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The Customer Orientation of Salesperson for Performance in Korean Market Case: A Relationship between Customer Orientation and Adaptive Selling

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Abstract: The role of the salesperson has been more highlighted in recent research for company profits and sustainable relationship with customers. This study attempts to classify sales behaviors into a conceptual structure of customer orientation and adaptive selling in order to examine the effect of the customer orientation and adaptive selling on organizational performance and sales performance. The study newly compares the relationship between salespeople's customer orientation and adaptive selling in terms of the organizational aspect of the organizational delivering market value and the behavioral aspect of individual delivering. Results show that customer orientation affects adaptive selling behaviors of salespeople, and such behaviors affect the salespeople's organizational identification and their sales performance. However, the effect of their organization identification on sales performance was not supported. This result suggests the need for educational programs which provide the salesperson with opportunities to understand customer-oriented organizational culture. In addition, such programs need to empower salespeople to develop positive corporate identities.

Keywords: salesperson; customer orientation; adaptive selling; organization identification; sales performance

1. Introduction

As the current market environment among companies tends to shift from product-oriented to service- and customer-oriented, the importance of customer management through creating positive customer value is further emphasized [1]. Effective salespeople play key roles in creating positive customer value by fostering sustainable relationships between customers and firms [2]. These behaviors contribute to the sustainable benefits of their companies as well as positive relationships with customers.

A salesperson plays an important role in representing his or her company in the liberal market economy. Their role is even more critical in representing their firm when the company's products are not particularly superior. A salesperson is also a key factor in delivering corporate images to customers [3–5]. The salesperson is the contact point for customers to quickly identify changes in their needs, acquire and utilize customer information, and provide services and products that meet the customers' expectations, except when there exists a purchase facilitator such as a digital signage and a different shopping characteristics [6–8]. The salesperson not only increases customer satisfaction but also superior sales performance in a sustainable way [9,10].

Previous studies have been conducted since the 1960s to improve the salesperson's performance and to explore what is needed for effective sales. As a result, many studies have shown that it is possible to improve the performance of salespeople through monetary rewards, such as incentive

and salary increases [11], and welfare provisions [12] and non-monetary rewards, such as education, training, and communication [13]. However, there are other studies that suggest that if a salesperson is not able to provide good customer services, he will feel exhausted and emotionally unstable [14]. As such, monetary or non-monetary rewards alone cannot improve the performance of the salesperson. Thus, more recent studies focus on customer orientation and adaptive selling as resources of effective and sustainable sales.

According to previous research, sustainable behaviors have been defined as a set of actions to protect natural, social, and human resources [15]. In marketing strategy and sales domains, marketing orientation or customer orientation is a philosophy and an action plan that focuses on long-term business relationships. Companies conducting a coherent set of behaviors which focuses on their B2B partners find that a solid business entry barrier can be created by their satisfied clients. Furthermore, in the B2C market, brand loyalty can be strengthened by meeting the market needs, and all these efforts ensure sustainability when managing core business activities.

In the marketing field, as relationship marketing was highlighted, one began to pay attention to how to maintain and promote long-term relationships with existing customers rather than short-term sales-oriented relationships with new customers. The term, relationship marketing, was first mentioned in the literature of Berry [16], and since then, much has been discussed about relationship marketing in the service marketing literature. This relationship marketing has been more effective in the service industry when there is a high orientation towards customers and salespeople interact closely with customers in order to benefit from short-term exchanges [4].

Definitions of relationship marketing may vary, but the concept of relationship marketing is the same as pursuing mutual benefits that seek long-term relationships between customers and companies. Morgan and Hunt [17] defined relationship marketing as the first line of marketing activities carried out to form, develop, and maintain successful relationship exchanges, while Treacy and Wiersema [18] emphasized a company's sustainable competitive advantage and customer value. For this, they argued that customer intimacy, product leadership, and differentiation were necessary. Several studies directly investigate this influence of relationship marketing on business sustainability [19,20]. In sum, the main purpose of relationship marketing is to maximize mutual benefits between customers and companies by having a long-term and sustainable relationship with customers.

Customer orientation is one of the major concerns to maintain a long-term relationship with customers. Salespeople focus on customers' needs and desires and deliver relevant services. They acquire customer information and knowledge, deliver services to satisfy their customers' needs and desires, and develop products and company knowledge [21]. Several previous studies found that customer orientation affected performance of salespeople in a significant way. It also had an effect on salespeople's behaviors in relational sales environments [22].

Adaptive selling is the ability of a salesperson to change his sales behavior while interacting with customers [23], or based on perceived information about the nature of sales situations such as correcting communication styles, content, and sales behaviors [24,25]. In other words, adaptive selling modifies sales behaviors to meet the individual needs of customers, which strengthens the relationship between the customer and the salesperson, resulting in a significant impact on the sales performance [26].

This study of customer orientation and adaptive selling argues that these sales behaviors are formed by the characteristics of organizations and the psychological characteristics of the individual salesperson and directly affect the sales performance [22,26,27]. However, research on the difference between customer orientation and adaptive selling for the salesperson is insufficient, and the two concepts tend to be considered as identical.

In terms of the differences between the two concepts, customer orientation is an organization culture that creates the most effective and efficient actions necessary to create a superior value to customers [28], while adaptive selling can be seen as the salesperson's individual actions to perform marketing concepts [29]. In other words, customer orientation can be regarded as a culture composed

of values or beliefs shared by the organizations. This leads to the salesperson's behavior, whereas, adaptive selling can be regarded as the salesperson's individual decision making action.

Recently, studies on enhancing the relationship between salespersons and customers are emerging, not only in the existing B2B field, but also in B2C research. In Franke and Park's study [30], a meta-analysis was conducted in relation to sales behavior and customer orientation of salespersons. In the sample used for the meta-analysis, they included 31,428 salespeople from 33 different journals, 48 dissertations, and six working papers. The representative samples of salespeople are from telemarketing, door-to-door, computer services, financial services, insurance, real estate, etc. From this perspective, if the salesperson can have more customers by enhancing relationships with them, they can increase sales. This is an important finding, in that salespeople can control their company's unilateral dismissals or opportunistic behaviors by securing a large number of customers through enhanced customer relationships.

Hurley and Hult [31] proposed a causal relationship between an organizational culture and individual behaviors, in the sense that the culture of the organization affects individuals' behaviors (values-drive-behavior). Deshpande and Webster [29] argued that an organizational culture shapes shared organizational values and beliefs and provides individuals with a basis for taking actions within the organization. However, Kohli and Jaworski [28] argued that specific behaviors of individuals transforms marketing concepts in practice and such concepts were applied to organizational knowledge assets of the salespeople (behavior-drive-values).

Based on previous studies, the purpose of this study is as follows. In this study, we investigate whether customer orientation as a norm of an organizational culture affects an individual's sales behavior which reflects individual characteristics (culture-drive-individual behavior) or whether an individual's sales behavior with salespeople's characteristics affects customer orientation as an organizational concept (individual behavior-drive-culture). Based on these parallel constructs, two relational models will be theoretically discussed and empirically tested. The study will provide implications on sustainable business profits and sustainable relationships with customers in the future.

2. Theoretical Background and Literature Review

2.1. Customer Orientation

Customer orientation is a concept derived from market orientation, and specifically Shapiro [32] regards both constructs as identical. However, market orientation can be regarded as a concept based on the entire organization, customers, and competitors, and customer orientation can be defined as a more concrete concept based on marketing organization and customers [33]. Saxe and Weitz [34] defined customer orientation as "the degree to which salespeople practice marketing concepts so that customers can make a satisfactory purchase decision." Kohli and Jaworski [28] have described customer orientation as "the most effective and efficient way to create the necessary action to create the organizational culture". Thus, a salesperson with high customer orientation tends to take actions that increase customer satisfaction in the long run and avoid actions that can cause dissatisfaction even if they could increase sales in the short term [34].

The study on the exploratory constructs of customer orientation distinguishes the variables by individual factors, organizational factors, and system factors. First, personal factors influencing customer orientation include a salesperson's gender, sales experience, and the emotional situation of customers [30,35]. Second, organizational factors, such as the delegation of authority for problem solving or providing an environment for collaboration among colleagues [36], ethical education [37], and creating an environment that stimulates organizational culture and motivation [38]. Third, system factors include behavioral control [39]. For the consequences of customer orientation, a number of scholars agree that customer orientation enhances the quality of the relationship between the seller and the buyer, but the relationship between customer orientation and sales performance show various results. The results of these studies are as follows: First, a positive causal relationship between the two

variables [26,30,34,40–42], second, there are various studies reporting a non-significant relationship between variables [26,43], and finally the study that there is a negative causality [34]. Saxe and Weitz's study [34] shows that a high relation-oriented group forms a positive relationship with performance and a low relation-oriented group forms a negative relationship. In this context, their study can be a basis for an assertion that a conditional relationship may exist between customer orientation and performance. Thus, the relationship between customer orientation and sales performance can be considered as being determined by other variables that constitute the salesperson.

2.2. Adaptive Selling

Adaptive selling refers to "the ability of salesperson to change sales behavior in the process of interacting with customers" [44] or "the process of interacting with customers based on perceived information about the nature of the sales situation" [25]. Adaptive selling has been studied in the field of industrial psychology [45] and introduced by Weitz [46] into the field of sales management. Adaptive selling has been studied in the B2B field [34] because it can be a more powerful and effective means of persuasion than other marketing communication tools [34], and its importance is recently reconsidered with the increased role of personal selling.

Adaptive selling changes the sales strategy according to the consumer's needs and sales situation. The salesperson who is oriented toward adaptive selling uses various sales techniques to meet the needs of consumers. Adaptive selling emphasizes the importance of satisfying consumers' needs with such sales techniques, as a salesperson must gain trust and commitment from consumers in order to increase sales performance [44]. In general, if the sales situations are diverse and the appropriate sales behavior is needed in each situation, the adaptive selling level becomes high, and if the sales situations are usually the same and the predictable sales behavior occurs, the adaptive selling level becomes low [47].

The results of the prior studies are summarized as follows: First, there is a positive relationship between adaptive selling and organizational characteristics [27], learning orientation and performance orientation [48], knowledge structure of salesperson [25], and gender and sales experience [30]. The research results on the relationship between customer orientation and sales performance have various interpretations about the causal relationship between the two variables, but studies on the causal relationship between adaptive selling and sales performance generally suggest a consistent direction [24,49–51]. This inconsistency in directions is because both customer orientation and adaptive selling have different intentions. According to Saxe and Weitz [34], regardless of the customer orientation level (whether it is high or low), a salesperson can adopt adaptive selling behavior, which suggests that adaptive selling can be regarded simply by selling tactics to increase sales performance. A salesperson with a high level of adaptive selling skills modifies sales proposals on the basis of the feedback they receive from consumers. These actions are sometimes referred to as offering customized solutions, even though it may be far away from what consumers really need or are most interested in. However, customer orientation is always mindful of what a consumer wants in the salesperson's mind, and is different from simply modifying a sales strategy based on consumer feedback. Thus, the study by Chakrabarty et al. [47] introduces customer orientation as the sales behavior that seeks long-term benefits that can offer meeting consumer needs while taking short-term sacrifices.

2.3. Job Performance

It is difficult to find a consistent definition due to the multidimensional nature of job performance, but generally it is a concept of how successfully the work has been accomplished by the member in an organization. Studies related to the salesperson describe job performance through various variables. These variables can be categorized into sales performance, which is an output-based performance focused on sales results, and organizational performance, which is an action-oriented performance focused on sales behavior [52]. If the sales performance emphasizes the individual and quantitative aspects of the performance such as the sales, the sales level of the product, and the achievement level of

the quantitative goal, then the organizational performance is a result of emphasizing organizational and qualitative aspects of performance, such as organizational commitment, organizational identification, and service delivery level [52]. In this study, sales performance and organizational identification were used as the sales performance of salesperson, and the differential effects of customer orientation and adaptive selling on these job performance factors were examined.

3. Hypothesis Development and Research Model

3.1. Customer Orientation and Adaptive Selling

Customer orientation can be seen as an organizational culture that creates the most effective and efficient actions necessary to create customer value [28], which means the values and beliefs shared by organizational members [53,54]. In other words, it is a constant endeavor to identify and satisfy customers' desires and provide value for them [21]. The value can be seen as the philosophy or culture that creates a competitive advantage by identifying customers' needs and fulfilling them better than competitors [21]. This is customer orientation which refers to a salesperson's perception of organizational culture or philosophy. Adaptive selling is rather an individual level of thought. It defines a customer's desires from an individual perspective as a salesperson rather than an organizational perspective [55]. A salesperson with high levels of customer orientation show adaptive selling behavior, such as the immediate resolution of problems, systematic customer contact, friendly attitudes, and stable emotional communications because of the internal motivation to smoothly perform support behaviors to customers [56,57]. In other words, the salesperson's perception formed from the organizational culture can be considered to affect the individual sales behavior (culture-drive-individual behavior). From this research, we predict that customer orientation will affect the salesperson's adaptive selling and set the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis H1a. *Customer orientation will have a positive effect on salesperson's adaptive selling.*

The organizational culture can be expressed as a result of gradual knowledge and dedication that an organization member gained through experience, rather than the result created by the organization's management. This is consistent with a behavioral approach in which culture is formed as a result of behavioral experience [58,59]. Kohli and Jaworski [28] argued that marketing behaviors, such as monitoring the external environment in at least some situations, lead to the development of a marketing culture. Many previous studies on organizational culture and the behavior of organizational members argued that organizational culture induces members' behavior, but the possibility that the behavior of organizational members can create a new culture should also be considered.

As adaptive selling focuses on the needs and preferences of each customer at the point of sales, it can be seen as a kind of customer-oriented problem-solving and individual behavior of the salesperson. Siguaw et al. [60] argued that an empathetic relationship can be formed between the salesperson and customers through adaptive selling, and these emotional attachment relationships develop into an organization culture for customers. Because adaptive selling refers to the strategy of listening to customers' needs at the point of sales, in this situation, the rapport between salesperson and customers increases [30] and it can be formed into the organizational culture. In other words, individual sales behavior of salesperson can lead to the salesperson's perception formed as organizational culture (individual behavior-drive-culture). Therefore, it can be predicted that the salesperson's adaptive selling will affect customer orientation [61,62], and we, therefore, have set up the opposite hypothesis, hypothesis H1b.

Hypothesis H1b. *Adaptive selling will have a positive effect on the customer orientation of salesperson.*

3.2. Adaptive Selling, Customer Orientation, and Organization Identification

Organizational identification can be conceptualized as "having a unity of the organization or perceiving interests or goals shared with other organizational members" [63]. Many studies have conceptualized organizational identification as cognitive [63,64], however, recently the concept of organizational identification has been described by combining cognitive and emotional factors. Organizational identification can be viewed as an extended self-identity, contributing to organizational success, and sustained even when serious loss, damage, or group failure of the organization is anticipated [64].

In the previous research, organizational identification has been found to influence a salesperson's satisfaction and organizational efficiency. Furthermore, it has been found to be a factor to induce collaborative behavior among salespersons and to encourage organizational support [65]. In addition, the higher the identification of the organization, the more satisfied the salesperson is [66] which motivates them to focus on the organization's goals [65]. As such, organizational identification has become an important concern to researchers as a concept that can explain and predict the attitudes and behaviors of salesperson as an important psychological state that affects salesperson and organizations [67]. However, we suggest organizational identification as a consequence factor formed through organizational culture and behavior rather than a predictor to explain and predict a salesperson's attitude and behavior. According to the theory of social identity, an individual is immersed in his role in society and forms an identity for himself as part of the semantic set that he constructs [68]. At this point, the more valued the role of the individual being immersed, the more important is the role identity and the more efforts are made to strengthen it [69]. In addition, human beings, social beings, go through the process of establishing their identity not only in the roles given to them in society but also in the character of their group. In other words, human identity is determined by personal characteristics, but also influenced by members of the group or organization to which the individual belongs [70].

Therefore, it is expected that salespersons can establish their identity by the characteristics of their organization, not only when they are immersed in and valued by individual sales behavior, but also by the values and beliefs they share as an organizational culture. Based on the theory, hypotheses are set as follows.

Hypothesis H2a. *Adaptive selling will have a positive effect on salesperson identification.*

Hypothesis H2b. *Customer orientation will have a positive effect on salesperson identification.*

3.3. Adaptive Selling, Customer Orientation, and Sales Performance

Many previous studies have suggested sales performance as a result of adaptive selling and customer orientation [24,30,49,71,72]. This is because, adaptive selling and customer orientation are both sales behaviors to identify consumer needs and ultimately satisfy consumer needs. As described above, adaptive selling improves the sales performance by increasing a rapport and reducing purchase resistance in a sales situation [30], and customer orientation improves by increasing factors such as satisfaction, trust, or the development of relationships with salesperson [73,74].

Customer orientation is a prerequisite for long-term relationships with consumers. Although some argue that if it takes a long time to analyze and resolve consumer problems, it does not affect or negatively impacts sales performance [34], many studies have found that customer orientation positively affects sales performance [21,52].

Previous research that studied the relationship between adaptive selling and sales performance suggests that adaptive selling increases the sales performance of the salesperson in any sales situation [24,25,49]. Because adaptive selling is rooted in individualism and performance theory, suggesting a product or service that meets customer needs in an adaptive selling process can be seen as

a way to place a consumer's order [75]. Therefore, it can be predicted that the salesperson's customer orientation and adaptive selling will affect the sales performance and set the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis H3a. *Adaptive selling will have a positive effect on the sales performance of the salesperson.*

Hypothesis H3b. *Customer orientation will have a positive effect on the sales performance of the salesperson.*

3.4. Organizational Identification and Sales Performance

The research that discusses the relationship between organizational identification and financial performance has not yet clarified, as it is in most studies focusing on behavioral performance. From a practical point of view, however, it is desirable that the ultimate goal of organizational identification be related to financial performance, especially sales. As identified above, it is likely to increase financial performance [76] because a salesperson feels higher job satisfaction [77]. In addition, because it reduces the intent to terminate a relationship [78], it also reduces the cost of finding, managing, and maintaining new customers. In some cases, a salesperson who feels a sense of organizational identification may suffer financial damages for the entire organization [65], which can increase the responsiveness of the entire system even in the face of financial difficulties. Therefore, it can be predicted that the organizational identification of the salesperson will affect the sales performance.

Hypothesis H4a. *Organizational identification will have a positive effect on the sales performance of the salesperson.*

Hypothesis H4b. *Organizational identification will have a positive effect on the sales performance of the salesperson.*

3.5. Research Model

Based on the hypotheses described above, the research model is divided into the initial research model 1 (Figure 1) and the research model 2 (Figure 2) composed of alternative hypotheses. The reason why two alternative models are set up is that the influence direction between two conceptual constructs have not been widely tested except in a few pioneering studies [30,60]. And it is necessary for the researcher to investigate the order of research constructs which one construct precedes another. A final model will be chosen based on the model fitting analysis.

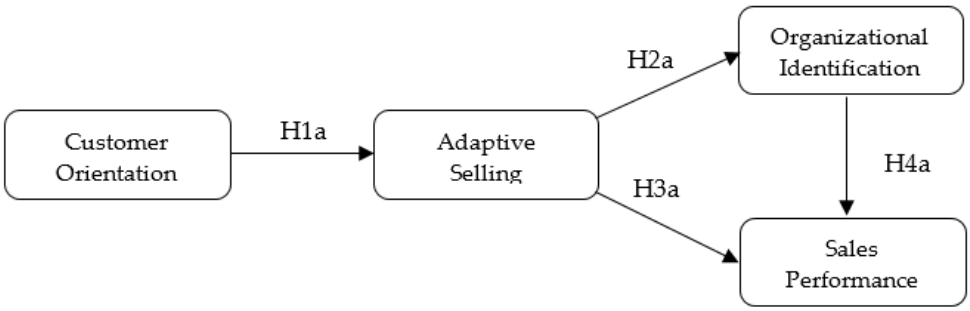


Figure 1. Research Model 1.

In research model 1, customer orientation has a positive (+) effect on adaptive selling, adaptive selling has a positive (+) influence on organizational identification and sales performance, and organizational identification has a positive (+) influence on sales performance. In study model 2, adaptive selling has a positive (+) effect on customer orientation, customer orientation has a positive

(+) effect on organization identification and sales performance, and organization identification has a positive (+) effect on sales performance.

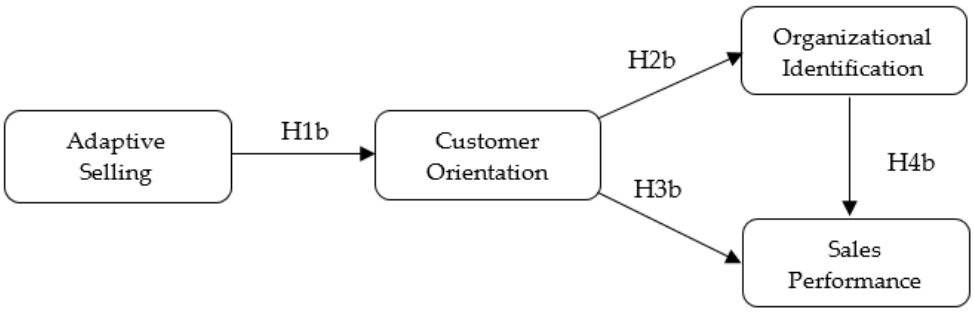


Figure 2. Research Model 2.

4. Empirical Results

4.1. Measurement of Variables

In order to test the research hypotheses and verify the fit of the model in this study, the measurement items were measured based on the existing research as follows. The items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (see Appendix A). First, customer orientation was measured on the four items of Narver and Slater [21]. Second, adaptive selling was based on the four measurement items from Spiro and Weitz [24]. Third, based on the measurement items from Mael and Ashforth [65], organizational identification of salesperson was measured with four items. Finally, sales performance was based on the four measurement items from Behrman and Perreault [79].

4.2. Samples and Data Collection

All of the measured items used in this study were derived from existing studies, coordinated with research context and translated into the Korean language. Prior to conducting the survey, a pretest was accomplished and modified the scales partially. Furthermore, when the scales were developed in one country and applied to another, it was necessary to evaluate whether the versions of each scale were equal [80]. Therefore, it was translated into the Korean language through the procedure proposed by Brislin [81]. Then, the questionnaire was back-translated into English to support equivalence [82]. The questionnaire was then back-translated and checked for familiarity with the original language. The back-translated questionnaire was compared with the original language.

In this study, the authors conducted a survey from salespersons who are dealing with individual customers rather than corporate customers and are employed at various industries in South Korea. This is because many scholars and researchers in the context of South Korea are paying considerable attention to the research of salespeople and exploring a long-term relationship between salespersons and customers as well as salespersons and organizations [83,84]. The survey was conducted online from 3 May 2016 to 6 May 2016, and a total of 366 samples were collected for analysis using convenience sampling. The survey response took about 20 minutes. An online survey is appropriate for gathering opinion from a certain fields of experts and when expecting a long time response. Out of a total of 366 respondents, a total of 326 respondents were used for the actual analysis, except for responses showing a central tendency or unfaithfulness. Those excluded samples were responses with identical numbers from beginning to end and no answer to questions. Prior to conducting this survey, 100 sales representatives were randomly pre-tested to correct and supplement the questionnaire or unclear interpretation problems. In Table 1, the demographic characteristics of the respondents show that 49.1% were males and 50.9% were females. Similarly, based on the age group, 38.9% were in their thirties, 28.6% were in their forties, 20.5% were in their twenties and, 12.0% were in their fifties. Of respondents, 48.5% were employees, 16.6% were assistant managers, 13.5% were chief, 12.3% were managers, 5.8% were directors and 3.4% was assistant directors in job position. The highest number

of samples were from the service industry with 62.6%, followed by wholesaling and retailing with 16.3%, financial and insurance with 13.2%, communication with 3.4%, manufacturing was 2.8% and other were 1.8%. Finally, based on the job status, 66.3% were regular full-time workers and 33.7% were non-regular workers (including contract workers and interns). In order to include a valid sample in the analysis, a screening question was given at first whether the respondents are currently working as a salesperson in the survey. The job position 'manager' only represents the position in Korean business context, and it does not mean that he/she is taking a responsible role for a store. Interns and part-time employees are considered as a bridge step for many young people from the state of unemployed to regular workers in Korea. A number of interns and part-time workers can extended their labor contract period and can be promoted as regular employees. Hence this work type can be also included for the analysis because these workers certainly have interest in forming customer relationships.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents.

	Demographics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	160	49.1
	Female	166	50.9
Age	20s	67	20.5
	30s	127	38.9
	40s	93	28.6
	≥ 50s	39	12.0
Job Position	Employee	158	48.5
	Chief	44	13.5
	Assistant Manager	54	16.6
	Manager	40	12.3
	Assistant Director	11	3.4
	≥ Director	19	5.8
Industry	Manufacturing	9	2.8
	Communication	11	3.4
	Finance/Insurance	43	13.2
	Service	204	62.6
	Wholesaling/Retailing	53	16.3
	Others	6	1.8
Work Type	Full-time	110	33.7
	Contract/Part-time	166	50.9

Based on the collected data, the study empirically analyzed through structural equation modeling. Structural equation model is designed to model not only the relationship with indirectly measured variables using the data obtained through direct measurement but also to model the structural relationship between indirectly measured variables. Because of the advantage of modeling the relationships between directly measured and indirectly generated variables, structural equation models have recently been used in most research fields [85].

Although there is no exact criterion for sample size in structural equation models, 15 times the observed variables to be measured is the minimum recommended level, and the ideal recommended size is 200 or more [86]. Therefore, the study analyzed 326 data considering the ideal sample size while satisfying the minimum recommended level for the observed variables.

4.3. Reliability and Validity

In this study, Cronbach's Alpha test was used to verify the reliability of measurement items and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to check validity. Table 2 shows the results of the reliability test and confirmatory factor analysis of the items used in this study.

Table 2. Results of confirmatory factor analysis.

Latent Variable	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Customer Orientation	CUS1	0.69	0.84	0.85	0.59
	CUS2	0.71			
	CUS3	0.86			
	CUS4	0.80			
Adaptive Selling	ADA1	0.71	0.84	0.84	0.56
	ADA2	0.80			
	ADA3	0.71			
	ADA4	0.78			
Organizational Identification	ORG1	0.78	0.63	0.87	0.87
	ORG2	0.79			
	ORG3	0.81			
	ORG4	0.82			
Sales Performance	SAL1	0.75	0.87	0.87	0.63
	SAL2	0.82			
	SAL3	0.80			
	SAL4	0.80			

χ^2 = 237.35, df = 98, Q = 2.42, RMR = 0.03, RMSEA = 0.07, GFI = 0.95, IFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.94, CFI = 0.95

Table 2 shows that the four measured items have a higher value than the minimum value of Cronbach's Alpha (0.7), which can be interpreted as having consistency among measurement items [87]. CFA was conducted to verify the single dimensionality of items with reliability. The results of confirmatory factor analysis showed that χ^2 = 237.35, df = 98, Q = 2.42, RMR = 0.03, RMSEA = 0.07, GFI = 0.95, IFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.94 and CFI = 0.95. The Q value shows the change of χ^2 with increasing or decreasing degree of freedom. It should be less than 3.0 to satisfy the overall fit [86]. A model fit is acceptable when RMR is less than 0.05, RMSEA is less than 0.08, IFI, TLI, CFI, and GFI are more than 0.9. Thus, the fit of the research model to the given factors is generally good [87]. In addition, we calculated the average variance extracted (AVE) value and the composite reliability (CR) value from the confirmatory factor analysis to determine whether the measurement items were representative of the research constructs. Both values are over 0.5 and 0.7, respectively, which are the acceptable minimum values [88,89]. Table 3 shows the correlation analysis results among variables.

Table 3. Correlation analysis result.

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4
1. Customer Orientation	3.85	0.57	1	0.48 **	0.49 **	0.49 **
2. Adaptive Selling	3.51	0.63		1	0.45 **	0.60 **
3. Organizational Identification	3.69	0.68			1	0.39 **
4. Sales Performance	3.33	0.62				1

** $p < 0.01$.

4.4. Model Fit and Hypotheses Test

In this study, we compared research model 1 and research model 2 using AMOS, 21.0 to analyze the structural equation model. In the analysis of the research model 1, a model with χ^2 = 274.80, df = 100, Q = 2.75, RMR = 0.04, RMSEA = 0.07, GFI = 0.91, IFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.92 and CFI = 0.94 was derived. The Q value shows the change of χ^2 with increasing or decreasing degree of freedom. It should be less than 3 to satisfy the overall fit. RMR should be less than 0.05, RMSEA less than 0.08, IFI, TLI, CFI and GFI more than 0.9 to be valid. Therefore, it can be seen that research model 1 is

appropriate when compared with general indicators of covariance structure analysis. The results of the path coefficient set in research model 1 and the test results of the research hypotheses are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of SEM (Research Model 1).

Relationship of Variables			Hypotheses	β	Results
Customer Orientation	→	Adaptive Selling	H1a(+)	0.60 **	Supported
Adaptive Selling	→	Organizational Identification	H2a(+)	0.58 **	Supported
Customer Orientation	→	Sales Performance	H3a(+)	0.70 **	Supported
Organizational Identification	→	Sales Performance	H4a(+)	0.04	Not-supported

χ^2 = 274.80, df = 100, Q = 2.75, RMR = 0.04, RMSEA = 0.07, GFI = 0.91, IFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.92, CFI = 0.94, ** $p < 0.01$.

In particular, customer orientation has a positive effect on salespersons' adaptive selling ($\gamma = 0.60$, $p < 0.01$, supporting H1a). Adaptive selling has positive effects on the salesperson's organizational identification ($\beta = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$) and sales performance ($\beta = 0.70$, $p < 0.01$), which support H2a and H3a. However, H4a was not supported because organizational identification did not have a significant effect on sales performance ($\beta = 0.04$, $p > 0.05$).

In the analysis of research model 2, a model with χ^2 = 323.44, df = 100, Q = 3.23, RMR = 0.05, RMSEA = 0.09, GFI = 0.89, IFI = 0.92, TLI = 0.90, CFI = 0.92 was derived. The Q value, RMSEA and GFI are lower than the standard, in comparison with general indicators of covariance structure analysis. A normed-χ^2, or Q-value, represents the one of absolute fit indexes that assess the overall fit of the model. The Q value is the χ^2 value divided by the degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF). A value above 3 means that the model does not fit the sample covariance matrix well. Therefore, we decided that research model 2 was not good enough to accept because the Q value did not meet the reference value. Buse [90] proposed additions and deletions to improve this model. However, the changes were not approved. Therefore, research model 2 is considered to be inadequate. The results of the path coefficient set in research model 2 and the test results of the research hypotheses are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of SEM (Research Model 2).

Relationship of Variables			Hypotheses	β	Results
Adaptive Selling	→	Customer Orientation	H1b(+)	0.62 **	Supported
Customer Orientation	→	Organizational Identification	H2b(+)	0.59 **	Supported
Adaptive Selling	→	Sales Performance	H3b(+)	0.52 **	Supported
Organizational Identification	→	Sales Performance	H4b(+)	0.14 **	Supported

χ^2 = 323.44, df = 100, Q = 3.23, RMR = 0.05, RMSEA = 0.09, GFI = 0.89, IFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.92, CFI = 0.94, ** $p < 0.01$.

Indirect effects, or mediating effects, on this model were also verified. In the case of direct effects, the significance can be examined through the verification results of the model, but in the case of indirect effects, the bootstrapping technique should be used to analyze whether the relationship is significant [91]. This technique modifies the standard error by resampling samples from randomly sampled data. As a result of verifying the percentile method using the bootstrap in AMOS, we support the mediating effect on most causal pathways in this model. In other words, the indirect effect of customer orientation on organizational identification and sales performance was verified. Tables 6 and 7 show these direct and indirect effect respectively.

Table 6. Standardized direct effect.

	Customer Orientation	Adaptive Selling	Organizational Identification
Adaptive Selling	0.49 **		
Organizational Identification		0.48 **	
Sales Performance		0.58 **	−0.10

** $p < 0.01$.

Table 7. Standardized indirect effect.

	Customer Orientation	Adaptive Selling
Organizational Identification	0.25 **	
Sales Performance	0.33 **	−0.06

** $p < 0.01$.

A number of previous studies have pointed out that if the variables in the model are measured in the same method, biases may occur that threaten the validity of the findings [92]. There are many reasons for the common method bias, however, the dependent and independent variables were measured from the same person and the same time period in this study, which may cause bias in the responses. In order to eliminate the possibility of common method bias, Harman's single factor test, the most frequently used method for the post-diagnosis of the common method was conducted to confirm the existence of the common method problem. As a result, a total of four factors with eigenvalues greater than or equal to 1 were obtained and the explanatory variance of the factor that accounts for the most explanatory power was 43.29%, which is not absolute because the explanatory power of the factor did not exceed 50% [93]. Therefore, it can be judged that the collected data for the study did not cause problems according to the common method bias.

5. Discussions and Conclusions

This study examines the customer orientation and adaptive selling of salespeople in terms of organizational viewpoint and the behavioral aspect of individual performing marketing concept, and the relationship between two variables is summarized as follows. First, as a result of examining the causal relationship between customer orientation and adaptive selling, Research Model 1, in which customer orientation is preceded by adaptive selling, is statistically significant, and customer orientation has a positive effect on adaptive selling (H1a). Second, adaptive selling had a positive effect on both organization identification (H2a) and sales performance (H3a). Finally, organizational identification does not have a significant effect on sales performance (H4a).

Previous research on salesperson's customer orientation and adaptive sales has focused on the preceding or outcome factors affecting both variables. However, this study focused on identifying relational constructs between salesperson's customer orientation and adaptive sales. In an existing study of the relationship between two variables, Spiro and Weitz [24] argue that customer orientation has a positive effect on adaptive sales, while Franke and Park [30] suggest that adaptive sales can increase customer orientation. It has been demonstrated that the effect of customer orientation on adaptive sales is not clear from the studies. This study, however, focused on identifying precedent and subsequent relationship between the two variables. The relationship between customer orientation and adaptive sales of salespersons was distinguished in terms of behaviors and individual behaviors as an organizational culture. As a result, a statistical significance of organizational behavior affecting individual behavior has been found. Therefore, the study firstly initiates the causal relationship between customer orientation and adaptive sales and opens the black box of how customer orientation in corporate level implements an individual salesperson's adaptive motivation.

5.1. Theoretical and Practical Implications

Our study shows that customer orientation and adaptive selling are resources of sustainable companies' performance. Based on the result, the current study has contributed in several ways.

First, the study examined the relationship between customer orientation and adaptive selling in terms of organizational culture and individual behavior. Although there have been many studies investigating the effect of customer orientation and adaptive selling on sales performance, no significant relationship between these two variables has been found. Therefore, this study is meaningful in identifying the consequential relationship between customer orientation and adaptive selling.

Second, the sales behavior of the salesperson shows that the customer orientation that is driven by the organizational culture affects the individual's sales behavior rather than that the individual's sales behavior affects the organizational culture. It shows the same perspective of previous studies [29], that organizational culture influences individual behavior (culture-drive-individual behavior). It can be said that a salesperson can do adaptive selling well even for a variety of customers' anomalous requests if companies have a good organizational culture that focuses on customer satisfaction and building sustainable customer relationship. Through this, the companies will be able to make sustainable profit. Therefore, it is important to cultivate customer-oriented culture through educational programs before the salesperson starts to take customer-oriented actions.

Third, adaptive selling is an act of persuading customers at the contact point with customers, and responds to customers' anomalous behaviors and attempts to share positive aspects of sales products or companies. Therefore, it is commonly accepted that adaptive selling can increase organization identification with higher company attachment level by observing salesperson's own behavior [94]. It is important for the company to give the salesperson empowerment to make decisions at the point of contact with the customer.

Fourth, adaptive selling affects sales performance as a sales strategy that identifies the needs of consumers at the point of sales in order to improve short-term performance. Adaptive selling varies depending on the individual's ability or characteristics. The company has various supports to develop the ability and characteristics of the individual through education and self-development of the sales skill, so that the salesperson can respond properly at the point of contact with the customer.

5.2. Limitation and Future Research

Limitations of this study and directions for future research are as follows.

First, it is difficult to generalize the findings of this study to other industries, such as the manufacturing industry, because in the current study we only focused on the service industries. Therefore, in future research, it is meaningful to investigate the differences between B2B and B2C industries in order to give specific insights to each field or increase the external validity of the results.

Second, there are various leading factors and output factors that can affect both customer orientation and adaptive selling. In particular, previous studies related to the two sales behaviors discussed that customer orientation or adaptive selling are constructed by organizational characteristics or psychological characteristics of an individual salesperson and directly affect sales performance [22,26,27]. Therefore, it is necessary to explore a few more variables among these characteristic variables and to incorporate them to the current research model.

Finally, considering the causal relationship between the variables in the study, it is necessary to make a longitudinal measurement of the performance variable of adaptive selling and customer-oriented selling. In addition, the performance was measured in a self-reporting manner, therefore, we argue that future studies should use alternate methods to minimize the self-reporting bias.

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Appendix A

Customer Orientation

1. Our company expresses commitment to our customers.
2. Our company creates value for our customers.
3. Our company understands the needs of our customers.
4. Our company sets customer satisfaction objectives.

Adaptive Selling

1. I sell products or services in a very flexible way.
2. I use a variety of sales methods easily.
3. I do not use the same approach for the most of customers.
4. I like to try the various sales approach to the customer.

Organizational Identification

1. When a person accuses our company, they feel personal insults.
2. I am very interested in how others think about our company.
3. I always use my company when I talk about the company.
4. I think it's good that my company is doing well.

Sales Performance

1. I am increasing the market share of the company in a certain area.
2. I am increasing the sales volume of a product or service.
3. I am selling new products or services quickly.
4. I am finding new customers and forming relationships.

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