

## Synergity Presentation Skill, Questioning Skill and Adaptation Skill To Selling Skill Improve Sales Force Performance

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this research is to develop conceptual model of sales force performance. The specific targets of this study empirically examine the effect of presentation skills, questioning skills, adaptation skills to selling skills, and the influence of sales skills on salesperson performance. Sampling technique based on purposive sampling, the sample of 105 respondents. The data obtained in this study was obtained by interview. Data collection uses a combination of open questions and closed questions given to respondents. The collected data is then analyzed by using SEM (Structural Equation Modeling). The theoretical findings in this study are enriching the literature to create salesperson performance. While the managerial findings in this study are to develop and improve sales skills, where sales training is very important to improve sales success and establish good relationships with customers in the long run. The focus of training can be directed to elements of presentation skills, questioning skills, adaptation skills.

**Keywords:** Presentation skills, ability to ask, adaptability, sales skills, sales force performance.

### INTRODUCTION

Business competition is increasingly competitive, making each company must have the ability to deal with these conditions [12, 27]. Preparation of the right strategy and an appropriate market analysis is expected that the company has the power to do the competition [10]. The possibility of each other dropping or scrambling the market is very large, given the increasingly pursued business competition. In such situations, the right strategy needs to exist in developing the market share, increasing the sales volume and achieving the optimal profit [21].

Successful management of the company is supported by a sales management strategy [11]. Management of poor sales management will affect the success of the company. Because the sales force as the spearhead of marketing activities in bring benefits to the company. The study of [13,7], states the role of a salesperson is crucial to the success of a sale, Such success is characterized by the ability of salespeople to build good relationships with customers and colleagues in the corporate environment. While [31,15] study explains the most important part of sales management is having a role in the success of the company in the management of its sales force. The performance of salespeople gives a direct impact on the outcome of the sale [22, 25]. The performance of salespeople is the most important part in holding the role of sales management [1]. Salespeople have an important role to bridge the relationship between the company and the consumer, in addition to running the routine function

of selling products, they must also be able to determine their policies.

The study of [15, 4], explained to improve the performance of a salesperson must have the ability to manage factors - factors that support the performance of salespeople, many factors affecting the sales force to achieve the performance expected by the company, one of those factors is sales skills owned by salespeople. Salespeople who achieve maximum results for companies certainly have good selling skills, where sales skills owned by salespeople will grow and increase as experience and learning are done. Sales skills are described as an orientation of a person to attempt to improve and improve the ability and control over the work he / she is responsible for [26]. Factors that support the performance of salespeople include sales skills owned by salespeople. To measure the skills of selling salespeople in small and medium enterprises will be determined the right variable.

Salespeople in small and medium enterprises should have high selling skills including interpersonal skills and salesmanship skills, then in this study will be used three variables that are expected to affect the sales skills of a salesperson.

Presentation skill is a variable to generate interest and generate customer buying reactions, so the expertise of a salesperson in making a sales presentation will show the level of selling skills he has. [14] notes that the concept of sales is based on three sales frameworks that include approach, presentation, and closure [8]. explains that successful salespeople are those who can adapt their communication styles appropriately in interactions with customers. Good adaptability will facilitate the subsequent sales process, will also lead to closer relationships with customers. The ability to ask salespeople is an ability to ask questions to understand customers so as to read the situation and purchase needs is a very important sales skill.

Based on the description above then the research question is: How to build sales force performance model through sales skills?. The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of presentation skills, adaptability and technical knowledge to sales force skills in improving sales force performance.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Performance Of Salespeople

[20] performance of salespeople is a form of evaluation of the contributions of salespeople to achieve organizational goals. The performance of salespeople is an important aspect of the overall organization performance assessment. This is because salespeople are part of the organization as a whole that plays an important role to sell the company's products.

Sales force performance is formed by four indicators: high earning ability, product selling ability with high profit margin, selling ability above sales target and ability to sell new product quickly. [34], the performance of salespeople will also point to whether the contribution made by sales people shows good or bad results in implementing the company's goals. In addition, performance will show the effectiveness or activity of salespeople in the field. The success of the company is something that all companies expect. Successful companies, of course, through a process. Toughness among them through one dimension that is the performance of salespeople. Salespeople are a group of sales force to support the company's activities.

The performance of salespeople is an evaluation of the contribution of salespeople to achieve organizational goals [2]. suggests that the performance of salespeople is conceptually useful for testing performance with regard to the behavior or activities performed by salespeople, and the results that can be

distributed to businesses. Dimensions of this performance are shown as behavioral performance and results performance [9, 32]. The performance of salespeople is the level or degree of salespeople in fulfilling sales tasks, whether in terms of achievement of results and sales behavior [4]. The performance of the sales force is determined by the sales force itself, how much performance that salespeople have can be indicated by looking at the achievement of the sales results. The performance of salespeople is a level of fulfillment of sales targets by salespeople, where the targets have been assigned to them. The performance or performance shown by salespeople can also be interpreted as the extent to which the salespeople carry out their responsibilities and duties [3, 18].

### Selling Skill

Sales skills are defined skills possessed by someone who contribute in terms of business sales consisting of approaches, search, requires identification, product knowledge, presentation, objection and closing of sales [25], Skills sales presentation, include: Active listening, adaptive sales, objection handling, closing, negotiating and searching. The selling skill is a belief in existence special knowledge possessed by salespeople are supportive business relationships [34]. Sales skills often too indicated by the ability of power sales to provide a solution required by the customer, so customers feel the value added which is obtained [3,18]. The ability to sell that owned salespeople will be increasingly increase, this increase goes hand in hand a salesperson's learning against the conditions facing inside carry out sales tasks. Expertise selling is also described as a orientation of someone to try make improvements and improve ability and mastery over work that be the responsibility [2].

### Presentation Skill

Each company must have a sales force who has the skills to make sales presentations. Sales presentation is an opportunity to expose the product offered as well as an opportunity for salespeople to generate consumer interest in the product. A frequent phenomenon in the field, a salesperson in a sales presentation is more like a kind of speech [6]. There are certain skills that should be developed in the presentation, where the sales presentations that engage the consumer so that the consumer is interested to participate in it so that it is more effective. The presentation, a salesperson should follow the AIDA formula to gain attention, generate interest, arouse desire, cause purchase action. [19], to get the attention of consumers to generate consumer interest in the products offered, arouse the desire to have and cause consumer purchase action. Therefore a salesperson must use the communication strategy well. Study [26, 23] describes salespeople playing a role in the marketing of products and services offered by firms influenced by communication skills and

communication strategies used by salespeople. The opportunity to be able to give a specific sales presentation to each customer is the advantage of personal selling, where there is an opportunity for the sales force to collect information directly from the customer, then based on the information, it can know the wishes, complaints and expectations of customers.

#### **Ability to Ask**

The ability to ask salespeople, is an ability to ask questions to understand customers so as to read the situation and purchasing needs, is a very important sales skill [25]. The salesperson who can understand the needs and desires of the customer in relation to the product through the right questions will lead to a close relationship with the customer, where the relationship is the seed of the customer's trust [29]. Study conducted by [30] describes the process of asking appropriate salespeople in achieving sales goals: (1) report development and trust, (2) ease of meaningful communication, (3) acquisition of information.

Good inquiring capability, will lead to closeness and create trust from customers. When the trust of the customer has been indicated then the process next sale will run easier. This is in line with research conducted by [33] who find that buyers will be more open to salespeople who know the most effective questions and this will help the seller in choosing a message.

#### **Ability to Adapt**

Adaptability is a change in sales behavior during interacting with customers based on information received about actual sales situations [24]. There are various market segments aimed at by salespeople in offering their products. Only salespeople with good adaptability are able to enter in all segments [1]. Salespeople approach various sales aims to show the impression they want to show to customers. The ability to adapt in sales is described as a change in sales behavior while interacting with customers based on valuable information about situational sales traits [13], to have the adaptability skills required character learning in various sales situations. The process of self-adjustment leads to the expression of expressive character-learning in social situations and can express themselves in various ways of expression to convey their purpose [5].

#### **Influence Between Variables**

##### **The Effect Of Presentation Skill On Selling Skills**

Sales presentation is a sales concept that has an important role, which in the presentation will affect the amount of interest, interest and consumer desires in determining purchasing decisions. The study of [19,34] described a salesperson using the approach to the customer, when the customer's desire is the same, the sales presentation provided is sufficient to influence his customers to make a purchase [26,23]. The importance

of a presentation, so it can affect customers to make purchases, making the ability to make sales presentations is an important part of a sales skill that needs attention.

The success of the presentation is indicated by the consumer's response in following the presentation process and the purchasing actions performed by the customer after the presentation [23]. describes sales presentations in front of consumers so that consumers interested in participating in them are more effective. The communication strategy used influences the salesperson's ability in making sales presentations. The ability of salespeople to modify interactive communication models with consumers in each segment is critical. The study of [9, 32] describes communication skills and involvement of interactions affecting salesperson performance results either directly or indirectly to improve sales interaction ability. The study of [2] explains there are three sales skills studied by salespeople in completing their sales tasks, which include: 1. Interpersonal skills, such as how to resolve and solve conflicts. 2. Salesmanship skills, such as making presentations and closing sales, 3. Technical skills, such as knowledge of product appearance and benefits, engineering expertise and company policy.

Based on the literature review above, it can be proposed a hypothesis as follows:

H1: The better the sales skill presentation the better the sales skills.

##### **The Influence Of The Ability To Ask About Selling Skills**

The involvement of salespeople in interacting with customers through the ability to explore customer needs by asking questions [29]. By knowing what the complaints and customer needs are, a salesperson can take appropriate action to meet customer needs, where knowing the needs and expectations of customers is an efficient and useful way to obtain information about customers [3, 18].

In small and medium enterprises, it is very important to understand the needs of customers, the strategy of asking well then bring up the required information. The information obtained is useful as a basis for salespeople to offer the right product for customer needs.

The study of [30, 2], explains one of the reliability of the sales force is the ability to obtain information from customers through asking buyers and listening to buyers and then using information to explain their products to buyers and obtain important information from buyers in relation to their products.

Based on the above description can be proposed the third hypothesis as follows: H2: The better the ability to ask the salesperson the better the sales skills.

**The influence of adaptability to selling skills**

Adaptability is a good medium for interacting with customers, where sales conditions are not always the same. One of the most important selling techniques is the ability of salespeople to use adaptive selling with customers [5, 2], Salespeople who have the ability to adapt the sales force who have communication style, interaction and expression with customers causing proximity relationship with the customer so that in the end can do the purpose of sales [1]. effective salespeople have better customer adaptability, experience to use different sales approaches, change sales force from one situation to another and have a flexible sales approach [9, 32].

Describes a successful salesperson as a salesperson who is able to adapt in his communication style appropriately in customer interaction. Good adaptability of salespeople will make it easier for salespeople to interact with customers with different characters. Adaptability has a significant effect on achieving a salesperson's outcome [13].

Based on the above description can be proposed the second hypothesis as follows:

H3: The better the adaptability of the sales force the better the salesperson's skills.

**The influence of selling skills on salesperson performance**

The performance of sales force can be improved if the sales force has the ability to manage the factors that support the performance of the sales force, many factors affect the sales force in achieving the performance expected company [34], One of the factors is the selling skills possessed by sales force [2].

The sales force performance indicators are the factors controlled by the sales force itself, based on the behavior of the sales force in the conduct of sales activities and the results obtained by the sales force [26, 23], describes the determinants of the performance of salespeople, such as the skills or skills possessed by the sales force. The most accurate sales force performance indicator, by measuring the behavior of the sales force it self [17, 16].

Marketing performance is highly dependent on how resources are developed, to allocate resources more effectively and efficiently. Companies must be able to find a good salesperson whose performance or everything that is capable of supporting the company's program .

Based on the above description can be proposed the fourth hypothesis as follows:

H4: The better the selling skills the better the salesperson's performance.

From the above literature review can be made empirical model presented in the path diagram in table 1 below:

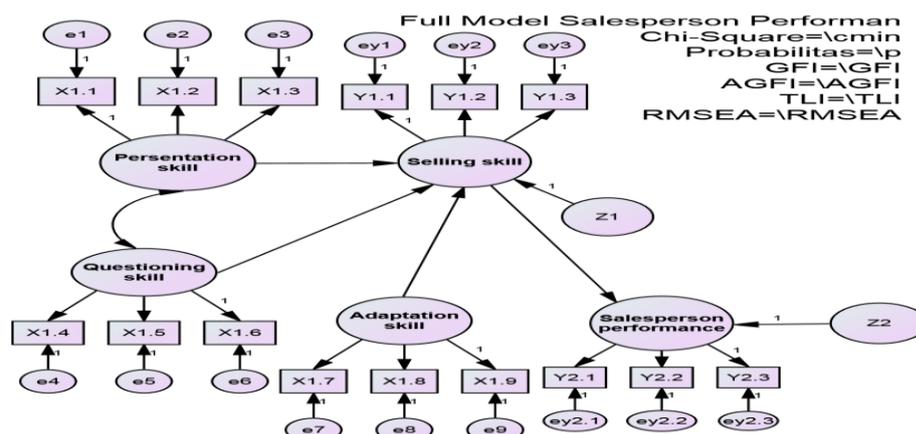


Fig-1: Path chart

**RESEARCH METHODS**

A survey of 1,601. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) batik in Central Java Province. Small and medium enterprises were chosen because there is evidence that, especially in Central Java, Indonesia. Batik SMEs face an environment of uncertainty due to competition in this era of globalization. One option in making batik is to

distinguish that SMEs batik products remain competitive.

The population in this study is small and medium enterprises batik in Central Java Province amounted to 1601 people. Selection of salespeople in small-scale batik medium as the population aims to provide an overview of the condition of the problems

being faced by batik SMEs. Sampling technique in this research is purposive sampling method means that samples taken must meet the criteria - the criteria that have been set include: Salespeople on batik SMEs have been working for more than two years. This requirement is determined with the consideration that the salesperson understands the sales task well and has

committed to the organization. Samples were taken as many as 105 respondents.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Data analysis**

Data analysis using AMOS version 5.0. The results of data processing seen in Table-1.

**Table-1: Goodness of Fit Index Modified Structural Equation Model**

No	Goodness of fit index	Cut of value	Results of analysis	Model evaluation
1	X <sup>2</sup> – Chi-Square	< 126,57	112,47	Good
2	Significancy Probability	≥ 0,05	0,06	Good
3	CMIN / DF	≤ 2.00	1,905	Good
4	CFI	≥ 0,90	0,955	Good
5	GFI	≥ 0,90	0,921	Good
6	AGFI	≥ 0,90	0,932	Good
7	TLI	≥ 0,95	0,989	Good
8	RMSEA	≥ 0,08	0,183	Good

Source: primary data that is processed, 2018

Table-1, after going through several stages of the test against the model hypothesis, the results show that this model is in accordance with the data or fit on the data used in the study, as seen from the level of significance (P) to the chi-square model (55.47) TLI, CMIN / DF, GFI, AGFI and RMSEA indexes are within the expected range of values. Thus the full model hypothesis test shows that this model is in

accordance with the data or fit on the data used in the study.

The measurement results have met the criteria of goodness of fit. Furthermore, based on the fit model then tested five proposed hypotheses. Regression coefficient values of causality relationship and t value arithmetic seen in CR value (critical ratio), as follows:

**Table-2: SEM analysis results and hypothesis testing**

Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)						
			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Selling skill	<---	Presentation skill	.308	.261	2.133	.032
Selling skill	<---	Questioning skill	.975	.388	2.471	.011
Selling skill	<---	Adaptation skill	.461	.354	2.212	.015
Salesperson performance	<---	Selling skill	.751	.387	2.164	.031

Source: primary data that is processed, 2018

**Hypothesis testing**

H1: There is a significant influence between presentation skills on selling skills. It is shown in estimation parameter 0,308, with value of CR = 2,133 or C.R> 2,00 with significance level 0,05 (5%), also proved probability value <0,05. Thus hypothesis 1 is acceptable. This is in line with the research of Boorum *et al.*, [26, 23, 19, 34]. Found that presentation skills have a positive and significant impact on sales skills. This means that the findings of this research is the skills in the sales presentation of a salesperson raises a good product perception to the customer, the ability to generate interest and the ability to cause purchase action will affect sales skills owned by salespeople. Study [9, 32] found presentation skills as one of the focus of attention in building sales skills owned by

salespeople. The results of hypothesis testing 1 accept the conception that presentation skill as an educational effort and direct product promotion, it is expected that the sales objectives can be achieved, so the success of a sales presentation affects the sales skills of a salesperson. It has been tested how much influence the sales force skills in small and medium enterprises batik. The use of presentation skill factor indicates that a product education conducted by a salesperson to the customer in order to generate buying desire thereby improves his sales skills. There are certain skills that should be developed in the presentation, where a sales presentation that involves the customer until the customer is interested to participate, more effective.

H2: There is a significant influence between the ability to ask questions about selling skills. It is shown in estimation parameter 0,975 with value CR = 2,471 or C.R> 2,00 with significance level 0,05 (5%), also proved probability value <0,05. Thus hypothesis 1 is acceptable. This is in line with the study [3; 18], found that questioning ability had a positive and significant effect on selling skills. The results of this study contributed empirical support to the conceptions conveyed by Schiffman [30, 2], that the ability to inquire is an ability to ask questions in order to understand customers so as to understand the situation and customer purchasing needs, it is a sales skill which is very important. This ability to ask is a good skill from the salesforce so it can boost performance which are owned.

H3: There is a significant influence between the ability to adapt to selling skills. It is shown in estimation parameter 0,461 with value of CR = 2,212 or C.R> 2,00 with significance level 0,05 (5%), also proved probability value <0,05. Thus hypothesis 3 is acceptable. This is in line with [5, 2], found that the ability to adapt positively and significantly influence the selling skills. The results of this study support the importance of the conception of adaptability as a process of self-adjustment leads to a more expressive relationship of learning characters in existing social situations and can express themselves in various ways to be able to express their goals.

H4: There is a significant influence between sales skills on salesperson performance. It is shown in estimation parameter 0,751 with value CR = 2,164 or C.R> 2,00 with significance level 0,05 (5%), also proved probability value <0,05. Thus hypothesis 4 is acceptable. This is in line with the study [26, 23], found that selling skills have a positive and significant effect on the performance of salespeople.

This research tries to find the trigger factor of salesperson's performance so as to produce maximum closing for the company. In a study conducted by [17, 16] to improve the performance of salespeople, companies must have the ability to manage factors that support the performance of salespeople in order to achieve the expected performance of the company, where one of the factors is the selling skills owned by the power sales.

## IMPLICATIONS

### Theoretical Implications

This research provides theoretical implications for the study of marketing management, among others:

First, the findings of this study clarify the conception and empirical evidence of contributing to the conception of Johlke & Mary [25]; Kotler [35]; Rentz *et al.*, [36] about sales presentations as part of a salesmanship skill that influences a salesperson's sales

skills, wherein a sales presentation there are certain skills to be developed.

Second, the ability to ask questions appropriately to understand the customer so that it can read the situation and the customer's needs are manifested by the ability to ask a salesperson actually play a role in improving the skills of selling optimally to the resulting performance, so that this result can contribute empiric to Schiffman's view on questioning skills [37].

Third, this study reinforces the view that one of the most effective selling techniques is the ability of salespeople to use adaptive selling with customers [38, 39].

Fourth, this study supports the opinion of Spiro & weitz which states that among the factors that can affect the sales force to achieve the performance expected by the company, one of which is the sales skills owned by the sales force [40].

## MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Based on the research that has been done, the managerial implications of this study for small and medium enterprises batik in Central Java Province are:

First, Sales skills are an important element in improving performance generated by salespeople. Because of the existence of the selling skills aspect attached to the individual sales force, therefore it becomes important for the sales force in doing self-learning efforts to run the self-control function against the failure in sales tasks done, so that factors that cause failure can be improved to improve the selling skills it has.

Secondly, the concept of selling skills can be developed along with the learning done, but there is no training program for small-scale batik business that focuses on the effort of increasing the selling skills, it becomes important implication for the company to hold continuous training program. The company's main objective is to conduct continuous training programs to develop and improve sales skills, where sales training is essential to improve sales success and establish long-term customer relationships. The focus of the training can be directed to presentation skill elements, questioning skills, adaptation skills and technical knowledge.

Third, the ability to ask is very useful for the continuation of product development from the company. The implication is that underwriting departments need to synergize with department marketing in an effort to follow up on their sales force's inquiring strategy. This can be realized by increasing the company's responsiveness in capturing customer wishes and expectations appropriately and

interpreting them quickly as needed, as well as integrating them directly to customers on the choice of marketed batik products.

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