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## **Digital and AI-Driven Antecedents of Sales Performance: A Bibliometric Analysis and Future Research Agenda**

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose** – Sales performance has long been a central concern in marketing and entrepreneurship research, with scholars examining a wide range of behavioural, relational and organisational antecedents. The purpose of this study is to systematically map and synthesise existing research on the antecedents of sales performance, and to identify key themes, trends, and research gaps within the field.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The bibliometric analysis process consists of three phases: assembling, organizing, and evaluating, based on the most reliable and authentic sources. This research was conducted using a scientific search technique on the Scopus database spanning the years 2015 to 2025 using VOS Viewer.

**Findings:** Sales performance continues to be an evolving area of study with the majority of the antecedent themes remaining unresolved and changing with the market environment. The results of the study revealed several important factors affecting sales performance.

**Practical implications** – The findings provide an empirical basis for the design of sales training, motivation and performance management systems and aid in improving resource allocation decision-making, as well as increase the likelihood of ethical and socially responsible selling practices.

**Originality/value:** This study systematically synthesises many of these antecedents with the intent of consolidating all of the dispersed knowledge from this body of work, clarifying the key dominant and emerging themes, and providing a coherent base from which to understand how sales performance research has evolved. By integrating these ideas into one model, the authors provide a ‘readily accessible’ platform for developing new theory and for identifying substantive future research directions.

**Keywords:** Sales performance; Bibliometric analysis; Science mapping; Salesperson effectiveness; Research evolution

### **1. Introduction**

The sales performance is one of the most vital factors for future growth, profitability and long-standing competitive advantage of any company (Wang *et al.*, 2025). In both consumer and industrial markets, the capacity of a sales professional to turn prospects into revenue, create an authentic customer relationship and deliver value continues to be a critical success factor for any organisation (Gopalakrishna *et al.*, 2022). Over time, researchers have studied a wide variety of antecedents that lead to successful sales performance. These antecedents include salesperson motivation, emotional intelligence, adaptability, customer orientation, organisation support systems and technology-enhanced capabilities (Høgevoid *et al.*, 2024; Kerr and Marcos-Cuevas, 2024; Madanchian, 2024). As the selling environment continues to change, the importance of understanding antecedents of sales performance will continue to grow.

Over the past few years, the sales domain has undergone an accelerated transformation due to several key development trends, namely: the growing use and adoption of Digital Technology; the increasing integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Sales Channels (Jayanthi, 2025; Potwora *et al.*, 2024); and the rise of Industry 5.0.



Industry 5.0 signifies the growing importance of Human-Technology collaboration, the creation of customised customer value, and the automation of tasks through Intelligent Automation (IA) (Sahdev *et al.*, 2025; Strielkowski, 2025). As a result, there has been a change in the Skills required of Sales Professionals. Salespeople are now required to have Digital Fluency, Data-Driven Decision-Making Skills, AI-Assisted Selling Skills, and Greater Customer Engagement Skills. This means that the antecedents impacting Sales Performance now include a much broader range of variables than just demographic and behavioural variables; they also include Complex Capabilities of Integrating Technology (Berniak-Woźny *et al.*, 2024; Gowrishankar *et al.*, 2024; Knap-Stefaniuk, 2023).

While there has been an increase in literature regarding the antecedents of sales performance, the body of literature is very disjointed as it relates to the theoretical perspectives within this phenomenon and its context. Therefore, the differing constructs that comprise this research, as well as the differing methodological approaches and conceptual backgrounds, have made it challenging to have a complete picture of where the field has come from and where the field is headed. In addition to this fragmented literature body, while there have been numerous studies on certain antecedents such as motivation and adaptive selling, many new themes have emerged from the literature (digital selling competency, CRM-enabled behaviours, sales analytics, salesperson agility) that still require systematic mapping of the research (Abu Bakar *et al.*, 2025; Chu, 2024; Peesker *et al.*, 2024; Sardjono *et al.*, 2023).

While research in this area is incredibly important, there has not yet been a comprehensive and systematic scientific mapping of the different factors that can lead to the improvement of sales performances. To assist in filling this gap in the literature, bibliometric analysis serves as an effective tool to identify key authors, journals and topic clusters in the existing body of work on this topic, along with demonstrating the development of various inter-relationships within the existing intellectual, conceptual and social frameworks of the sales profession. Additionally, bibliometric analyses provide insights not just into the history of the literature, but also into previously developing trends in the scholarly community through looking at citation patterns and co-citation analysis based on keyword co-occurrences.

The purpose of this study is to conduct a detailed bibliometric analysis of the factors that lead to sales success by reviewing all studies in Scopus published between 2015 and 2025. The study will use the VOS viewer to determine what are the most important topics associated with these studies, develop a theoretical foundation for the field and identify the patterns of research in this area. The review brings together research that has previously been disorganized in order to provide a better overall understanding of the subject and to give suggestions to anyone interested in learning about or improving sales performance in an Industry 5.0-based economy.

### **1.1 Transformations in Sales Performance Research**

Research on sales performance has changed drastically over the past three decades, which reflected by broader shifts in market dynamics, customer expectations and technological advancements (Liu *et al.*, 2025; Rodriguez *et al.*, 2023). Early studies emphasised individual salesperson characteristics and behavioural factors as the primary determinants of performance (Homburg *et al.*, 2024). These traditional views were grounded by motivational theories, role theory and interpersonal communication frameworks that highlighted the importance of effort, adaptability and customer orientation in influencing sales outcomes (Mallin and Ragland, 2017; Wang *et al.*, 2021).

With increased competition in various industries and more complicated purchasing decisions by consumers, an increasing number of research studies would examine not just individual traits of the salesperson but also the surrounding relationship and organisational environment in which they operate (Hochstein *et al.*, 2019; Vieira *et al.*, 2019; Zahn *et al.*, 2023). As such, research highlighted the importance of various aspects of relationships with the dominant client, support from supervisors, effectiveness of training, and an overall culture within the organisation, all of which contribute to sales success (Høgevoid *et al.*, 2021). Research shows that this shift in focus from individual factors only to consideration of personal ability, relationships with people, and support from the organisation has resulted in a movement away from the individual-based models and toward the holistic model that considers how each of these factors contributes to someone's success (Souza, 2023).

The impact of digitalisation and the increasing reliance on data-driven methods influences how sales performance is conceptualised and understood within the growing body of academic literature (Oliveira *et al.*, 2025). The rise of CRM systems, advanced analytics for sales, artificial intelligence-based tools and virtual selling platforms has introduced a major technological component to sales performance antecedent research. Through these technologies, salespeople can analyse customer data more precisely, thereby enabling the salesperson to better customise their behaviour toward customers and respond to the changing dynamics in the marketplace (Yoo *et al.*, 2024). Recent studies, therefore, are increasingly viewing sales performance as a multidimensional construct



shaped by both an individual salesperson's selling abilities and their organisation's technological capabilities and supports (Alavi and Habel, 2021; Yao *et al.*, 2024).

This evolution of the field suggests that a comprehensive examination of the academic literature related to sales performance and the impact of emerging themes will help clarify the evolution of the field and develop future research directions. In this regard, bibliometric reviews provide an effective way to systematically map the research patterns related to a particular topic and establish a conceptual framework and the intellectual contributions and collaboration networks that shape the field of study.

### **1.2 Bibliometric analysis**

Using the bibliometric methods for analyzing bibliographic data through quantitative analysis allows researchers to systematically identify and map large amounts of published academic literature (S *et al.*, 2024). Using bibliometric techniques, researchers can identify the key authors and academic journals in a given field, develop a better understanding of co-authorship networks, and identify what are now or were previously the most important subjects of research (Passas, 2024). By using tools such as VOSviewer, researchers can create graphical representations of a research network in terms of the co-authorship, co-citation, bibliographic coupling, and keyword co-occurrence relationships between the authors in a specific research domain, which will provide researchers with a more thorough insight into the conceptual, intellectual, and social structure of a given research domain.

Given the interdisciplinary and rapidly evolving nature of research on sales performance antecedents, a bibliometric approach is particularly suitable for synthesising existing knowledge and identifying research gaps. While bibliometric techniques have been widely applied in adjacent domains such as marketing analytics, digital marketing, and customer relationship management, their application to the systematic mapping of sales performance antecedents remains limited. To the best of our knowledge, no prior study has comprehensively examined this research stream using bibliometric visualisation tools to uncover its structural foundations and thematic trajectories.

To address this research gap, the authors attribute their contributions of filling the gap through completing an extensive bibliometric analysis pertaining to antecedents in the literature concerning sales performance. To gain insight into an integrated overview of the evolution of the field, the authors conducted an extensive bibliometric analysis and used VOS viewer for visualising the mapped results of their analysis of the publications indexed in the leading database of academic journals, thus enabling the authors to compile a comprehensive summary of the evolution of this field of research (Indriati *et al.*, 2024; Van Eck and Waltman, 2010). The research identified prominent research contributors and classified the various antecedents into relevant thematic clusters. In addition to creating a clearer understanding of the currently existing knowledge in this field, the authors also demonstrated the presence of several emerging themes as well as future research avenues for scholars and industry practitioners.

### **1.3 Research questions**

The authors chose to address the following Research Questions (RQ)

RQ1: What is the trend of Research publications within the Research field 'Antecedents of Sales Performance'?

RQ2: What has been the contribution of Country, Institution, and Author to academic research in this area?

RQ3: Which Journal and Article are the most highly Cited in the Research Area of 'Antecedents of Sales Performance'?

RQ4: Based on citation counts, what are the most widely Cited works in the Field of 'Antecedents of Sales Performance'?

The following study goals are derived from the aforementioned research questions for the present paper.

(1) To identify patterns or trends in the growth of knowledge in the field of Sales performance (2) To look at the structure of knowledge and create a synthesis of knowledge.

## **2. Methodology (Data and Method)**

Bibliometric analysis in this study uses Scopus as the primary data source and VOSviewer as the main visualisation tool, with carefully chosen keywords guiding the selection of relevant research topics.

Scopus, maintained by Elsevier, is a large abstract and citation database that offers coverage of peer-reviewed journals, books and conference proceedings, along with links to full-text content where available. It supports the identification of research trends, influential works and collaboration patterns across a wide range of academic disciplines.

VOSviewer is a specialised software application designed to construct and visualize bibliometric networks, including co-authorship, citation, co-citation and keyword co-occurrence relations.



By mapping these networks and highlighting clusters, it enables more nuanced detection of key authors, themes and country-level linkages than simple descriptive or manual methods.

Bibliometrics, originally associated with the idea of “statistical bibliography,” developed during the mid-twentieth century as scholars began systematically quantifying patterns in scholarly communication. The term “bibliometrics” was formally introduced by Alan Pritchard in 1969 and it now refers to the application of quantitative techniques to study, map and evaluate the dissemination and structure of scientific knowledge.

### 2.1 Need for the study

Existing research is dispersed across multiple disciplines, sectors and time horizons and frequently relies on varied theoretical perspectives and measurement frameworks. This fragmentation limits the comparability of results and complicates the identification of consistent determinants of sales performance. By systematically charting key authors, leading journals, thematic clusters and underlying intellectual foundations, the present study clarifies dominant antecedents, highlights emerging constructs and surfaces neglected linkages. In doing so, it supports more integrated theory development for scholars and provides practitioners with empirically grounded insights to inform sales performance enhancement strategies.

### 2.2 Data set.

As per (Table 1) provides a high-level overview of the bibliometric data frame of the 452 publications that were carefully chosen after a search query was made in the Scopus database.

|  | Include | Exclude | Net  |
|--|---------|---------|------|
| Scopus search using the following search transcript: ( antecedents of sales performance ) OR ( antecedents of Salesperson performance ) OR ( antecedents of Sales effectiveness ) OR ( antecedents of Sales productivity ) OR ( antecedents of Sales outcomes ) OR ( factors affecting sales performance ) OR ( factors affecting sales commitment ) OR ( factors affecting Salesperson performance ) OR ( factors affecting Sales effectiveness ) OR ( factors affecting Sales productivity ) OR ( factors affecting Sales outcome* ) in the Search criterion of "Abstract title, Abstract, Keywords" | 1391    |         | 1391 |
| Filter & limit to Publication years from 2015 to 2025  | 919     |         | 919  |
| Filter & limit "Document type" to "Article", "Book" and "Book Chapter"   | 726     |         | 726  |
| Filter & limit to "Final" in "Publication Stage"   | 703     |         | 703  |
| Filter & limit to "English" in "Language"  | 676     |         | 676  |
| Filter & limit "Subject area" to "Economics, Econometrics and Finance" and "Business, Management and Accounting"   | 452     |         | 452  |

All the analysis in this paper would be basis these 452 research items. A small analysis of the concerned documents are as follows

| <i>Description</i> | <i>Data</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Data</i> |
|--------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
|--------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|



|                      |       |                                      |             |       |
|----------------------|-------|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------|
| <b>Book</b>          | 7     | <b>Per Document Citation</b>         | <b>Avg.</b> | 26.42 |
| <b>Articles</b>      | 372   | <b># countries with publications</b> |             | 76    |
| <b>Book Chapters</b> | 73    | <b>Author Keywords</b>               |             | 1669  |
| <b>Authors</b>       | 1216  | <b>Index Keywords</b>                |             | 1041  |
| <b>Citations</b>     | 11944 | <b>All research works</b>            |             | 452   |

*Table I: Summary of document types covered for the bibliometric analysis*

*Source: created by author(s)*

### **3. Data analysis and findings**

Descriptive analysis and scientific mapping were the two ways that data analysis was organised.

(1) Descriptive statistics concentrates on analysing bibliometric information in terms of the fundamental components of the set of data, including “annual publication trends”, “influential journals”, “productive authors”, and “contributing countries”.

(2) “Scientific mapping” uses a variety of visualisation techniques, including “bibliographic coupling analyses.”, “Co-occurrence of author keyword” and “*Country-wise co-authorship analysis*” and extracts the earning structures to support the additional study of literature review in any field and bibliometric analysis.

#### **3.1 Descriptive analysis**

The numerous dimensions used for analysis are covered in this section.

##### **3.1.1 Annual trends in publications**

Data from the year-by-year analysis of publication output (Fig. 1 .1) show an overall trend of variable volumes of publication throughout the study's duration. While there is no evidence of a consistent increase in volume or a substantial increase in volume from one year to the next (e.g. exponential development of volume), the presence of yearly productivity suggests that there is ongoing research activity interest in the field;

i.e., the periodic high rates of production in certain years suggest that there may have been an influx of new researchers and/or new research being produced at the same time or sustained periods of increased interest in the same topic area.

The overall trend indicates that while this area of research has been around for quite a while, and there is continued interest and development in the field, it is not considered to be an area that has only had short-term significance or is currently declining.

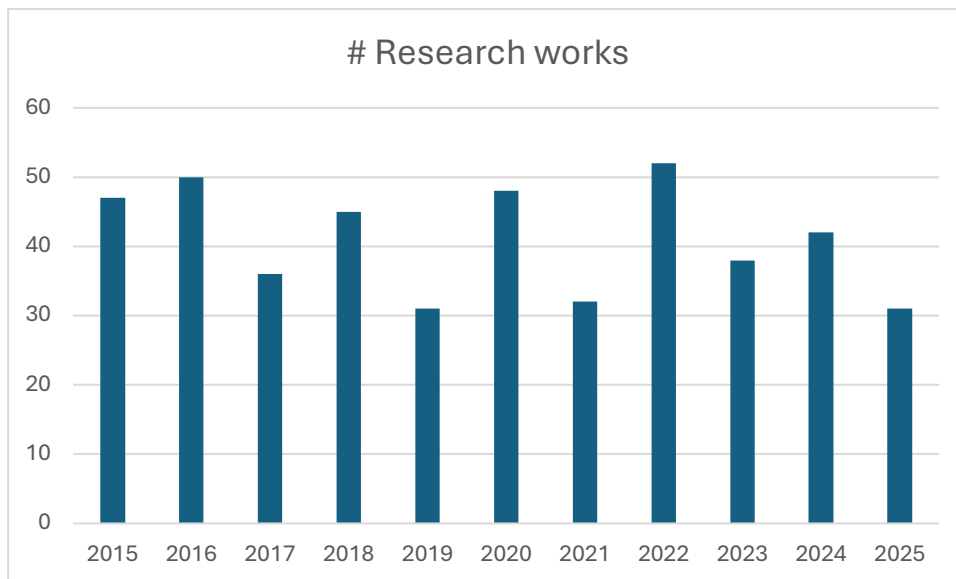


Fig 1: Publication over the years

Source: Created by author(s)

### 3.1.2 Journal-wise Citation Analysis

A review of journal citations (Table 2) shows that the body of research regarding the antecedents of sales performance is heavily weighted toward a relatively small number of top-tier marketing and management research journals. These journals are where the majority of the most cited, high-impact articles on the theory and empirical evidence surrounding drivers of sales performance are published. As such, this concentration of citation activity clearly demonstrates that this research area has developed and matured as a well-established and credible stream of inquiry.

| Journal Name   | # Articles | ISSN     | Publisher          |
|--|------------|----------|--------------------|
| Developments in Marketing Science: Proceedings of the Academy of Marketing Science | 50         | 23636165 | Springer Nature    |
| Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing                                       | 21         | 8858624  | Emerald Publishing |
| Industrial Marketing Management  | 16         | 198501   | Elsevier Inc.      |
| Journal of Cleaner Production  | 13         | 9596526  | Elsevier Inc.      |
| Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management                                   | 12         | 8853134  | Routledge          |
| International Journal of Production Economics                                      | 9          | 9255273  | Elsevier Inc.      |
| Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing  | 9          | 1051712X | Routledge          |
| Journal of Business Research   | 8          | 1482963  | Elsevier Inc.      |
| Technological Forecasting and Social Change  | 8          | 401625   | Elsevier Inc.      |
| International Journal of Information Management                                    | 6          | 2684012  | Elsevier Inc.      |



*Table II: Best journals in terms of articles published on ASF*

*Source: created by author(s)*

“Developments in Marketing Science: Proceedings of the Academy of Marketing Science” seems to be the best journal in terms of article publication on ASF.

### 3.1.3 Publication basis countries

The distribution of publications on antecedents to sales performance across countries ( Table 3) illustrates a geographically diverse landscape of research in this area. India, United States lead the list with over 100 works. No other country has crossed 50 also. China and India follow the top slot.

| <i>Country</i> | <i># Research work</i> |
|----------------|------------------------|
| United States  | 129                    |
| China          | 49                     |
| India          | 42                     |
| United Kingdom | 37                     |
| Australia      | 30                     |
| Germany        | 22                     |
| Malaysia       | 19                     |
| Spain          | 19                     |
| France         | 18                     |
| South Korea    | 18                     |
| Taiwan         | 18                     |

*Table III: Country-wise publications*

*Source: created by author(s)*

### 3.1.4 Basis journal citations

An analysis of citations by journals on the antecedents of sales performance (Table 4) shows that they are mainly contained within a small number of highly regarded marketing and management journals, which also support the greatest number of high-impact studies and thus create theories and empirical debates related to what drives a salesperson's performance. These concentration patterns further demonstrate that this research area is established and accepted.

| <i>Journal name</i>                             | <i>Citations</i> | <i>ISSN</i> | <i>Publisher</i>    |
|---|------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| International Journal of Information Management | 1995             | 0268-4012   | Elsevier            |
| Journal of Cleaner Production                   | 925              | 0959-6526   | Elsevier            |
| Industrial Marketing Management                 | 646              | 0019-8501   | Elsevier            |
| International Journal of Production Economics   | 536              | 0925-5273   | Elsevier            |
| Business Strategy and the Environment           | 534              | 9644733     | John Wiley and Sons |
| Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing    | 354              | 0885-8624   | Emerald Group       |
| Journal of Marketing Management                 | 345              | 0267-257X   | Routledge           |



|   |     |           |                                |
|---|-----|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Journal of Marketing                        | 337 | 0022-2429 | American Marketing Association |
| Technological Forecasting and Social Change | 328 | 0040-1625 | Elsevier                       |
| Journal of Business Research                | 305 | 0148-2963 | Elsevier                       |
| Journal of Communication Management         | 301 | 1363-254X | Emerald Group                  |

*Table IV: Best journals in terms of citations on articles on ASF*

*Source: created by author(s)*

Besides the ones mentioned, we have 12 other journals with citations of at least 100. Basis Table 2 and Table 4, it comes out that the following journals are good journals (basis large number of articles as well as citations) in the area of ASF.

International Journal of Information Management  
 Journal of Cleaner Production  
 Industrial Marketing Management  
 Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing  
 International Journal of Production Economics  
 Technological Forecasting and Social Change  
 Journal of Business Research

### 3.1.5 Basis Article Citations

This article-wise analysis of the publication reveals which studies have had the greatest impact on understanding how individual capability, organisational support, and relational factors lead to successful sales performance. It is notable that a small number of studies have received considerable academic attention, thus forming the basis for creating new conceptual and empirical frameworks for these areas.

| <i>Article Name</i>   | <i>Author(s)</i>                                 | <i>Year</i> | <i>Journal Name</i>                             | <i>Cited by</i> | <i>Publisher</i> | <i>ISSN / ISBN</i> |
|---|--|-------------|---|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Consumers acceptance of artificially intelligent (AI) device use in service delivery  | Gursoy, Dogan; Chi, Oscar; Lu, L.; Nunkoo, Robin | 2019        | International Journal of Information Management | 993             | Elsevier Ltd     | 0268-4012          |
| Mobile food ordering apps: An empirical study of the factors affecting customer e-satisfaction and continued intention to reuse | Abdallah Alalwan, Ali Abdallah                   | 2020        | International Journal of Information Management | 584             | Elsevier Ltd     | 0268-4012          |



|   |   |      |                                       |     |  |           |
|---|---|------|---------------------------------------|-----|--|-----------|
| Green Product Innovation: Where we are and Where we are Going   | Dangelico, Rosa Maria   | 2016 | Business Strategy and the Environment | 534 | John Wiley and Sons Ltd<br>Southern Gate Chichester,<br>West Sussex PO19 8SQ | 0964-4733 |
| Live streaming commerce from the sellers' perspective: implications for online relationship marketing   | Wongkitrung rueng,<br>Apiradee;<br>Dehouche,<br>Nassim;<br>Assarut,<br>Nuttapol | 2020 | Journal of Marketing Management       | 345 | Routledge<br>info@tandf.co.uk  | 0267-257X |
| How symmetrical employee communication leads to employee engagement and positive employee communication behaviors: The mediation of employee-organization relationships | Kang,<br>Minjeong;<br>Sung,<br>Minjung  | 2017 | Journal of Communication Management   | 301 | Emerald Group Publishing Ltd. Howard House Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA      | 1363-254X |
| Causality analysis of media influence on environmental attitude, intention and behaviors leading to green purchasing  | Trivedi,<br>Rohit H.;<br>Patel, Jayesh D.; Acharya,<br>Nidhi                    | 2018 | Journal of Cleaner Production         | 290 | Elsevier Ltd   | 0959-6526 |



|  |  |      |   |     |   |           |
|--|--|------|---|-----|---|-----------|
| Social networks within sales organizations: Their development and importance for salesperson performance   | Bolander, Willy; Satornino, Cinthia Beccacece; Hughes, Douglas E.; Ferris, Gerald R.         | 2015 | Journal of Marketing                            | 245 | American Marketing Association 311 S. Wacker Drive, Suite 5800 Chicago IL 60606 | 0022-2429 |
| Building E-Commerce Satisfaction and Boosting Sales: The Role of Social Commerce Trust and Its Antecedents | Lin, Xiaolin; Wang, Xuequn; Hajli, Nick  | 2019 | International Journal of Electronic Commerce    | 237 | Routledge aabs@uw.edu   | 1086-4415 |
| Social tie formation in Chinese online social commerce: The role of IT affordances                         | Dong, Xueyan; Wang, Tienan   | 2018 | International Journal of Information Management | 204 | Elsevier Ltd  | 0268-4012 |
| Alexa, what's on my shopping list? Transforming customer experience with digital voice assistants          | Aw, Eugene Cheng Xi; Tan, Garry Wei Han; Cham, Tat Huei; Ramakrishnan, Raman; Ooi, Keng Boon | 2022 | Technological Forecasting and Social Change     | 190 | Elsevier Inc.   | 0040-1625 |



|   |  |      |  |     |  |           |
|---|--|------|--|-----|--|-----------|
| The antecedents and consequences of affordable value innovations for emerging markets             | Ernst, Holger; Kahle, Hanna Nari; Dubiel, Anna; Prabhu, Jaideep C.; Subramaniam, Mohan | 2015 | Journal of Product Innovation Management | 161 | Blackwell Publishing Ltd<br>customerservices@oxonblackwellpublishing.com | 0737-6782 |
| The double-edged effects of perceived knowledge hiding: empirical evidence from the sales context | Wang, Yonggui; Han, Myat Su; Xiang, Diandian; Hampson, Daniel Peter                    | 2019 | Journal of Knowledge Management          | 155 | Emerald Group Holdings Ltd.  | 1367-3270 |

*Table V: Best articles in terms of citations on articles on ASF*

Source: created by author(s)

The research articles have been chosen basis the citations of atleast 150.

### 3.1.6 Basis Productive Co-Authors

The producing co-authors show that there is a cluster of highly regarded academics who have provided ongoing research into the antecedents of sales performance. The majority of this expertise has been contributed via co-authorship with other scholars, thus demonstrating the importance of this collaborative model and how it adds to the ability of scholars to develop their understanding of how the factors associated with individuals, relationships and organisations affect Sales Performance. Further, the pattern of co-authors as noted above illustrates the clear evidence of both the collective and cumulative nature of knowledge development within the broad area of Sales Performance.

| <i>Name of the authors</i>                                  | <i># Research works</i> |
|---|-------------------------|
| Aqmala, D.; Batu, K.L.; Kusumawardhani, A.; Andriyansah, A. | 2                       |
| Aremu, A.Y.; Shahzad, A.; Hassan, S.                        | 2                       |
| Chaker, N.N.; Nowlin, E.L.; Walker, D.; Anaza, N.A.         | 2                       |
| Chen, Y.-C.; Amaya, A.A.; Wu, W.-Y.                         | 2                       |
| Paparoidamis, N.G.; Chumpitaz, R.                           | 2                       |
| Rodríguez, R.; Román, S.                                    | 2                       |



|   |   |
|---|---|
| Shannahan, R.J.; Bush, A.J.;<br>Shannahan, K.L.J.; Moncrief, W.C. | 2 |
|---|---|

*Table VI: Productive authors basis number of articles on ASF*

*Source: created by author(s)*

These are the only seven pair of authors who have at least 2 research works.

### 3.1.7 Basis Productive Authors

The research on having productive co-authors reveals that there is an elite group of prominent researchers who have made long-lasting and significant contributions to the body of work regarding the factors that determine sales performance. The researchers comprise a disproportionate share of all the literature in this area and, therefore are a principal source of contributions to the theoretical and empirical understanding of the primary contributors to sales performance. Furthermore, the analysis of the co-authoring relationships identifies a structure of collaborative research, which is an indicator that knowledge in this area has developed over time through both cumulative and networked research activity. These authors have been selected basis minimum 3 articles in the subject.

| <i>Authors</i>     | <i>Research Works</i> |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Rodriguez, M.      | 5                     |
| Svensson, G.       | 5                     |
| Högevold, N.M.     | 5                     |
| Vieira, V.A.       | 5                     |
| Groza, M.D.        | 4                     |
| Gabler, C.         | 4                     |
| Badrinarayanan, V. | 4                     |
| Hughes, D.E.       | 4                     |
| Kusumawardhani, A. | 3                     |
| Zboja, J.J.        | 3                     |
| Jaramillo, F.      | 3                     |
| Dugan, R.          | 3                     |
| Huo, B.            | 3                     |
| Rahman, S.A.       | 3                     |
| Otero-Neira, C.    | 3                     |
| Evanschitzky, H.   | 3                     |
| de Ruyter, K.      | 3                     |
| Chaker, N.N.       | 3                     |
| Rangarajan, D.     | 3                     |
| Boles, J.S.        | 3                     |
| Barksdale, H.      | 3                     |

*Table VII: Productive authors' basis number of articles on ASF*

*Source: created by author(s)*

## 3.2 Scientific Mapping Using VOS viewer

### 3.2.1 Country-coupled bibliometric analysis



Country-level bibliographic coupling analysis was conducted to examine similarities in research focus across nations studying the antecedents of sales performance. The results indicate that countries cluster together based on shared citation patterns, suggesting convergence in theoretical perspectives and empirical approaches used to investigate sales performance drivers. Strong coupling relationships among certain countries reflect aligned research priorities and common intellectual foundations, while weaker linkages highlight contextual and regional differences in the examination of sales performance antecedents. Overall, the country-coupled analysis reveals the existence of interconnected national research communities contributing to the global development of this research domain.

We used the minimum number of documents for a country as 5 and arrived at 30 countries. The screenshot of the Vosviewer result is appended below.

| <i>Countries</i> | <i>Documents</i> | <i>Citations</i> | <i>Total link strength</i> | <i>Citations per document</i> |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| United States    | 135              | 4657             | 3476                       | 34.50                         |
| United Kingdom   | 37               | 1535             | 1323                       | 41.49                         |
| Australia        | 30               | 1965             | 1190                       | 65.50                         |
| China            | 49               | 1538             | 1175                       | 31.39                         |
| India            | 42               | 1015             | 898                        | 24.17                         |
| France           | 19               | 482              | 773                        | 25.37                         |
| Canada           | 17               | 219              | 752                        | 12.88                         |
| Germany          | 22               | 402              | 684                        | 18.27                         |
| Italy            | 17               | 881              | 661                        | 51.82                         |
| Malaysia         | 19               | 503              | 474                        | 26.47                         |

*Table VIII: Country couple data basis total link strength*

*Source: created by author(s)*

United States has the largest number of articles. However, when it comes to quality (referred by citations / research work), Australia and Italy rate very high.

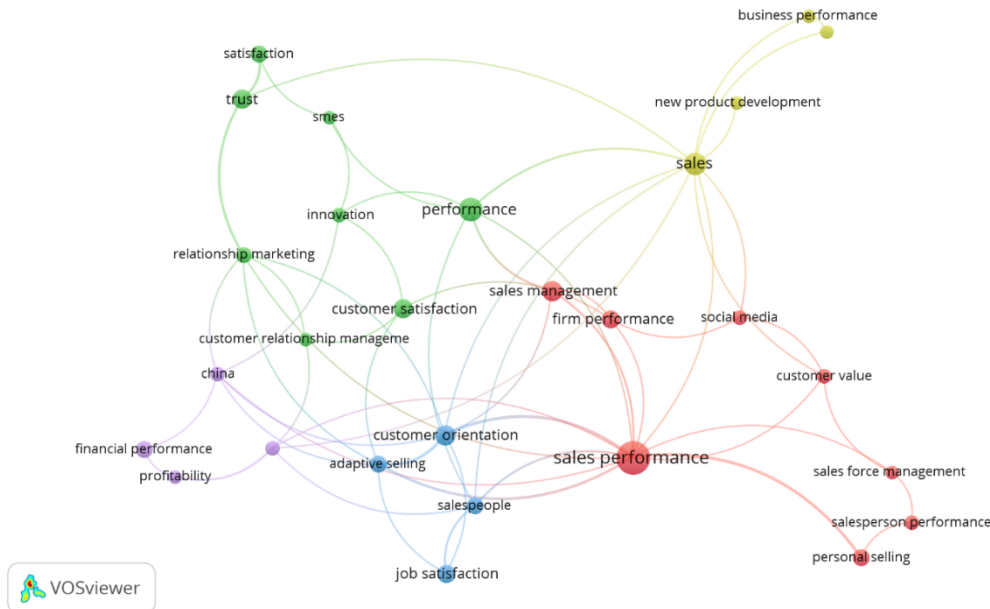




*Table VIII: Author keywords basis total strength*

*Source: created by author(s)*

It is clear from the keywords that researchers are also looking at “trust” besides the typical areas related to sales.



*Fig 3: Author keywords basis total strength*

*Source: created by author(s)*

Clearly, “sales performance” stands apart. “customer orientation” and “sales performance” are the other key author keywords.

### 3.2.3 Co-occurrence of index keywords

The co-occurrence analysis of index keywords was performed using VOSviewer to examine the standardized conceptual structure of the literature on the antecedents of sales performance. Unlike author keywords, index keywords are assigned by databases and therefore provide a more consistent representation of the core topics investigated across studies. The resulting network reveals distinct clusters that reflect major research streams and dominant antecedents influencing sales performance. Strong co-occurrence links among index keywords indicate thematic convergence and highlight the central concepts that underpin this research domain..We used the minimum number of co-occurrence of index keywords as 5 and we arrived at 50 keywords out of 1041, which meet the threshold. The screenshot of Vosviewer result is appended below.

| <b>Keyword</b>         | <b>Occurrences</b> | <b>Total link strength</b> |
|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| sales                  | 99                 | 361                        |
| costs                  | 16                 | 135                        |
| pubic policy           | 9                  | 124                        |
| population statistics  | 8                  | 121                        |
| employment             | 9                  | 120                        |
| budget control         | 7                  | 115                        |
| district of columbia   | 7                  | 115                        |
| economic activities    | 7                  | 115                        |
| employment information | 7                  | 115                        |
| information providing  | 7                  | 115                        |



Table IX: Index keywords basis total strength  
 Source: created by author(s)

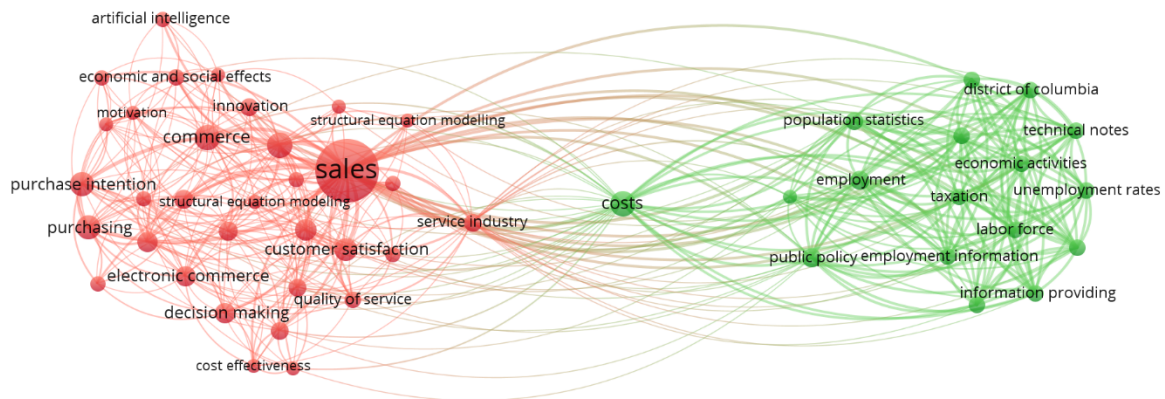


Fig 4: Index keywords basis total strength  
 Source: created by author(s)

“sales” has the highest link strength. This is visible in the Vosviewer screenshot.

### 3.2.4 Co-authorship Countries Analysis

The VOS viewer application was then employed for the analysis of the co-authorship network of countries based on their total number of co-authored publications related to the research of antecedents to Sales Performance; therefore, visual representations produced by VOSviewer exhibit the clusters within this network of international co-authorship. This clustering helps to identify and analyse trends in international collaboration and the flow of knowledge among different countries. In particular, several links between individual countries suggest that these countries have developed a long-standing collaborative relationship with one another. Conversely, if there are fewer links between countries in different regions, this indicates that there has been an emergence of new research and/or collaborative efforts in these countries or regions. Overall, the analysis illustrates that the collaborative and international nature of research on antecedents to Sales Performance exists in every part of the world.

With a minimum criterion of 5 documents per country, we arrive at 30 countries out of a total of 76 countries.

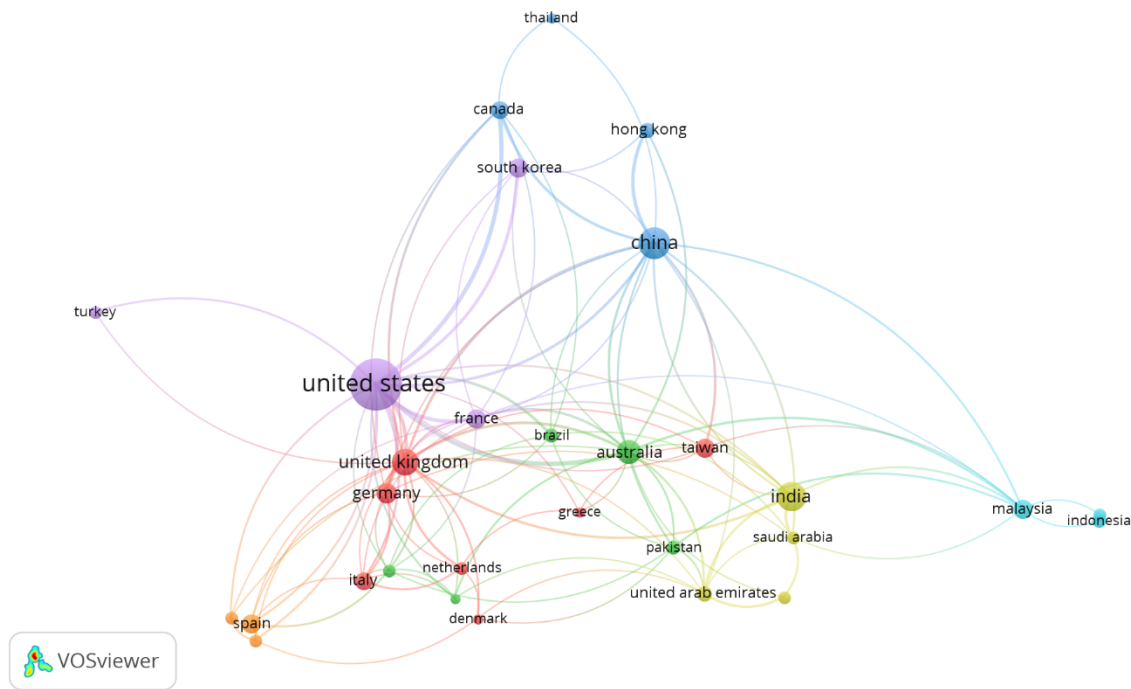
| <b>Countries</b>     | <b>Documents</b> | <b>Citations</b> | <b>Total link strength</b> |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| United States        | 135              | 4657             | 71                         |
| United Kingdom       | 37               | 1535             | 43                         |
| China                | 49               | 1538             | 38                         |
| Australia            | 30               | 1965             | 37                         |
| France               | 19               | 482              | 22                         |
| Germany              | 22               | 402              | 22                         |
| Canada               | 17               | 219              | 20                         |
| India                | 42               | 1015             | 19                         |
| Malaysia             | 19               | 503              | 14                         |
| United Arab Emirates | 12               | 204              | 14                         |



*Table X: Country-wise co-authorship analysis*

*Source: created by author(s)*

The countries have been arranged in terms of total strength.



*Fig 5: Co-authorship-countries analysis*

*Source: created by author(s)*

Besides the countries mentioned, the next countries are Italy, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Finland, Pakistan and Spain.

#### 4. Practical Implications

Through a systematic mapping of the literature regarding sales performance antecedents, this study gives insight into the research carried out by academics, industry professionals, government regulators, and business management. The steady and consistent growth in the number of articles published on this topic shows that it continues to be a critical area of research and practical application for both academics and organisations, especially in relation to rapidly and dramatically changing markets, digital selling environments, and evolving relationship between buyers and sellers.

This bibliometric analysis of the literature will be useful to all doctoral candidates and other academic researchers by providing a broad view of the main intellectual contributors, leading authors, and significant topics associated with the study of sales performance drivers.

The research findings help in establishing common constructs and measurements for the analysis of sales performance drivers across multiple contexts and settings. For sales practitioners and managers, this study provides insight into the complexity of sales performance and identifies the importance of individual skill level, relational capability, organizational support systems, and situational/environmental influences. With knowledge of the antecedents to sales performance, organizations can implement focused training programs, develop performance monitoring systems, and create incentive programs that enhance individual salesperson performance as well as improve long-term value delivery to customers.

For policymakers and the business community's decision-makers, the results of this study highlight the increasing importance of Sales Capability as a driver of both business competitiveness and economic growth. Data analysis may guide the development of workforce training strategies, skills training programs, and best practices within industries to enable stronger sales skills for an increasingly digital and service-oriented economy.



## 5. Future Research Directions

The bibliometric data analysis suggests the following as having sustained opportunities for research on what drives sales performance or how to use technology to improve sales performance based on empirical evidence:

First, while the existing research offers consistent opportunities to investigate what drives sales performance; the data indicates considerable opportunity to expand on both these areas through collecting more information using a wider variety of databases, keywords, and phrases that represent new sales contexts, new selling environments, and future opportunities with digital selling.

Second, further investigation using qualitative and/or quantitative methods, including systematic literature review or meta-analyses and longitudinal studies, should be completed to provide additional insight into the causal relationship between antecedents of sales performance and outcomes. Attention should also be given to identifying, through theory-driven models, the mediation and moderation of technology, organisational culture, and market turbulence as well as their potential as "context" for what drives sales performance.

Third, it will be important to approach future sales research from an interdisciplinary perspective by incorporating knowledge from the fields of Marketing, Psychology, Organisation Behaviour, Information Systems and Strategic Management. In particular, there are great opportunities for future research to investigate the intersection between sales performance and points such as digital transformation, customer analytics, and ethical selling practices.

Finally, improved partnerships between academic researchers and industry practitioners will strengthen the practical applicability of future research on the drivers of sales performance; collaborations between these two sectors can lead to the development of context specific models and actionable frameworks that connect theory to practice.

## 6. Conclusion

In this paper we present a bibliometric review of the antecedent factors associated with sales & their relationship to performance. The review covers research published over several decades. Our findings indicate that there has been a sustained and consistent level of published research relating to this topic (researchers continue to publish) although there has not been significant exponential growth in the number of research publications in this area, suggesting that there is still potential for continued research activity on sales performance antecedent factors and thus sales performance antecedents themselves.

The paper utilizes both descriptive bibliometrics and scientific mapping (using VOSviewer) to identify key contributors, leading journals, dominant countries and thematic clusters (core clusters) within the existing literature regarding sales performance antecedents. From our analysis, we see that over time the focus of investigation on sales performance antecedents has shifted away from an early emphasis on individual characteristics to include more broadly focal sources of relationship, organisational and contextual antecedents.

This paper presents an opportunity to consolidate previously fragmented literature in this area and develop a baseline for future research. The slow yet steady evolution of the sales performance antecedent literature suggests numerous theoretical and empirical avenues remain open for exploration and eventually interdisciplinary collaboration to advance the field of sales performance antecedent research.

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