that can improve sales force performance. By understanding and exploiting the relationship between emotional regulation, adaptive selling behavior, and perceived job autonomy, organizations can better position themselves in the competitive marketplace and ultimately increase their profits.

This study provides several implications. Theoretically, the present study enriches the literature on sales force strategy by emphasizing the importance of sales force job resources (emotional regulation and perceived job autonomy). The findings of this study highlight when and how emotional regulation can lead to positive outcomes, namely increased sales force performance in the banking industry in Indonesia. The limited research that combines the interaction between individual (e.g., emotional regulation) and organizational (e.g., perceived job autonomy) level characteristics in improving positive behavior and outcomes for salespeople underlies this study. For this reason, the present study identifies the mechanisms underlying the emotion regulation process in influencing sales force performance.

Practically, the findings of this study emphasize the need for management, specifically sales managers, to ensure that their salespeople have a customer orientation and are willing to dedicate the energy and resources they possess to meet customer requests or needs. Then, the findings of this study also indicate that the tendency of salespeople to regulate emotions, show adaptive selling behavior, and improve their performance will be stronger when they have job autonomy. As such, management needs to be aware of this to provide space for the sales force to carry out their work.

There are several limitations in this study. First, this study was limited to the banking industry in Indonesia. Although it has provided insights in this context, it still has limitations regarding the generalizability of the findings to other industries and regions. Further research can be conducted to see cross-industry and cross-cultural comparisons. Second, this study used subjective data from bank sales forces to measure performance, giving rise to the potential for bias and subjectivity. Future researchers can use supervisor ratings or assessments from other parties to minimize the potential for bias. Third, this study used cross-sectional data. Future research can explore the longitudinal impact of emotion regulation, adaptive selling behavior, and perceived job autonomy on salesperson performance to assess its sustainability over time.

Finally, this study only employed one mediator (adaptive selling behavior) and moderator (perceived job autonomy) and has not considered their interactions comprehensively, for example, through mediated moderation with conditional process analysis. Therefore, future research could explore other mediators and moderators and their interaction processes to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

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