

Enhancing Corporate Online Sales Performance in Vietnam during Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: During the pandemic period, the production and business activities, the provision of essential services for the economy were more or less turned online. This will continue even after the pandemic ends. So are the sales activities to bring profit to the company. Therefore, companies during the Covid-19 pandemic time must continuously improve and enhance their employees' online sales skills. This is the topic of the article with the aim of exploring the measures and solutions to improve these important skills during and after the Covid-19 pandemic period.

Keywords: Covid-19, sales online, Vietnam

1. INTRODUCTION

From the end of 2019 up to now, the Covid-19 pandemic has been developing very complicatedly in the world and in Vietnam in particular. Covid-19 pandemic quickly spreads to over 200 countries and territories with a tremendous speed, and in many places the situation could not be under controlled. The consequences of this epidemic is very serious, both economically and socially.

In the context of slowing global economic growth, Covid-19 pandemic appears to create a resonance of factors that lead to sweeping fluctuations in global commodity and financial markets. From disruptions in the supply chain, the supply-demand relationship, to the reduction in demand, changing the spending habits, the travel of consumers, leading to stagnant production, rising unemployment, insolvency and bankruptcy. The blockade and restriction of travel imposed by countries in turn also reduces the capacity for international cooperation and coordination.

To restore and stabilize the economy in this difficult period to ensure the quality of goods to meet the needs of consumers, government and state agencies have taken measures to support businesses. However, with the confusion nationwide, this is only a temporary measure, so with the cooperation and support from the government's policies, businesses have redirected development toward domestic market, applying information technology in commercial transactions. Thanks to the development of science and technology, the promotion of domestic trade, Vietnamese businesses have chosen online solutions due to quickness and convenience. Online business is and will be the optimal solution in the current pandemic situation and in the future as the development of information technology and the diverse selection of products and services are provided for consumers.

Researching this topic, authors want to find out some typical factors of salespeople that affect consumers' online buying decisions. Thereby, giving practical solutions to improve sales skills, managers can improve business operations at the Trade & Service Companies (industry) in Vietnam (TSC). Research also shows the skills needed to be able to improve an employee's online business performance.

Research object: The topic focuses on researching customers who have been and will use online shopping services to find out the factors that affect consumers' online buying decisions.

Scope of research: customers have been and will be using online shopping services in Ho Chi Minh City.

Research content: The research topic focuses on factors from salespeople influencing consumers' online buying decisions to come up with effective solutions to improve and improve sales skills of TSC online sales staff.

When conducting research activities, the authors use and combine a system of popular methods such as analysis, synthesis, and technical methods such as statistics, description, comparison, evaluation, and interviews, sociological surveys to create useful tools to best collect information sources. Through the review and evaluation of published research papers on online shopping behavior, the authors will synthesize theoretical and practical trends as a basis for in-depth discussion. The topic proposes some management implications to improve online sales skills of sales staff to promote business performance.

2.THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Sales

According to James. M. Comer (2005), "Selling is a personal process in which the seller learns, discovers, evokes and responds to the needs or desires of the buyer in order to realize a satisfactory, long-term interest of both sides".According to Philip Kotler (2001), "Selling is a form of direct introduction of goods and services through the exchange and with potential buyers to sell goods".According to Tuan &Hoa (2009), from a classical point of view, selling is defined as "the activity of performing the exchange of products or services of seller to buyer for money or item or agreed exchange value".

Therefore, although there is a difference between the concept of expression or the scope mentioned, the above concepts all have similarities in meaning. In short, we can understand in a simple and complete way: selling is a process of exchanging between a seller and a buyer for a product or service to meet the needs and desires of the buyer. At the same time, the buyer will bring physical or spiritual values to the seller according to the agreement between the two parties. Sellers will, through their inquiries and discoveries about the needs of customers, not only evoke the wishes to be met, satisfy the needs of buyers to provide the products and services they have provide to potential customers.

The role of sales

For the economy

- When the commodity is not sold, it stays in the warehouse and this quickly leads to a slowdown in the business's goods circulation affecting financial problems in the long run that will have a serious impact. important to the existence of that business. Conversely, if the goods are sold, but the seller is not able to sell effectively, it also has the opposite effect on the economy. Someone said that the economic problem is not the problem of producing goods, but the distribution and sale of goods.

- Sales create utilities that satisfy customers' needs: personal sales (direct) create 3 utilities, namely time, ownership, location (place of purchase). For example, the customer intends to buy a Japanese car and the customer needs it in the next month, but it takes at least 6 months for the car to import, so will the customer care?

- Selling increases aggregate demand: selling on time, convenient place to buy, etc. will increase the demand for goods and services. This brings benefits to society: The number of unemployed decreases, more people have job opportunities; the increase in demand results in increased consumption, and the cost per unit of product decreases, so the product can be sold at a cheaper price.

- Sales impact on inflation reduction: sellers provide information, focus on solving buyer's problems, offer benefits of products that will help buyers become smarter spending. and more efficient. Increased competition among businesses will help reduce prices.

- Selling makes a difference: when selling, the salesperson will point out the effective ways that the product benefits the customer, which changes the customer's habits. Without salespeople, social creativity is reduced.

For businesses

Sales activities reflect the business situation, which is a measure of the business performance of an enterprise. The business performance of an enterprise is assessed through the volume of goods sold in the market and the profits earned by the enterprise through sales.

Sales are more flexible than other marketing mix tools in conveying messages to specific groups of customers. Sellers meet customers directly, so they can capture customers' needs, can explain clearly and in detail about products, capture customer feedback through responses. The sales person is the representative of the business. The salesperson is the first person the customer comes into contact with. The customer's impression of the business comes from the impression of the salesperson. The sales person is the image of the business.

2.2. Sales online

According to Comegys et al. (2006); Darley et al., (2010); Yörük et al. (2011), online and traditional shopping methods also have similarities when going through the five-step shopping process, including: identifying demand, searching product information, evaluating Alternatives, purchase decisions and post-purchase evaluation. However, these two types of shopping methods have some differences.

Traditional business - Traditional sales channel is a form of distribution providing goods including many levels, suppliers will use the sales system to bring their products to sales agents.

-Advantages:

+ Traditional distribution channel has a large number of members in the network. Diverse distribution intermediaries. Prices are usually cheaper than showrooms, modern distribution channels.

+ Modern distribution channel: the manufacturer can manage it directly. Easy to reach consumers. Having a large and branded retail system.

-Disadvantages:

+ Modern distribution channel: customers are not widely available in the provinces. Mainly in big cities.

+ Traditional distribution channel: difficult to control price in the market. It is easy to cause conflicts on prices and sales areas between commercial intermediaries.

+ Traditional distribution channels require experienced and experienced managers and agents. It is easy to conflict between distributors if the incentives are not clear. Controlling consumer programs will be more difficult.

Online business - Online business is a form of doing business on the internet through online channels and social networks such as: designing website to sell, selling on youtube, selling via facebook, marketing on Zalo to product display and sale advertising.

-Advantages:

+ Just with simple click, anywhere with Internet connection, you can own the product as desired.

+ Support services quickly, after only 24 hours the product has been delivered to you.

- + Your online business products and services will be quickly known by customers through various support tools.
- + Give customers the opportunity to shop at any time they want.
- + Easily refer to prices in different stores before deciding to buy products.
- Disadvantages:
 - + The biggest downside when joining the online community is security. There is not yet a regulated policy on cybersecurity, information safety is not guaranteed.
 - + Therefore, customers are very afraid to register to buy products online because they are afraid that personal information about their account is secure or not?
 - + In addition, customers are also very worried when buying quality products like referral ads or not? Because there are many frauds, the product image is shimmering, but when receiving the goods, the quality is different from the advertisement image.
 - + Online sales policy is limited, lack of transparency.

2.3. Review of research models

❖ *Ahmad S.Z, Basir M. Sahvã Kitchen P.J (2010)*

This research topic examines the relationship between aspects of sales skills (interpersonal communication, sales experience, technical skills and marketing skills) that impact salespeople's performance. The impact of organizational commitment on this relationship is explored as a moderation variable. From there, the study assesses the impact of individual salespeople factors on the business performance. From that result to be aware of factors from the salesperson can influence buying decisions of buyers.

Results from this study show that salespeople possessing the above exceptional personal communication skills can significantly boost sales skills and sales performance. Additionally, this study shows that in a monopolistic business environment, interpersonal communication skills play an important role in salespeople's performance. Furthermore, to bolster sales, all interpersonal relationships must have a goal and, whenever possible, every effort must be made to avoid creating win-lose transactions.

❖ *MohdSahBasir, Syed Zamberi Ahmad, Philip J. Kitchen (2010)*

The goal of this paper is to understand the impact of aspects of sales skills, namely: personal communication skills, sales skills, technical skills and marketing skills on performance of sales staff at Telekom Malaysia Berhad, a major Malaysian telecom corporation. The data was collected based on a quota sample of 114 salespeople in the company and the findings showed that the impact of interpersonal skills positively affects salesperson performance.

This study investigates the effect of four aspects of sales skills on salesperson's performance. Three aspects of sales skills are interpersonal communication skills, sales skills and technical skills adopted from Ford et al. (1988; cited in Churchill et al., 2000), and another aspect of marketing skills is derived from Ahearne and Schillewaert (2000). This study examines the relationship between aspects of sales skills (interpersonal communication skills, sales consulting skills, technical skills and marketing skills) and salespeople performance.

Current research shows a similar finding in that interpersonal skills suggest a relationship with salesperson's performance. Interpersonal skills reflect an individual's ability to interact successfully with others and often foster positive interpersonal relationships (Gibson, Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1997). Hochwarter, Kiewitz, Gundlach, and Stoner (2004) and Churchill et al. (2000) stated that interpersonal skills were reflected in effective persuasion, interpretation and other influencing mechanisms that reveal the ability to persuade and control others. Therefore, it is expected that the performance of those with high level of personal communication skills will be better. In this regard, people with the highest level of personal communication skills report the level of performance.

The results from this study show the importance of interpersonal skills as a means of improving salesperson's performance. This result implies that salesperson performance can be enhanced by recruiting salespeople with high level of interpersonal communication skills. Optionally, most sales organizations will expect to have salespeople with higher interpersonal communication skills that could lead to operational outstanding sales or satisfying items. sales consumption of an organization (Ingram et al., 2004; Futrell, 2006).

❖ *Nour El Houda Ben Amor (2019)*

This study explores the critical skills of an effective salesperson as well as its impact on performance from both the sales manager and sales representative's perspective. An exploratory study was conducted on a total of 58 car sales professionals including 30 sales directors and 28 sales staff.

During qualitative content analysis, sales professionals clearly agree on the existence of eight skills of an effective salesperson as well as on their consequences for performance. sales action. However, the importance of skills viewed differently by the two groups of respondents. From most to least, salespeople arrange the following skills: communication and listening skills, ownership knowledge, sales presentation skills, flexibility and adaptability, empathy, cooperative skills, honesty and behavioral ethics, and time management skills. While sales managers rank them as follows: communication and listening skills, knowledge ownership, sales presentation skills, collaboration skills, flexibility and adaptability, skills time management, honest and ethical behavior, and empathy. Accordingly, consensus is related to three main skills: communication and listening skills, knowledge possession and presentation skills. This is an interesting result because each of these skills represents a sub-aspect of the three selling skills advanced by Rentz et al. (2002).

The results of the study show that communication and listening skills represent an additional aspect of interpersonal communication skills. During interviews, sales professionals endorse that other side aspects of interpersonal communication skills, namely empathy, honest and ethical behavior, as well as Cooperative skills improve effective communication and listening skills.

Possessing knowledge is an additional aspect of technical skills. The sales representative and the sales manager stated that this sub-dimension refers to product technical information and environmental knowledge. Only the sales manager indicates that technology skills represent the second sub-aspect of technical skills and that they constitute the knowledge base.

Sales consultant presentation skills form an extra aspect of your sales skills. The results showed that the respondents claim that flexibility and adaptability are also a side aspect of sales skills that help to improve salespeople's efficiency in sales presentation steps.

Only the sales managers added the sequel to the third side of the selling skill. They emphasize its importance in maintaining strong customer relationships, especially after sales presentation steps are reached. Time management skills do not appear in the category of sales skills enhanced by Rentz et al (2002). However, the salespeople and the sales manager interviewed emphasized its importance for the sales representative.

2.4. Hypotheses and proposed research model

Research hypotheses

Through reference to some documents and reviewing the online shopping situation in Vietnam, the author gives some hypotheses that subjective factors of salespeople and businesses can affect the factors. Purchasing effects are summarized as follows:

- (H1): Personal communication skills positively affect sales skills of salespeople.
- (H2): The sales consultant skills of the salesperson positively affect sales skills.
- (H3): Customer persuasion skills help sales staff positively impact sales skills.
- (H4): Problem solving skills positively impact salespeople's sales skills.
- (H5): Sales closing skills have a positive impact on sales skills of salespeople.
- (H6): Company policies will positively affect employees' awareness of improving sales skills.

Proposed research model

Based on research on factors affecting online buying behavior of customers affected by many factors, especially in the period of online business is very developing, especially during the epidemic period. The disease is progressing complicatedly at home and abroad.

In this research, the author focuses on studying the factors that influence consumers' online buying decisions influenced by salespeople to come up with effective and appropriate solutions to improve employees' high online sales skills. Based on the research model of author Nour El Houda Ben Amor (2019), there are 4 factors of aspects that can affect sales skills of employees: (1) Communication skills, (2) Skills sales consulting skills, (3) persuasion skills, (4) problem solving skills. In addition, by a specific qualitative research method, which is to refer to scientific studies on the factors that a salesperson can influence consumers' online buying decisions, the author said. develop the above research model by adding 2 new factors: (5) Order closing skill, (6) Company policy. Both of these two factors are based on the studies mentioned above.

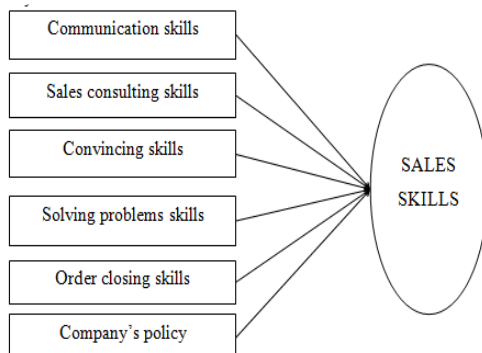


Figure 1: Proposed research model
Source: own development

3. RESEARCH METHODS

After identifying the research problem, on the theoretical basis, the authors proceed to build the research model. Based on research models that make hypotheses, we set up draft scales, adjust the draft scale by referencing some domestic and foreign studies. Since then, authors rebuild the theoretical research model for the topic and reconstructs an appropriate scale.

Authors conduct quantitative research through two phases of preliminary research and formal research. In which, the preliminary study was done by analyzing Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to eliminate variables with small total variable correlation coefficients, checking the reliability of the scales and analyzing the discovery factor EFA (Exploratory Factor Analysis) through SPSS 23.0 processing software to eliminate variables with low correlation coefficients, and reconstruct the remaining observed variables into appropriate factors (measurement components) as a basis for adjusting research models and hypotheses. Formal research has also been performed by analysis of Cronbach's reliability coefficients and exploratory factor analysis EFA. In addition, to test research models and hypotheses, the author conducted a regression analysis from which to give conclusions and propose solutions for the research model.

3.1. Research methods

Qualitative research

Qualitative research is done through expert consultation and group discussion. This research step aims to explore and form the theoretical basis and reference research model. In the process of building a research model, authors consulted experts and group discussions, from which we adjusted the scales and built a theoretical research model for the research topic. In the process of building scales, the authors perform the following steps:

- Develop preliminary research questionnaires based on relevant studies.
- Edit and complete the final questionnaire, give a complete questionnaire and official scale to prepare quantitative research.

Quantitative research

Quantitative research method is used in preliminary research and official research.

- *Preliminary research:* The author conducted a test survey of 80 questionnaires, thereby preliminarily evaluating the scale of research hypotheses before conducting official research. The scale has been preliminarily assessed through Cronbach's Alpha's confidence coefficients. When Cronbach's Alpha coefficients have values of 0.6 or more, it's a usable scale. At the same time, variables with correlation coefficients between variables and total variables (Item - Total Correlation) below 0.3 will be removed. Next is the factor analysis EFA, then adjust the questionnaire and conduct official survey.

- *Official research:*

+ The author conducts online survey of questionnaires. After collecting information, the author filtered the questionnaires to remove invalid questionnaires. The purpose is to collect and analyze survey data as well as to test the research model. Collected information will be cleaned and processed using SPSS 23.0 software.

+ The scale after being statistically analyzed for the mean value of the scale, evaluated by Cronbach's Alpha's reliability coefficient analysis method, EFA factor analysis will be used regression correlation analysis to measuring the influence of each factor on brand identity. From the data obtained, the author commented and evaluated the impact of factors from salespeople on online buying behaviors to come up with suitable solutions to improve sales skills.

3.2. Sampling method

Sample size

- The optimal sample size depends on the expectation of reliability, the data analysis method, the estimation method used in the study, and the parameters to be estimated.

- To best perform analysis, according to Tabachnick&Fidell (1996), sample size:

$$n \geq 8m + 50$$

Where (m is the number of independent variables in the model)

- According to Aprimer, the sample size:

$$n \geq 104 + m$$

To test the scale, the researchers did not give a specific number of samples needed, but gave the ratio between the number of samples needed and the reference number to be estimated.

- For exploratory factor analysis (EFA), sample size will depend on the number of variables given in factor analysis. Hair et al. (1998) suggested that the number of samples required 5 times the number of variables. While Hoang & Chu (2005) stated that the ratio was 4 or 5.

3.3. Data analysis method

After collecting and removing unsatisfactory questionnaires, the author encodes and enters data, then the data is processed using SPSS software. Data of the study is analyzed through the following steps: discovery factor analysis, scale reliability testing, correlation analysis, regression analysis.

Descriptive statistics

According to Huysamen (1990), descriptive statistics allow researchers to present collected data in a structured and summarized form. Descriptive statistics used in this study to analyze and describe data include: Frequency, rate, mean value and standard deviation.

Descriptive statistics is a method used to synthesize methods of measurement, description and presentation of data applied to the economic field. Statistics table is a form of presenting statistics and collecting information as a basis for analysis and conclusions, also presenting research problems through which administrators can make comments on the topic of study.

In this research topic, the descriptive statistical method is used to describe the factors of salespeople that can affect consumers' online buying decisions.

Analysis of reliability Cronbach's Alpha

First of all, the reliability of the criteria is assessed through Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. Using Cronbach's Alpha's confidence coefficient method before analyzing the EFA factor to eliminate the inappropriate criteria because these non-conforming (garbage) criteria can create dummy factors (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2009), Cronbach's Alpha confidence coefficient only shows the whether the criteria are linked or not; but does not indicate which criteria to remove and which observed variables to keep. Then, calculating the correlation coefficient between the variable-sum helps to eliminate criteria that do not contribute much to the description of the concept to be measured (Hoang & Chu, 2005). Conditions to be used when performing the reliability assessment of the following criteria:

- Type of criteria with small variable-total correlation coefficient (less than 0.3); criteria for selecting factors when the alpha reliability is greater than 0.6 (the larger the alpha, the higher the internal consistency reliability (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2009).

- The value of Alpha: greater than 0.8 is a good scale; from 0.7 to 0.8 is usable; 0.6 or more is available in cases where the research concept is new or is new in the context of a research (Perterson&Jolibert, 1995; Hoang & Chu, 2005).

- Criteria with small variable-total correlation (less than 0.4) are considered garbage variables, they will be eliminated and the variable is accepted when the confidence coefficient Alpha is satisfactory (greater than 0.7).

Based on the above information, the study evaluates the criteria based on the standards:

- Criteria with variable-total correlation coefficients of less than 0.4 (these are the criteria that do not contribute much to the description of the concept to be measured and many previous studies have used this standard).

- Select criteria with an Alpha reliability greater than 0.6 (the concepts in this study are relatively new to the research subjects when responding).

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

EFA is used to reduce a set of k variables into a set F ($F \leq k$) factors are more significant than variables (ie related variables are grouped together and separated out of other variables with little relevance), used to evaluate convergent value and valuedifferentiation of variables.

- Convergence value: ie the observed variables must have a strong load (Factor Loading coefficient) for a factor will have to gather that factor.

- Regarding the separate value: Each factor in the model has a different load tendency. Group of observed variables for the first factor has no correlation (separate) with the group of observed variables for the second factor. From there, leading to the grouping of factors into columns in the rotation matrix.

- The condition for the discovery factor analysis is to satisfy the following requirements:

- Factor loading coefficient: factor's weight (Factor loading) > 0.5

+ Factor Loading > 0.3 , is considered the minimum level;

+ Factor Loading > 0.4 , is considered important;

+ Factor Loading > 0.5 , is considered to be of practical significance.

- KMO coefficient (Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin) is an index used to consider the appropriateness of factor analysis. Large KMO value and factor analysis is appropriate ($0.5 \leq KMO \leq 1$).

- Bartlett test has statistical significance (Sig. < 0.05): This is a statistical quantity used to consider hypotheses that the variables have no correlation in the population. If this test is statistically significant (Sig. < 0.05), the observed variables are correlated with each other in the population.

- Percentage of variance $> 50\%$: Shows the percentage variation of the observed variables. This means that considering the 100% variation, this value tells how much of the factor analysis explains.

Correlation analysis

After analyzing the EFA and testing the reliability of the scales, the satisfactory scales were determined with the mean and the control variables were coded to conduct correlation analysis. The author used Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) to check the linear relationship between the factors. If the correlation coefficient between the dependent and independent variables is large, it proves that they are related and can be suitable for linear regression analysis. The absolute value of r tells us how strict a linear relationship is. The closer the absolute value of r is to 1, the more closely correlated the two variables are and vice versa (Trong & Ngoc, 2008).

Regression analysis

After analyzing the correlation, the author conducted a multivariate regression analysis according to the Enter method with the significance level of 5% to test the research hypotheses and the relevance of the model as well as the influence level of the variable up dependent variable. The reason for choosing linear regression analysis rather than nonlinear regression is because previous studies also used this method. The regression method used in the thesis is the least squares method of OLS.

Adjusted coefficient R^2 is used to determine the appropriateness of the model, the F-test is used to confirm the scalability of the model, the t-test is used to reject the hypothesis that the regression coefficients of the population are equal to 0.

3.3. Building measuring scale

The variables in the model are measured by the Likert scale with the rating scale from 1 to 5. 7 official scales for 7 variables in the model are included in the questionnaire with the observed variables (items). For other categorical variables such as: gender, age, income is measured by identification or hierarchical scales depending on the nature of their data types. The scale used in the questionnaire to measure the variables in the specific research model is as follows:

1: Totally disagree;

2: Disagree;

3: No comments (Neutral);

4: Agree;

5: Totally agree;

(1) Communication skills

Communication skills are an especially important aspect of an employee's sales skills. Skills are assessed in many respects from personal characteristics and skills trained in learning and working. The scale of communication skills is measured by 5 observed variables, which are developed based on the combination of the scales of many authors. The observed variables were measured using the 5-point Likert scale.

Table 1.1 Communication skills

| Variables | Code |
|---|------|
| I think listening skills are important in the communication skills of employees. | GT1 |
| I believe salespeople's communication style affects their communication skills. | GT2 |
| I think the voice characteristics impact communication skills. | GT3 |
| Non-verbal communication skills are very important in communication skills. | GT4 |
| I believe that expressive skills are an important aspect of the sales consultant element. | GT5 |

Source: Own development

(2) Sales consulting skills

Another aspect of sales skills that directly affect consumer buying decisions is sales consulting skills that are skills of observing, asking questions properly and exploiting necessary information of customers. This is the basis for sales staff to make an accurate sales judgment and advice.

These observed variables are measured using the 5-point Likert scale. The sales consulting skill scale is measured by 4 observed variables, which are developed based on the aggregate scale of many authors.

Table 1.2 Sales consulting skills

| Variables | Code |
|--|-------|
| I believe salesperson's negotiation skills are very important in sales consulting. | TVBH1 |
| I believe that product knowledge helps a lot when consulting products to customers. | TVBH2 |
| I believe that observation will help with sales advice. | TVBH3 |
| I believe that salespeople with questioning skills are very important in sales consulting. | TVBH4 |

Source: Own development

(3) Skills to convince customers

Customers decide to buy products or services that employees provide, not partly based on the sophistication of the way to convince customers. This skill requires employees to have the acumen and possess the necessary knowledge about products, services and practical knowledge about society.

These observed variables are measured using the 5-point Likert scale. The scale of customer service skills is measured by 4 observed variables developed based on the combination of the scales of many authors.

Table 1.3. Skills to convince customers

| Variables | Code |
|---|-------|
| I think that the salesperson has the ability to identify and observe the social style of the customer | TPKH1 |
| I believe salespeople have an understanding of external and social environmental issues. | TPKH2 |
| I believe the salesperson will understand a competitor's product line. | TPKH3 |
| I believe that when providing information about applications and functions of products and services, the product makes the product more convincing. | TPKH4 |

Source: Own development

(4) Problem solving skills

An employee with sales skills means that they are flexible employees, adaptable in communication and handling situations. Employees with good problem solving skills are able to recognize problems through their words and expressions.

These observed variables are measured using the 5-point Likert scale. The scale of problem solving skills is measured by 3 observed variables, which are developed based on the combination of the scales of many effects.

Table 1.4 Problem solving skills

| Variables | Code |
|---|-------|
| I believe that problem solving is a very important aspect of the problem solving skill element. | GQVD1 |
| I believe that the ability to detect verbal and non-verbal leads is crucial in solving a sales situation. | GQVD2 |
| I think the salesperson's ability to empathize will be of great help in dealing with the sales situation. | GQVD3 |

Source: Own development

(5) Order closing skills

Single key skills are one of the skills that salespeople need to practice. Sales staff need to create confidence for customers about their products and services. and appropriate timing to close the order to increase sales efficiency.

These observed variables are measured using the 5-point Likert scale. The scale of order closing skills is measured by 3 observed variables, which are developed based on the aggregate scale of many authors.

Table 1.5 Order closing skills

| Variables | Code |
|---|------|
| I think the ability to capture the psychology of the customer will help increase the salesperson's ability to close the contract. | CDH1 |
| Creating trust for customers is an important factor in salesperson's skills to close orders. | CDH2 |
| Sales staff need to know the right time to close the order. | CDH3 |

Source: Own development¹

(6) Company policy

One of the aspects is the motivation for salespeople to improve their personal selling skills, salary and bonus policies. Is an attractive factor promoting development in the sense of enhancing learning and cultivating experiences?

These observed variables are measured using the 5-point Likert scale. The company's policy scale is measured by 3 observed variables, which are developed based on the aggregate scale of many authors.

Table 1.6 Company policy

| Variables | Code |
|---|------|
| I believe that factors related to salary, bonus ... affect work motivation, improve sales skills of sales staff. | CS1 |
| I believe that the sales force's motivation to improve sales skills is tied to career advancement opportunities. | CS2 |
| I believe that the organization's policies will influence the salesperson's work motivation and improve the sales skills. | CS3 |

Source: Own development¹

(7) Sales skills

Employees' sales skills have a direct impact on the company's business operations. When there is a good sales team, sales performance will bring profit for the company. The cultivation and learning from each other's experience of the sales team will partly improve the individual skills of each employee.

These observed variables are measured using the 5-point Likert scale. The sales consulting skill scale is measured by 4 observed variables, which are developed based on the aggregate scale of many authors.

Table 1.7 Sales skills

| Variables | Code |
|---|------|
| Sales skills are enhanced with working experience (Babakus et al, 1996). | BH1 |
| The empirical support among employees increases the individual's sales skills (Babakus et al, 1996). | BH2 |
| The sales skills of salespeople were identified as the determinant of salesperson's performance (Churchill et al, 1985) | BH3 |
| Sales skills will directly affect the business operations of the company or organization. (Ingram et al, 2004; Futrell, 2006) | BH4 |

Source: Own development¹

4. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

4.1. Conclusions

Research content summary

The research has identified factors affecting sales skills of employees, from which the author used as a basis to offer appropriate solutions to improve sales skills of employees of TSC companies in Covid-19 period.

Through reference to some previous research models, the author has proposed a research model of factors affecting sales skills of employees including 6 components: (1) Communication skills, (2) Sales consulting skills, (3) Customer persuasion skills, (4) Problem solving skills, (5) Order closing skills, (6) Company policies. After forming the research model, through the reference of previous qualitative studies to find out, supplement and adjust the scale of observed variables.

To confirm the reasonableness and reliability of the factors in the model, the author has done a preliminary study through 40 survey samples. And analyze the data obtained through SPSS 23.0 software to check the reliability of Cronbach's Alpha and analyze the discovery factor EFA to form a formal survey for the scale of the influencing factors.

After that, the author used quantitative research method with 280 questionnaires to collect research data. After checking and removing inappropriate answers, the author used 250 questionnaires to test the model. Data were collected and processed using SPSS 23.0 software. The scale is assessed by Cronbach's Alpha's confidence coefficients and tested by exploratory factor analysis EFA. Through analysis, the research model is adjusted. Then, the author put the factors of the adjusted research model into linear regression analysis and correlation analysis.

Achieved result

Through preliminary research, the author has built a proposed model including: 6 factors with 22 observed variables. Based on data analysis, all variables meet the requirements of analyzing reliability Cronbach's Alpha and discovery factors EFA. The official research model includes the following factors: (1) Communication skills, (2) Sales consulting skills, (3) Customer persuasion skills, (4) Problem solving skills, (5) Order closing skills, (6) Company policy.

The author conducts analysis of the official model, through the test, the factor of order closing skill is removed due to failure of the Cronbach's Alpha reliability test, finding 5 factors that affect the sales skills of the employee. tablets.

The results of regression analysis show that these 5 factors all affect the sales skills of employees according to the following equation:

$$BH = - 0.494 + 0.288 * GT + 0.149 * TVBH + 0.220 * TPKH + 0.259 * GQVD + 0.189 * CS$$

Based on the regression equation, to improve the sales skills of employees, it is necessary to pay attention to the factors of communication skills, sales consulting skills, customer persuasion skills, problem solving skills and other factors. corporate policies.

In addition, the regression results also show that the model explains 59.9% of the variation in brand identity, the rest is explained by factors that the author has not yet found and due to errors. Thus, the research results show that the research model is suitable with the research context and objective conditions of the study. At the same time, through the regression results, it can determine the impact level of factors in which the factor of communication skills has the strongest impact.

4.2. Management policy implications

Communication skills

In the research results, we found that the factors of communication skills greatly affect the sales skills of employees. Communication skills include many aspects such as:

- Listening is the most important skill of an effective salesperson. They testify that these skills lead to better understanding of the customer, building trustworthy relationships, increasing the power of persuasion, and increasing the likelihood of ending sales.

- The attitude and communication style is the most effective way to reach customers. An effective salesperson has the ability to adjust attitudes to communicate with customers. At the same time, the way of wording also helps the communication be more effective. From there, finding out the needs that customers need is the basis to convince customers to use the products and services that you are doing business.

- Voice characteristics are a particularly important part, because of the characteristics of each region, the way of speaking as well as using words will be different. Therefore, the sales staff needs to improve the voice so that it is appropriate and easy to hear to create sympathy for customers as well as convey the full meaning to customers.

Because of the practical meanings that communication skills bring to improve employees' business skills. Company management should make efforts to develop innovative development and training methods to improve communication skills among their sales staff. Training and development initiatives have been demonstrated by many previous empirical studies to lead to improved interpersonal communication skills of salespeople (Hunt and Baruch, 2003). For businesses, organizations need:

- To organize communication skills training classes for sales staff.
- To observe and comment on the employee's communication style during the work process.
- Instructions on how to communicate with customers.

Personal communication skills are a key skill component in the determining factors of salesperson hiring and selection, and also in the development of reward and recognition policies.

Sales consulting skills

For salespeople consulting skills are an important aspect of sales skills. A successful salesperson has the skills to negotiate with customers through their knowledge and work experience.

Knowledge of the product is the basis for sales staff to inform customers. That puts the product's direct benefits to mind and creates demand for customers. Therefore, the sales staff need to thoroughly understand the product's knowledge to help in the process of consulting products to customers.

A salesperson needs to have a sharp observation to recognize the customer's style in order to have the appropriate behavior and presentation of product advice to customers.

Recognizing the needs of customers, employees need to have a meaningful way of presenting questionnaires to exploit customer information to identify problem situations to be able to solve problems appropriately.

Therefore, sales businesses and organizations need to:

- Have the training methodically and carefully about the product lines and services of businesses and organizations.
- Always update new information, popular product lines, after-sales programs for employees to promptly inform customers to help make sales consulting more effective.

- The sales staff need to have a self-conscious and positive attitude to work confidently to increase persuasion when communicating and consulting sales.

Customer convincing skills

The research results have shown that the factors of employees' customer persuasion skills affect their sales skills. The enhancement of aspects of persuasion skills require their full range of on-the-job experience and knowledge bases.

Salespeople need necessary updates on market, product, customer trends and social issues. A salesperson needs an understanding of product functional characteristics, good technical characteristics sometimes have problems converting their technical knowledge into an understandable and understandable way for their customer base (Baldauf and Cravens, 2001). Salespeople need necessary updates on market, product, customer trends and social issues.

Market knowledge reflects salespeople's knowledge of the industry in general (e.g. competition, market trends). An extensive knowledge base is important for salespeople, because it allows them to cope with complex market environments. Therefore, it can be implied that most sales success is mainly due to the service engineers' ability from the technical support team to influence customers.

Problem-solving skills

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In the opinion of many experts, adaptability and flexibility in problem solving skills are important skills of an effective salesperson. In interviews, sales professionals have shown that the technical salesperson's ability to personalize sales and communication style improves their flexibility in sales situations and with many different consumers.

Therefore, sales professionals have established a clear link between adaptive behaviors to many sales situations and effective sales presentation of customer problem solving. The adaptive salesman indicates the salesperson's level of custom handling of the situation. It is defined as the salesperson's ability to change her behavior / sales behavior when interacting with customers (Weitz et al., 1986). Adaptive selling behavior has a positive impact on sales skills to increase sales performance.

The sales staff need to actively cultivate their experiences, learn how to behave, and deal with each different customer situation. Need to practice confidence in words to increase persuasion with customers.

Salespeople need more physical friction to increase their accumulated experience. Increase the ability to observe, recognize the status of the customer for reasonable resolution.

Managers need to take care of their employees and train them from the very beginning so that they can confidently handle the situation.

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