



(Re) defining salesperson motivation: current status, main challenges, and research directions

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The construct of motivation is one of the central themes in selling and sales management research. Yet, to-date no review article exists that surveys the construct (both from an extrinsic and intrinsic motivation context), critically evaluates its current status, examines various key challenges apparent from the extant research, and suggests new research opportunities based on a thorough review of past work. The authors explore how motivation is defined, major theories underpinning motivation, how motivation has historically been measured, and key methodologies used over time. In addition, attention is given to principal drivers and outcomes of salesperson motivation. A summarizing appendix of key articles in salesperson motivation is provided.

Keywords: salesperson; motivation; review; sales management

Salesperson motivation has long been considered to be one of the critical tasks of sales management (Doyle and Shapiro 1980; Jaramillo, Mulki, and Marshall 2005). If the interested manager was to peruse the academic literature, he or she would find a rich body of work on the topic but might find just as much ambiguity in terms of advice on how best to motivate salespeople. Indeed, sales scholars have expended significant effort on investigating salesperson motivation, creating a large and growing body of knowledge regarding how salespeople can be motivated, investigating the various forms of salesperson motivation, and exploring the effects of different forms of motivation on different forms of salesperson performance. Research has also exposed the different managerial interventions that can be brought to bear to positively impact the different forms of salesperson motivation including monetary and nonmonetary rewards, job designs, and interpersonal managerial styles and techniques. Taken together, the existing body of research on salesperson motivation places it as one of the most enduringly popular topics in all of sales research (Pullins 2001; Walker, Churchill, and Ford 1977; Williams and Plouffe 2007).

Despite all this prior work, inconsistencies and ambiguities remain within the domain of salesperson motivation, exacerbated by a number of conflicting research

findings. As a result, it is difficult to articulate a clear and unambiguous set of advice for managers as to what works, when, and why. The necessity to shape clarity on sales force motivation research is reinforced by well-documented developments that have changed the nature of the selling process including the use of digital and social media technologies (Kuruzovich 2013; Marshall et al. 2012), emergence of big data (Erevelles, Fukawa, and Swayne 2016), and implementation of team-based structures and groupware technology (Janson, Austin, and Hynes 2014; Stock 2006), among others. These developments have transformed the way sales organizations function and accordingly how salespeople can be best motivated.

Review articles serve a unique purpose of helping to bring clarity and order to prior literature within a domain, particularly when disparate results leave researchers unclear about potential future promising approaches such as the case with salesperson motivation. And for a field of practice that is undergoing profound change at the level currently experienced by selling and sales management, we proffer that a review of the extant motivation literature that is specific to sales should be timely and quite useful. Hence, the purpose of this article is to critically evaluate the roots and current status of salesperson motivation research, examine various key challenges apparent from the extant

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research, and suggest new research opportunities based on a thorough review of past work.

Roots and premises of salesperson motivation research

Research into salesperson motivation dates back to the 1970s, when sales and marketing researchers first began to explore this important area as key driver of sales performance (Churchill, Ford, and Walker 1976). Of course, pre-dating this were hundreds of studies within the psychological literature that explored how extrinsic rewards could shape behaviors, thus serving to build a strong base for general motivational research. In the early 1970s, the idea that some activities could serve as their own intrinsic reward emerged (e.g. Deci 1971), thus setting up what appears to be a continuing dichotomy between extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. Indeed, the divergence in sales practitioner-oriented work noted above can to some extent be traced back to this dichotomy, which remains salient in academic research. A number of reviews of motivation literature have appeared in the management literature that take in these differences. The most recent of these stresses that “motivation related to work remains one of the most enduring and compelling topics in industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology” (Kanfer, Frese, and Johnson 2017, 338). However, although I/O psychology does not lack for reviews of motivational research, sales-specific research lacks a wide-ranging overview regarding the specific nature of the various forms of motivation, and how these affect salesperson performance and other important job outcomes.

The lack of a prior comprehensive review of sales force motivation literature is a bit troubling as it leaves a number of important questions unanswered regarding the state of the literature and its potential contribution to the knowledge of salesperson performance. More specifically, as alluded to above, there remains little consensus on exactly how best to motivate salespeople, and a continuing challenge remains; for example, regarding whether it is best to use financial incentives, nonfinancial rewards, or rely on job design factors to generate intrinsic motivation. The purpose of the present review is to integrate our existing knowledge in sales force motivation, and thus more clearly delineate the current state of the art in sales force motivation research, identify gaps and inconsistencies in current academic knowledge of sales force motivation, and present an informed agenda for future research in the area that will both advance the body of knowledge and provide more coherent advice to practitioners. In doing so, we aim to deliver for sales force motivation research the currently missing “research integration and synthesis [that] provides an important, and possibly even a required, step in the scientific process” (Palmatier, Houston, and Hulland 2017, 1).

The need to clarify knowledge on sales force motivation suggested above is amplified by a variety of well-

documented recent changes in the sales domain. Businesses have been going through numerous changes in the way sales organizations operate (Keszezy and Biemans 2016). The beginning of this so-called revolution in sales (Marshall et al. 2012) could be dated back to the beginning of the century when the sales role was described as being in the heart of a “renaissance – a genuine rebirth and revival” (Ingram, LaForge, and Leigh 2002, 552). Since then, there has been a dramatic evolution in the salesperson’s role in the organization toward that of a business/development/consultant (Keszezy and Biemans 2016; Narus 2015), who is heavily technology savvy (Marshall et al. 2012), and a vital knowledge broker (Verbeke, Dietz, and Verwaal 2011). An array of other advances, such as new sales technologies that support and improve the sales processes (Kuruzovich 2013) and the emergence of big data (Erevelles, Fukawa, and Swayne 2016), have changed the landscape in which salespeople operate. Further to this, the implementation of team-based structures (Stock 2006) and global virtual sales teams (Badrinarayanan, Madhavaram, and Granot 2011) and groupware technology (Janson, Austin, and Hynes 2014) have also transformed the way sales organizations function. Also, recent years have seen significant changes in the composition of many sales forces, with inside sales roles making up an increasingly higher proportion of sales roles when compared with traditional field sales roles (Zoltners, Sinha, and Lorimer 2013).

The dramatic shifts in the role of the salesperson touched on above are accompanied by a significant demographic change in the sales workforce. Specifically, as the prior generations reach retirement age and move out of the workforce, new salespeople are increasingly being recruited from the ranks of what millennial generation, which is predicted to reach almost 50% of the workforce by 2020. Evidence suggests that they are motivated significantly differently from early generations such as Baby Boomers and Generation X (Brack and Kelly 2012). Both academic research and practitioner publications have also suggested that millennials in sales roles are motivated and perform in a manner different from earlier generational cohorts (Pullins et al. 2011; Schultz and Schwepker 2012).

The aforementioned changes in the sales job, and the people doing it, likely necessitate some fundamental changes in sales force motivation strategies, which calls for a better and more detailed understanding of individual salesperson motivation. However, without a strong appreciation of the state of the literature to date, it is difficult to provide any informed and coherent agenda for future research in salesperson motivation. As such, it is timely to review what we have learned about salesperson motivation and from there begin to envision what else is to come in the field. As such, the primary purpose of this article is to provide a comprehensive literature review of the topic of salesperson motivation, from its beginnings as a unique field of study in the

1970s, up to 2017. Within this broad charge, we have three key goals. First, we aim to delineate the key theoretical and methodological pillars of existing work on salesperson motivation. Second, we draw from our review to identify key challenges and future research directions for the field of salesperson motivation. And third, we proffer critical recommendations for the future focus of sales management practice from this literature. Importantly, we do not attempt to review the huge body of motivation research that is not specifically sales-related (although we certainly acknowledge that the salesperson motivation literature has been substantially impacted by it). Our focus in this review is on salesperson motivation only.

The article is structured in the following way. We initially describe the review methodology. We then outline how motivation is defined in the literature. We present the main theories, measurements and methodologies used in the area of salesperson motivation. We then present a summary of the main findings in the literature on the drivers and outcomes of salesperson motivation. Finally, we conclude with key suggestions for future research directions.

Review methodology

In undertaking the review presented in this article, key principles of a systematic review were adopted (Barczak 2017; Palmatier, Houston, and Hulland 2017). A systematic literature review has been recognized as a highly effective and transparent method for gathering and analyzing a body of knowledge in a specific research field (Shojania et al. 2007). Applying the key principles of the systematic review methodology can substantially enhance the quality of a review by making the ideas and assumptions behind a review more explicit (Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart 2003) and by minimizing error and bias (Cook, Mulrow, and Haynes 1997). Indeed, Palmatier, Houston, and Hulland (2017) recommend that a systematic approach is best used for literature reviews, rather than a narrative approach, which can lead to an overly descriptive approach that lacks critical assessment of the body of literature for additional guidance (see also Barczak 2017).

The focus of the present literature review is salesperson motivation, hence we primarily concentrate on sales, marketing, and management/business literature in line with previous conceptual work in sales domain (e.g., Moncrief, Marshall, and Watkins 2000). Obviously, much work has been conducted on the topic of general employee motivation in the wider I/O psychology domain, as summarized by Kanfer, Frese, and Johnson (2017). Our position is that we are “informed by” the theoretical and empirical findings from in a wider psychology literature to enrich our understanding of salesperson motivation and to support the proposed future research directions. But the focus here on

motivation in the sales domain is clearly defensible, as sales is well documented as a unique job set and environment, as mentioned earlier.

The current review is conducted in a funneling manner where each step feeds into the next leading to an increasingly more precise focus (Stros and Lee 2015). More specifically, an initial general literature review was performed to generate an overall pool of articles on the topic of salesperson motivation. Here we did not limit the search to any specific subject area or journal. The search was performed using the key search terms “motivation” and “sales” in the abstract field of the search databases (ProQuest Business Collection, ABI/INFORM Collection, ABI/INFORM Global and Entrepreneurship Database). This resulted in 2,957 hits. After eliminating trade journals, wire feeds, conference proceedings, magazines and newspapers, the pool of articles came down to 560 hits. Following this, we only included peer-reviewed journals, which resulted in a pool of 507 articles. The next step was to filter by document type. Specifically, we only used journal articles (excluding such documents as features, reports, or case studies) resulting in a pool of 483 articles. We then only retained articles that were written in English, which resulted in 478 hits. The next step was to use a key journal criterion. We began with including 19 key journals that publish sales related research as described by Moncrief, Marshall, and Watkins (2000; for similar guidance, see also Baumgartner and Pieters 2003 and Richards, Moncrief, and Marshall 2010). This resulted in 135 hits. To ensure that no relevant article has remained in the excluded pool, we performed a manual check of the relegated articles. Here, one additional relevant article from the *Journal of Applied Psychology* (JAP) was identified and added into the main pool resulting in 136 entries.

The next step was to manually check all articles and eliminate those that merely had a mention of the relevant key terms in the body of the full-text but did not specifically conceptualize or empirically/conceptually examine or investigate motivation per se.¹ As previously explained, we concentrated on salesperson motivation excluding such topics as customer/consumer/shopper motivation. Secondly, it was important to further explicate the scope of the review. That is, motivation is a broad topic, and as (Ryan and Deci 2000a, 54) put it, to be motivated simply means “to be moved to do something” (note that we will provide a more formal definition of motivation shortly). Therefore, motivation is often used as an “umbrella term” referring loosely to a variety of behavior-type variables (Kanfer, Frese, and Johnson 2017). In the present review we explicitly concentrate on articles that conceptualize/examine motivation or its types (intrinsic and extrinsic). After the exclusion of such nonrelevant articles, particularly those using “motivation” in the vernacular, the pool of articles came down to 57.

Again, a manual check of the citations was performed to ensure that none of the relevant articles has been missed. This resulted in additional six articles. Hence, the finalized pool of articles contains 63 articles that are from 13 different academic journals. The journals are the following: *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management (JPSSM)*, *Journal of Marketing (JM)*, *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing (JBIM)*, *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (JAMS)*, *Journal of Business Research (JBR)*, *Industrial Marketing Management (IMM)*, *European Journal of Marketing (EJM)*, *International Journal of Research in Marketing (IJRM)*, *Psychology and Marketing (P&M)*, *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice (JMTP)*, *JAP*, and *Journal of Business Ethics (JBE)*. Figure 1 below presents the key journals and the number of papers published per each journal.

After the evaluation of the selected pool of articles, the information from the final pool of 63 key papers has been structured into an appendix of this article as a means for the reader to receive details in a clear and structured manner (e.g., Hohenberg and Homburg 2016; Menguc et al. 2017; Shi et al. 2017; Stros and Lee 2015). Following their benchmarks, the Appendix represents the following information: study, year, journal, methodology, sample size and response rate, key relevant findings, theory used, and how motivation was measured.

How motivation has been defined

As a starting point, in a now classical paper (Walker, Churchill, and Ford 1977, 162) defined motivation as “the

amount of effort the salesman desires to expend on each of the activities or tasks associated with his job”. Moreover, motivation is a psychological state that causes the arousal, direction, and persistence of behaviors conditioned by need satisfaction (Mitchell 1982). We anchor our conceptualization on Mitchell’s (1982) definition. Research on motivation disaggregate the construct into two distinct types: intrinsic motivation (IM) and extrinsic motivation (EM) (e.g. Mallin and Pullins 2009; Tyagi 1982; Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986).

IM arises from enjoyment of an activity with absence of an apparent reinforcement or reward (Teo, Lim, and Lai 1999; Warr, Cook, and Wall 1979; Weiner 1995). The fundamental premise of IM is that human nature is active, curious, and inquisitive (White 1959). EM on the other hand is concerned with whether an activity is performed in order to obtain a separable outcome apart from the activity itself (Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw 1992; Ryan and Deci 2000a; Teo, Lim, and Lai 1999). Historically, salesperson motivation has been linked almost exclusively to pay packages and financial incentives (e.g. Oliver 1974; Walker, Churchill, and Ford 1977). It is common to refer to this assumption as a “conventional wisdom” of salesperson motivation (e.g. Cravens et al. 1993; Wotruba, MacFie, and Colletti 1991). However, later studies have further demonstrated the crucial importance of IM in influencing salesperson effort and performance.

Following the I/O psychology literature (Amabile et al. 1994), a number of studies on salesperson motivation (Miao and Evans 2007; Miao, Lund, and Evans 2009) further disaggregated EM and IM into their cognitive and affective orientations which were found to have distinct antecedents and consequences (Miao and Evans 2007; Miao, Evans, and Zou 2007). Specifically, the cognitive orientation of IM is

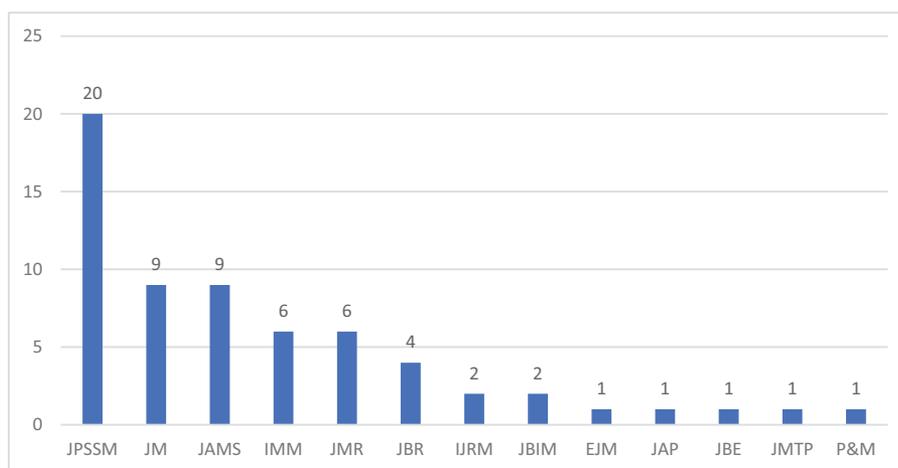


Figure 1. Key journals. Note: JPSSM = *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*; JM = *Journal of Marketing*; JAMS = *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*; IMM = *Industrial Marketing Management*; JMR = *Journal of Marketing Research*; JBR = *Journal of Business Research*; IJRM = *International Journal of Research in Marketing*; JBIM = *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*; EJM = *European Journal of Marketing*; JAP = *Journal of Applied Psychology*; JBE = *Journal of Business Ethics*; JMTP = *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*; P&M = *Psychology and Marketing*.

labelled “challenge seeking,” whereas the affective orientation of IM is labelled “task enjoyment.” In addition, the cognitive orientation of EM is labelled “compensation seeking,” whereas the affective orientation of EM is labelled “recognition seeking.” Amabile et al (1994) have specifically defined these terms as follows: Challenge seeking deals with the enjoyment of solving new and complex problems and seeking challenging tasks; task enjoyment is concerned with enjoying the selling job and finding it pleasurable; compensation seeking involves how much money one can earn in their job; and recognition seeking is concerned with receiving recognition from the others.

With a definition of motivation in hand, the following three sections outline the main theories used, key motivational measures used and key methodologies employed.

Main theories used

To date, three major theoretical underpinnings of motivation have dominated sales motivation research: expectancy theory, attribution theory, and self-determination theory (SDT). Figure 2 below illustrates their frequency of use within our pool of sales motivation articles.

Expectancy theory

Historically, the prevailing theory in sales research has been expectancy theory (Vroom 1964), which was originally applied by Oliver (1974) and then by Walker, Churchill, and Ford (1977) to create a famous model and what some might call a new paradigm for sales force management research (Johnston and Marshall 2005). Expectancy theory suggests that motivation is driven by three

variables, that Vroom (1964) named expectancy, instrumentality, and valence for rewards. *Expectancy* (effort-performance relationship) refers to an individual’s belief that applying a given amount of effort will result in performance; *instrumentality* (performance-reward relationship) is the individual’s belief that performing at a certain level will result in attainment of desired organizational rewards; and *valence* (rewards-personal goals relationship) is concerned with the degree to which organizational rewards can satisfy individual’s personal goals and attractiveness of these rewards to the individual (Robbins 2009).

By the 1980s, expectancy theory was said to “dominate the sales motivation literature” (Badovick 1990, 123), and sparked much empirical work (e.g. Oliver 1974; Teas 1980, 1981; Teas and McElroy 1986; Tyagi 1982; Walker, Churchill, and Ford 1977). The theory has been described as primarily suited in situations when effort-performance and performance-reward relationships are consciously perceived by an individual (House, Shapiro, and Wahba 1974). Specifically, salespeople exert effort to achieve certain level of sales (performance) that directly translates into them receiving a financial reward (Kishore et al. 2013). Such rewards are considered to be the most salient influencers of salesperson’s behavior (e.g., Cravens et al. 1993; John and Weitz 1989; Oliver and Anderson 1994; Roman, Ruiz, and Munuera 2005). The sales area, where these effort-performance-reward relationships are especially salient, likely provided optimal conditions for using the theory.

However, despite generally fruitful results produced by the expectancy theory in salesperson motivation (as well as in the general psychology domain), most studies

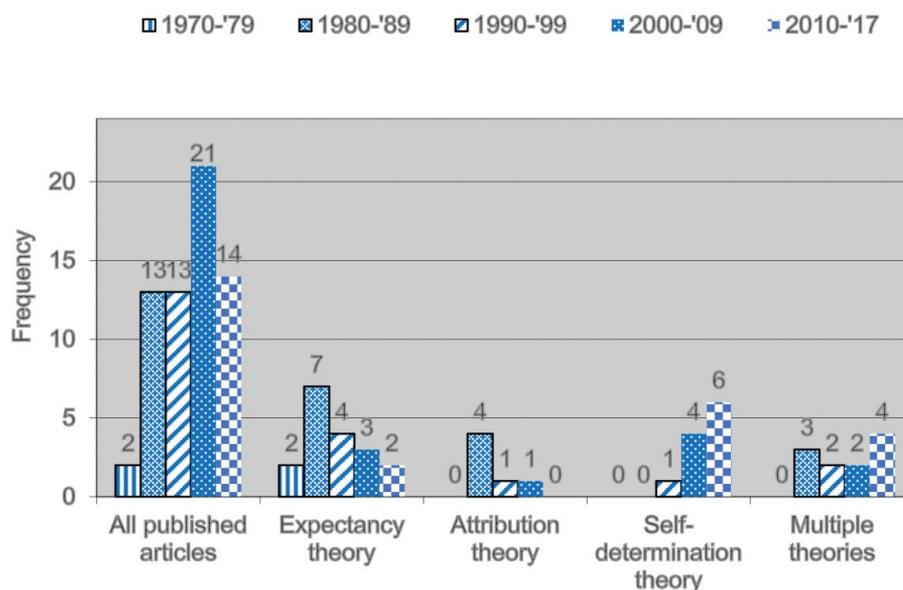


Figure 2. Key theories used.

could not provide clear predictions for salesperson motivation (Evans, Margheim, and Schlatter 1982). Research in psychology demonstrated “a lack of support for the multiplicative nature of the theory’s components” (Kanfer, Frese, and Johnson 2017, 344) and suggested the use of individual constructs of expectancy, instrumentality, and valence (Van, Eerde, and Thierry 1996).

Attribution theory

One interesting alternative theoretical approach that has been used in salesperson motivation research is attribution theory (Badovick 1990). Attribution theory, originated by Fritz Heider (1958), became widespread in the salesperson motivation literature during 1980s and 1990s. Heider (1958) suggested that people make attributions about themselves and other people in a manner of “naïve psychologists.” Subsequently, Weiner (1980) further applied attribution theory in the area of motivation as a means to understand why individuals think they succeeded or failed at a task. Sujan (1986, 41) was among the first sales motivation researchers to use attribution theory explicitly because it “appears to afford benefits over the expectancy value framework ... in understanding the motivation to work smarter.” He argued that instead of measuring motivation indirectly through valences, instrumentalities, and expectancies (as it’s done in expectancy theory), it should be conceptualized as behavioral intentions. Badovick (1990) found a strong support for attribution theory and concluded that it should be used in addition to expectancy theory when examining human motivation.

Self-determination theory (SDT)

Expectancy and attribution theories were dominant in sales research until around the turn of the century (Cadwallader et al. 2010). Drawing from a wider psychology domain, Keaveney and Nelson (1993) and then Pullins et al. (2000) took a different approach to measure intrinsic motivation by using Deci and Ryan’s (1985a) measure of causality orientation of autonomy within the SDT framework. SDT is a macro theory of human behavior, personality, and well-being (Ryan 1995). It was developed by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (Deci 1975; Deci and Ryan 1980, 1985b) and has been successfully applied in the area of work motivation (Gagne and Deci 2005). The basic assumption of the SDT is that humans are active organisms with innate tendency for growth, integration, and self-development, and that social environments and contexts can either facilitate and promote the growth and integration or

disrupt and diminish it (Deci and Ryan 2002). This combination of inner resources and social contexts results in motivational states through the satisfaction (or frustration) of the three basic human needs: need for competence, need for autonomy, and need for relatedness (Gagne and Deci 2005). One of the most important advancements brought by the SDT is that it emphasized the importance of looking at different types of motivation (i.e. intrinsic and extrinsic) instead of treating it as a “unitary concept that varies primarily in amount” (Cadwallader et al. 2010, 221).

The emergence of the SDT in sales force research appears to be particularly timely considering the recent changes in the sales field. Specifically, changes in the dynamism of selling and the increasingly autonomous decision-making setting where salespeople are becoming almost “social scientists capable of analyzing lines of power and influence across blurring boundaries” (Jones et al. 2005, 108) all have created fitting foundations for the development of the SDT in sales domain. Hohenberg and Homburg (2016) successfully applied the SDT to examine the effect of financial and non-financial steering instruments on salesperson innovative-selling motivation and found a strong support for the SDT.

Combining theories

Several authors in our sample endeavored to combine two or more theories of motivation in an attempt to expand the present knowledge on the topic (e.g., job design theory and expectancy theory, Tyagi 1985c). Hohenberg and Homburg (2016, 117) concluded that “future research could investigate how different motivation theories, such as SDT and expectancy theory, can be integrated to create a more nuanced perspective on intercultural sales force steering.” Integrating theories could in some cases prove challenging as different theories are based on different assumptions, constructs, and relationships. And our tradition in academia is to pit one theory against another in competition for best explanatory power. However, Stathakopoulos (1996) in his work on sales force control systems asserted that theories do not necessarily have to be construed as competing but rather can be built on as complementary to one another.

Key motivational measures used

In keeping with the conceptual dominance of expectancy theory, many studies have empirically operationalized motivation in line with the expectancy model (e.g. Cron, Dubinsky, and Michaels 1988; Ingram, Lee, and Skinner 1989; Tyagi 1985a, 1985c).

Table 1. Summary of the key motivational measures used.

Literature stream	How motivation is measured	Examples
Expectancy theory	Multiplication of the expectancy scores (effort-performance relationship), with the product of instrumentality (performance-reward relationship) and valence (rewards-personal goals relationship).	(Ingram, Lee, and Skinner 1989); (Tyagi 1985a); (Cron, Dubinsky, and Michaels 1988); (Ingram, Lee, and Skinner 1989); (Tyagi 1985a, 1985c).
Attribution theory	A combination of working harder (EM) and smarter (IM).	(Sujan et al. 1994); (Badovick 1990); (Schmitz 2013); (Verbeke, Belschak, and Bagozzi 2004).
Control systems	Internal (IM) versus external (EM) motivations.	(Anderson and Oliver 1987); (Oliver and Anderson 1994); (Jaramillo et al. 2007).
Affective and cognitive orientations of IM and EM	Specifically use designated scales for each of the four motivational orientations (originally developed by Amabile et al. 1994).	(Miao and Evans 2012); (Miao, Evans, and Zou 2007); (Miao, Lund, and Evans 2009)

Note. IM = intrinsic motivation (IM); EM = extrinsic motivation.

A number of other publications use more direct measures of IM and EM, whereas several measures capture the affective and cognitive orientations of IM and EM. Table 1 below presents a summary of the key motivational measures used.

In short, although motivation is measured in various ways, a trend is apparent nonetheless. Most IM scales largely incorporate both affective (task enjoyment) and cognitive (challenge seeking) orientations of IM, whereas the measurement of EM in most cases essentially captures the cognitive orientation only (compensation seeking), ignoring the affective orientation (recognition seeking).

This is largely in line with the trends in a wider I/O psychology literature (Kanfer, Frese, and Johnson 2017).

Key methodologies employed

Methodological trends within the salesperson motivation literature are in line with those in sales research in general (Asare, Yang, and Alejandro 2012; Williams and Plouffe 2007). That is, the field is largely dominated by quantitative methodology – specifically survey research. Figure 3 portrays the key methodologies used within our pool of articles. Within our pool, 51 articles

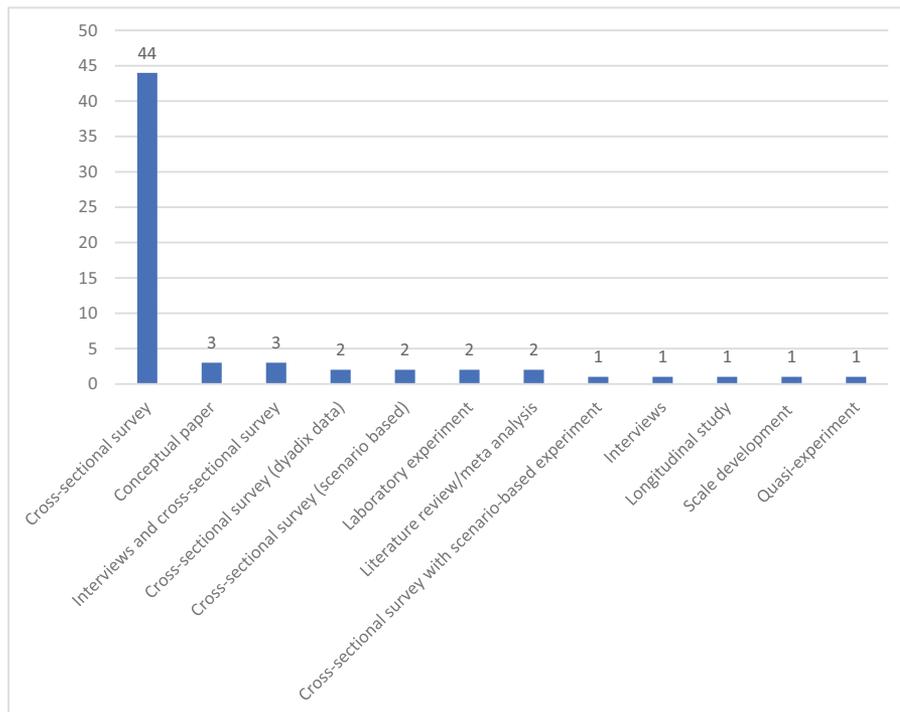


Figure 3. Key methodologies.

out of 63 used some form of cross-sectional survey approach.

Salesperson motivation: drivers and outcomes

The literature on salesperson motivation has been concerned largely with the drivers and outcomes of motivation (Pullins 2001). The following two sections are dedicated to the drivers and outcomes of IM and EM of salespeople, followed by a third section presenting a synergetic view of combining IM and EM of salespeople.

Drivers of salesperson motivation

Studies on the drivers of salesperson motivation can be largely grouped into (1) organizational-level variables and (2) individual-level variables. Organizational-level variables include those such as job-related factors, organizational stress, and sales force control systems, whereas individual-level variables include demographics (e.g., age and gender), personal feelings, and emotions. Both sets of variables have been popular topics of analysis for sales researchers, and we begin with a discussion of organizational level variables.

Organizational-level variables

The organizational variable of job importance has produced mixed results. For instance, job importance was found to be a strong predictor of both IM and EM (Tyagi 1985b) or only a mild predictor and only of EM (Tyagi 1982). Further to this, supervisory support was found to have a significant impact on salesperson EM (Tyagi 1985a, 1985c) and on salesperson IM (Jaramillo and Mulki 2008; Tyagi 1982), or no impact at all (Kemp, Borders, and Ricks 2013). Positive working environment (Kemp, Borders, and Ricks 2013), organizational identification (Tyagi 1982), and salesperson-brand relationship (Michel, Merk, and Eroglu 2015) were reported to enhance salesperson motivation.

In addition, a number of studies have examined the effect of sales job-related factors vis-à-vis job design theory (Hackman and Oldham 1976). These findings reveal that organizational stress, emotional exhaustion, and role conflict and overload negatively impact both IM and EM (Kemp, Borders, and Ricks 2013; Tyagi 1982, 1985a), with role overload having a far stronger effect on IM rather than on EM and role ambiguity having no significant effect on either IM or EM (Tyagi 1985a). In line with wider research on organizational stress (e.g. Everly and Girdano 1980; Selye 1978; Singh 1998), moderate levels of stress were reported

to be beneficial to enhancing salesperson motivation, whereas high levels of stress are detrimental to it (Tyagi 1985a).

An array of studies has examined the effect of sales force control systems on salesperson motivation, and Oliver and Anderson (1994) were pioneers in this field. They report that sales force control systems are important drivers of salespeople's affective and motivational states. Specifically, behavior-based control was found to be linked with greater IM, whereas outcome-based control was linked with greater EM. Further to this, behavior activity control was found to play a negative moderating role in the relationship between the proportion of commission (in total compensation) and IM.

Miao and Evans (2012) further investigated this question and found that a combination of the capability and outcome-based control systems enhanced IM, but a combination of capability and activity control can decrease it. Further, Hohenberg and Homburg (2016) used an SDT approach (Ryan and Deci 2000b) and concluded that both behavior-based and outcome-based steering instruments can increase salesperson's autonomous (intrinsic) innovation-selling motivation and financial performance.

Miao, Evans, and Zou (2007), however, found that disaggregating IM and EM into their cognitive and affective orientations led to more nuanced findings in terms of the effect of control systems. Specifically, activity (behavior-based) control was positively related to the affective orientation (recognition seeking) aspect of EM. In contrast capability (behavior-based) control was positively related to the cognitive orientation of EM (compensation seeking). In addition, they found that activity control mainly affects challenge seeking (the cognitive orientation of IM), whereas capability control mainly affects task enjoyment (the affective orientation of IM).

Research in psychology (see Kanfer, Frese, and Johnson 2017 for summary) also highlights the importance of considering cognitive and affective processes of human motivation. Kanfer, Frese, and Johnson (2017) concluded that historically, motivational theories have primarily concentrated on the cognitive side of motivation somewhat overlooking the affective motivational processes. However, psychological research over the last few decades has progressed into including affect and emotion into the studies on motivation, which offers directions for the future theory development in the field of motivation (Kanfer, Frese, and Johnson 2017). In this light, including both affective and cognitive orientations when studying IM and EM of salespeople seems especially sound.

Individual-level variables

Several individual-level variables have been found to influence motivation. For instance, salesperson motivation may vary significantly depending on age/career stage (Cron, Dubinsky, and Michaels 1988). This can be explained by salespeople's differences in valence for rewards, and whether these rewards contribute to a sense of accomplishment and career development aimed at different career stages. When IM and EM are disaggregated into their affective and cognitive orientations, the findings are somewhat different. Specifically, the cognitive orientation of IM and EM changes throughout career stages, whereas the affective dimension of IM and EM does not (Miao, Lund, and Evans 2009). Motivational perceptions were also found to vary significantly across certain national cultures (Dubinsky et al. 1994). Finally, Fine and Pullins (1998) in their study of the mentor–protégée relationship, discovered differences in motivational variables between men and women within this relationship, a finding with a potentially fruitful implication for future research.

Personal feelings and emotions also have been demonstrated to play an important role in salesperson motivation (Badovick 1990; Badovick, Hadaway, and Kaminski 1992; Verbeke, Belschak, and Bagozzi 2004). Badovick (1990) found that feelings of self-blame after a failure to complete a quota and feelings of satisfaction in performance after completing a quota have different effects on salesperson motivation. Verbeke, Belschak, and Bagozzi (2004) reported that feelings of pride were also found to be an important driver of motivation (Verbeke, Belschak, and Bagozzi 2004). Feelings of fulfilment and enjoyment of being instrumental to the customer (customer orientation) was found to have a direct positive impact on salesperson IM (Mallin and Pullins 2009). Finally, perceptions of fairness (perceptions of gaining or losing sales potential in a territory realignment context) were found to be a significant predictor of salesperson motivation (Smith, Jones, and Blair 2000); and satisfaction with territory design were reported to have a positive impact on salesperson IM (Grant et al. 2001).

Outcomes of salesperson motivation

Interestingly, outcomes of salesperson motivation have been somewhat less extensively studied than that of the drivers. Early research on motivation revealed highly inconsistent findings. Some studies report IM as a stronger predictor of performance outcomes, whereas other studies argue in favor of EM. Specifically, Oliver (1974) found IM to be a poor predictor of performance while extrinsic motivation was effective in predicting it. The author even suggested that IM might be dysfunctional in influencing performance. These conclusions found support in a study by Ingram, Lee, and Skinner (1989), who also reported

that IM did not impact performance (via effort) whereas EM had a significant impact. Contrary to this, Tyagi (1985c) found that IM had a stronger effect on work performance compared with EM, whereas Jaramillo and Mulki (2008) reported that IM had a positive impact on salesperson effort but EM had a negative impact.

More recent studies have demonstrated a pattern that was more in favor of IM, which is fundamentally consistent with findings on employee motivation in I/O psychology literature. Specifically, Levin, Hansen, and Laverie (2012) found that both IM and EM had a positive impact on the intention to use (sales- and marketing-related) technology. Miao and Evans (2007) reported that although both IM and EM contribute to performance, salesperson IM results in higher levels of performance than EM. In particular, intrinsically motivated salespeople were more likely to practice adaptive selling, which led to enhanced performance (Jaramillo et al. 2007; Pettijohn, Pettijohn, and Taylor 2002; Roman and Iacobucci 2010). They consider failures as a learning opportunity that helps them to improve in the future (Sujan 1986), which also implies an important performance consequence. IM was also found to increase job satisfaction (Grant et al. 2001; Low et al. 2001), which again is linked with performance.

Sujan (1986) using attribution theory found that IM led salespeople to attribute failures to poor strategies. This in turn motivated them to work smarter, which had a more important performance implication than EM. In contrast, EM led salespeople to attribute failures to insufficient effort, which in turn motivated them to work harder. Building on this, more recent studies have found that in comparison to EM, intrinsically motivated salespeople are more willing to work both smarter and harder (Jaramillo and Mulki 2008; Oliver and Anderson 1994), which in turn has important bottom line implications.

Research on motivation has also studied negative job outcomes, such as role conflict and ambiguity and burnout. IM has been found to reduce burnout, perceptions of role ambiguity and role conflict (Grant et al. 2001; Keaveney and Nelson 1993; Low et al. 2001), and also to contribute to a lessening in the tendency to engage in problematic behaviors (Murphy 2004). However, these findings may be seen in a different light when IM is further disaggregated into its orientations. For example, challenge seeking (IM), was found to decrease salesperson role conflict, whereas task enjoyment (IM) was found to increase role ambiguity (Miao and Evans 2007; Miao, Evans, and Zou 2007). The two EM orientations have also been found to work in opposition. Specifically, compensation seeking (EM) was found to decrease role conflict, whereas recognition seeking (EM) was found to increase it (Miao and Evans 2007).

Finally, a number of studies have examined the relationship between salesperson motivation and job satisfaction. For instance, motivation for recognition (EM, affective) was found to have a direct positive effect on job

satisfaction (Tanner, Tanner, and Wakefield 2015). Miao and Evans (2014) found that the two extrinsic motivational orientations have different effects on job satisfaction depending on the proportion of new customers they are dealing with. Specifically, the authors demonstrated that compensation seeking (EM) enhanced job satisfaction only when salespeople were dealing with lower percentages of new customers, but recognition seeking (EM) enhanced job satisfaction when salespeople were dealing with higher percentages of new accounts. In tandem, compensation seeking (EM) led to higher levels of performance when salespeople dealt with more new customers, but the opposite was true for challenge seeking (IM).

Combining the types of salesperson motivation

This literature on the outcomes of salesperson motivation demonstrates that IM is generally associated with higher levels of performance and other important salesperson job outcomes than EM. However, as later studies demonstrate, when IM and EM are disaggregated into the cognitive and affective orientations, the results do not appear to be solely in favor of IM. Moreover, in reality in most work situations people are motivated by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators (Amabile 1993). Hence, examining a combined effect of IM and EM and their orientations would appear likely to produce more nuanced findings.

A limited number of studies on this subject exist in the sales domain, which primarily explore the effect of salesperson compensation (EM) on IM. For instance, Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) in their conceptual work proposed that the use of EM (incentive compensation) has a diminishing effect on IM orientation, especially if controlling rather than informational aspects of incentives are emphasized. Ingram and Bellenger (1983) found that salespeople on commission-based compensation plans (performance contingent extrinsic rewards) valued IM such as personal growth significantly higher than those salespeople on straight salary (performance non-contingent reward). Pullins (2001) has suggested that sales researchers should more vigorously investigate the impact of IM on salesperson EM.

Key future research directions

Based on the reviewed literature, we structure the future research directions into the following subcategories: (1) emerging trends and future research suggestions (digital technologies, team-based structures, salesperson ambidexterity, longitudinal research, and curvilinear relationships); (2) drivers of salesperson motivation; (3) outcomes of salesperson motivation; and (4) other important variables.

Emerging trends and future research suggestions

First, the emergence of innovative digital technologies, including social media (e.g., LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook),

communication technologies (e.g., Skype, WebEx), cloud-based customer relationship management technologies, mapping software, and apps has opened up new opportunities for the sales profession. These new digital technologies have paved the way to the era of big data (France and Ghose 2016) where large datasets of customer information are readily available. Salespeople can help in interpreting customer information, market trends, and identifying latent customer needs. However, working with big data implies a motivational challenge, as a salesperson's motivation is geared to the face-to-face encounter with the customers with focus on interpersonal communication skills such as presenting, negotiating, and listening.

Prior studies have mainly relied on the Technology Readiness Index (Parasuraman 2000) and the technology acceptance model (Venkatesh and Davis 2000) to examine the driving role of EM and IM factors to the adoption of traditional offline sales technologies. Compared to these traditional technologies, innovative digital technologies often are more complex and integrative in nature, requiring a broader scope and more profound intellectual effort from the salesperson. For instance, the use of cloud-based sales technologies (e.g. Womack 2017) and the integration of different types of information from different types of channels and actors implies a different and more demanding way of working that may disrupt existing selling routines. As a result, salespeople often are more hesitant to use these innovative digital technologies. Moreover, they may be afraid that adoption of the innovative technologies will lead to the automation of important aspects of their job activities and put their job at risk. Therefore, one major challenge concerns how to effectively motivate salespeople to adopt digital technologies and effectively operate in this transformative and changing context.

Second, the introduction of team and network-based structures (Stock 2006) has highlighted the importance of interpersonal dynamics as a key aspect of sales force motivation strategies. This underlines the importance of examining the role of team dynamics and interpersonal interactions with coworkers as drivers of salesperson motivation. The purpose of sales teams is having salespeople work together "to create synergies among team members with different levels of skills and experiences" (Ahearne et al. 2010, 461). The use of such team-based structures implies that salespeople should be motivated to fulfil an additional role of helping and supporting colleagues in their sales team. Yet, both academics and practitioners recognize the importance of properly balancing salespeople's motivation to effectively sell products and help colleagues on the team. This presents a challenge as many sales teams still are dominated by self-interest—where salespeople tend to focus on maximizing personal utility with little room for displaying prosocial behaviors, such as helping other colleagues in the team. More

research is needed to examine how to adequately regulate salesperson motivation in team-based settings such that it yields a maximal result in terms of selling products and helping colleagues.

Future research could draw on the motivation, opportunity, and ability framework (MacInnis, Moorman, and Jaworski 1991) to acquire more insight into salespeople's motivation to help colleagues and sell products by considering their ability and the emerging opportunity to help colleagues on the team. Furthermore, we recommend borrowing insights from literatures in social identity theory, social exchange theory, and social network theory to get better insight into the nature of salesperson motivation to sell in team-based structures (MacInnis, Moorman, and Jaworski 1991; Schmitz 2013).

A related phenomenon is the emergence of global virtual sales teams (Badrinarayanan, Madhavaram, and Granot 2011) and the use of groupware technology as a communication tool in those virtual teams (Janson, Austin, and Hynes 2014). In a virtual context, it is more challenging to motivate salespeople, as managers have less capacity to control them. Then too, in a global virtual environment, clients may be doing business multiple time zones away and expect salespeople to be at their beck and call by virtual means during hours well outside the "normal work day" (Marshall et al. 2012).

Third, the traditional role of the salesperson is to carry out the different steps of the selling process, such as prospecting, approaching, negotiating, and closing the sale. However, the modern salesperson's job responsibilities have become much broader. Many salespeople operate in a multitask environments where they are engaged across greatly expended tasks and roles. In many modern companies salespeople have to go beyond the straightforward selling task and also perform marketing activities (Moncrief and Marshall 2005), combine the sale of products with the provision of high-quality customer service (Jasmand, Blazevic, and Ruyter 2012), or balance the traditional selling task with new selling approaches (der Borgh, de Jong, and Nijssen 2015). Also, as mentioned earlier, team-based settings necessitate that salespeople combine additional prosocial behaviors such as helping colleagues with the gamut of selling responsibilities. Future research along these lines can make use of the literature on ambidexterity, which is the ability to combine potentially conflicting role activities to investigate how salespeople can successfully combine and integrate multiple roles (March 1991; Tushman and O'Reilly 1996). Other theoretical approaches that can yield better insights into how to effectively balance different roles in sales include role balance theory (Greenhaus, Collins, and Shaw 2003; Marks and MacDermid 1996) and role theory (Katz and Kahn 1978). *Role balance* refers to the equal engagement of an individual in the performance

of every role in his or her total role system (Marks and MacDermid 1996).

Another important emerging theory of motivation that can be fruitful in studying salesperson motivation is Vancouver's (2008) dynamic process theory of self-regulation. This theory incorporates both cognitive and affective processes by using the notion of goal systems to understand a person's acting, thinking, learning, and feeling (Vancouver 2008). This is particularly relevant in sales roles when salespeople often work toward multiple goals.

Fourth, there is a strong call for adapting longitudinal techniques in sales research to "gain a more nuanced understanding of many of the most commonly studied phenomena in our field" (Bolander, Dugan, and Jones 2017). Researcher psychologists in the area of employee motivation assert that it is of crucial importance to adapt a dynamic interactionist approach to studying motivation to track how motivational variables change and develop over time (Kanfer, Frese, and Johnson 2017). Advanced longitudinal techniques and multi-source data (e.g., as it was done by Fu, Richards, and Jones 2009) can assist in exploring the cause-and-effect dynamics of salesperson motivation over time and as such further strengthen and develop the theoretical framework of the domain (Bolander, Dugan, and Jones 2017). Another approach is Steel and König's (2006) temporal motivation theory (TMT), which is grounded on the premises of expectancy theory, piceconomics, cumulative prospect theory, and need theory. TMT strives to provide "unifying insights from several theories of motivation" (Steel and König 2006, 907). Importantly for sales research, it defines expectancy and valence in truly dynamic terms. It also incorporates time to deadlines as a predictor for subjective utility followed by task choices over time (Vancouver, Weinhardt, and Schmidt 2010).

Finally, an interesting avenue for future research is to explore the possibility of curvilinear relationships (Walton 1969) between motivational and outcome (e.g., task performance, salesperson well-being, customer satisfaction) variables. For instance, a number of studies have found support for a presence of a U-shaped relationship between assigned goals and selling effort (Fang, Palmatier, and Evans 2004), quota levels and salesperson performance (Chowdhury 1993), and task conflict and employee creativity (De Dreu 2006). This raises the intriguing question: Is it possible to be too motivated and is there a point of optimal level of motivation?

Drivers of salesperson motivation

Although sales motivation research to date has examined several drivers of salesperson motivation, there appears to be a scarcity of knowledge on certain types of drivers of salesperson motivation – such as monetary versus non-monetary rewards.

One of the key challenges faced by sales motivation researchers is the assessment of the role of EM rewards such as financial incentives on IM variables. Pullins (2001) summarized several propositions on this topic, most of which have not been addressed to date. Generally, extrinsic rewards have been found to have an undermining effect on IM, especially when such rewards are offered for highly interesting tasks and are contingent on performance (as summarised by Kanfer, Frese, and Johnson 2017). It is known that sales compensation packages commonly consist of bonuses and commissions, which are contingent to certain performance achievements (Kishore et al. 2013), hence these could be detrimental to IM. Mallin and Pullins (2009) found that sales force steering mechanisms (behavior activity control) negatively moderated the relationship between proportion of variable pay and IM. Careful use of the right (combination of) incentives as well as work environment contexts (e.g., sales force steering mechanisms) which would not harm IM but perhaps even enhance it appears to be critical in this light. Indeed, the most recent meta-analysis on this subject (Cerasoli, Nicklin, and Ford 2014), which included 40 years of research and nine previously published meta-analyses, has demonstrated that although extrinsic rewards (incentives) can undermine IM, in truth EM and IM can still co-exist. Future research could investigate how salespeople's motivational orientations might work in synergy (as proposed by Amabile 1993) by employing extrinsic rewards in such a way that they enhance IM.

Another key question is linked to nonmonetary rewards. It has long been accepted that personal recognition, defined as "periodic acknowledgement of performance accomplishments of individual salespeople" (Wotruba, MacFie, and Colletti 1991, 9), is one of the important nonmonetary rewards available to salespeople (Bellenger, Wilcox, and Ingram 1984; Chonko, Tanner and Weeks 1992; Churchill, Ford, and Walker 1979). However, the current knowledge on the effect of such nonmonetary rewards on salesperson IM and EM and performance is scarce. A potentially interesting research avenue lies in investigating the effect of nonmonetary rewards on IM and EM as well as the combined effect of monetary incentives and nonmonetary rewards on salesperson IM and EM and the four motivational orientations.

Finally, several studies within the sales domain have emphasized the importance of positive working environment and supervisory support in influencing salesperson behaviors (Jaramillo and Mulki 2008; Kemp, Borders, and Ricks 2013; Tyagi 1982, 1985a, 1985b). These ideas are echoed in the organizational leadership literature (much of which is summarized by Bass and Stogdill 1990), which has demonstrated that charismatic leaders have highly motivated employees. However, how these influencers of motivation affect specific motivational orientations has not been explored to date. Hence, a

potentially fruitful avenue for research is how sales leader behavior can influence the four motivational orientations.

Outcomes of salesperson motivation

To date, much of the research on outcomes of salesperson motivation is concerned with salesperson performance, for several good reasons. For example, the sales force typically accounts for the largest part of the marketing budget and marketing personnel (Cravens et al. 1993), hence their actual performance is of crucial prominence in terms of ROI. That is, sales organization performance has important direct bottom-line implications (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Ahearne 1998). However, contemporary research in other areas of the sales domain as well as in the wider marketing literature includes other types of job outcomes that are subjective or behavioral in nature. Examples include salesperson innovativeness and creativity (e.g. Bai, Lin, and Li 2016; Miao and Wang 2016), work-life balance (e.g. Badrinarayanan et al. 2015; Closs, Speier, and Meacham 2011), and work engagement (e.g. Fujimoto et al. 2016; Menguc et al. 2017). Such work outcomes are commonly found to have important implications for overall organizational development, customer orientation, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance (e.g. Amabile 1996; Bai, Lin, and Li 2016; Miao and Wang 2016; Schaufeli et al. 2002). Future research could benefit by incorporating more of these behavioral job outcomes into studies on salesperson IM and EM in order to gain a richer understanding of the consequences of salesperson motivation.

Other important variables

This article has emphasized that salesperson motivation research has gone from studying a global motivation construct to looking at IM and EM and to further disaggregating these into the cognitive and affective motivational orientations. Extant research findings suggest that these motivational orientations have distinct antecedents and consequences. Hence, an opportunity exists for future research to further examine the four motivational orientations, incorporating their drivers and outcomes at individual and organizational levels.

In addition, research demonstrates the importance of personality traits and personal characteristics of salespeople in the field of salesperson motivation. Chonko, Tanner and Weeks (1992) suggested that salesperson personality traits and personal characteristics be taken into consideration when motivating salespeople. Indeed, business-to-business salespeople have been found to choose combinations of jobs and pay contracts that suit their heterogeneous traits (Lo, Ghosh, and Lafontaine 2011). Further research on salesperson motivation could incorporate personality traits such as the "Big 5" into the

research framework (e.g. the Big Five personality traits; He et al. 2015).

Research also demonstrates that motivational variables could differ for males versus female salespeople (e.g. Jaramillo and Mulki 2008). For instance, men and women were found to have differences in the ways motivational variables change across career stages (Cron, Dubinsky, and Michaels 1988) and in the motivational variables in the mentor–protégé relationship (Fine and Pullins 1998). More recent studies in sales have also demonstrated the importance of incorporating gender in sales force research (Rutherford, Marshall, and Park 2014). Boles et al. (2007) reported significant differences between male and female salespeople in the relationship between aspects of job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment. Rutherford, Marshall, and Park (2014) found that there are important gender effects in such areas of sales job as perceived organizational support, work–family conflict, and emotional exhaustion. Finally, Karkoulian, Srour, and Sinan (2016) in their study on work-life balance, perceived stress, and locus of control demonstrated the importance of this gender perspective. Future research investigating this matter in the sales context could offer fruitful insights on the topic of salesperson motivation, particularly since the percentage of females in business-to-business sales roles is rising.

Conclusion

The stated aim of our article was to critically review the literature on salesperson motivation and, while presenting key theoretical and methodological contributions, to also highlight key challenges and future research directions. Although theory development has progressed in this area, and has generally become more nuanced in terms of insights presented by academic research into salesperson motivation, we find significant and new motivation-related challenges faced by sales organizations, sales managers and salespeople that are unexplored or underexplored in the literature. Without subsequent research by sales academics, it will be difficult to provide industry sales leaders credible advice on how to effectively motivate salespeople in light of these challenges. We assert that effort is required post haste in theory building and testing in salesperson motivation that can drive practical insights among the key areas identified within this article.

One of the main challenges to sales motivation research in particular is in “its ability to provide sales executives with actionable guidance” (Asare, Yang, and Alejandro 2012, 387). Hence, it is of crucial importance that sales motivation research remains current, to inform and help organizations address new and emerging challenges. Sales leaders and managers must become aware of different types of motivation, as well as their potential to work in synergy to increase important job outcomes. Early

work on expectancy theory in sales changed the entire field of sales force management. But that work was undertaken 30–40 years ago. We challenge today’s generation of academic sales researchers to use this article as a springboard to develop the next generation of theory and practice in sales management, building on the history and opportunities revealed herein.

Motivating salespeople has always been one of the key challenges for sales leaders and, in truth, for firms as a whole (Doyle and Shapiro 1980; Jaramillo, Mulki, and Marshall 2005). Recently such challenges have been amplified by significant challenges to how sales organizations have traditionally operated (Keszey and Biemans 2016). There have been dramatic shifts in the role of the salesperson, and the accompanying competencies required, due to a widening role often incorporating business development and internal business consultancy elements (Keszey and Biemans 2016; Narus 2015) coupled with seemingly ever-escalating requirements for a deep technological knowledge set (Marshall et al. 2012). Add to the above the fact that the race to deploy more virtual forms of salesperson/customer interaction and relationship management – often with a cost-cutting goal as the key driver (travel is expensive) – has created challenges of workplace isolation for salespeople, both from their own company and their customers. This no doubt exacerbates the boundary-spanning role challenges and impacts motivation.

Then too, societal changes have presented key challenges as well, and in particular the arrival of millennials into the sales workforce with distinct professional work values and attitudes (Pullins et al. 2011). Indeed, recent research suggests that as millennials enter the workplace, organizations face additional and new motivational and retention-based challenges as initial evidence reveals millennials much more tuned into IM approaches versus EM (Ferri-Reed 2010). Our field must understand how to maximize salesperson success forward into the new horizons ahead. With hard work, we as sales academic researchers can build on our heritage of knowledge on salesperson motivation to open a new era of research discourse for the future of the field.

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Declaration of interest

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Note

1. This included a number of articles that had the words *motivate* or *motivation* present in the full-text of the document. For example, in an article that states “the authors’

motivation to examine this topic is . . .” or “hedonic motivation of the shoppers was . . .” the term *motivation* is irrelevant to the current study.

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Appendix

Appendix summary table of key articles on salesperson motivation

N	Study	Journal	Methodology	Sample size and response rate	Key relevant findings	Theory	Summary on motivation measures.
1	Oliver (1974)	<i>JMR</i>	Cross-sectional survey	95 (96%)	IM is a poor predictor of performance, whilst EM was effective in predicting performance.	Expectancy theory	IM is measured as five intrinsic outcomes
2	Walker et al. (1977)	<i>JM</i>	Conceptual paper	N/A	The article has provided a new classical definition: "motivation is viewed as the amount of effort the salesman desires to expend on each of the activities or tasks associated with his job, such as calling on potential new accounts, planning sales presentations, and filling out reports."	Expectancy theory	N/A
3	Evans et al. (1982)	<i>JPSSM</i>	Literature review	N/A	Literature review on expectancy theory research in sales domain.	Expectancy theory	N/A.
4	Tyagi (1982)	<i>JMR</i>	Cross-sectional survey	104	IM and EM have distinct predictors (drivers) among the organizational climate variables. Organizational climate variables produce stronger influence on IM than on EM. All organizational climate variables apart from challenge and variety have a significant impact on IM (job importance, task conflict, role overload, leadership consideration, organizational identification and management concern and awareness). Job challenge and variety, job importance and role overload do not significantly impact EM. Only job importance and organizational identification have a mild influence on EM.	Expectancy theory	Developed his own in line with Expectancy model
5	Becherer, Morgan, and Richard (1982)	<i>JM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	214 (33.2–65.8 depending on how many questionnaires have reached the salespeople)	Job related factors impact on motivation and job satisfaction of salespeople. It appears that internal motivation is positively related to the ways salespeople perceive their job characteristics and psychological states.	Job design theory	Job diagnostics survey by Hackman and Oldham (1974)
6	Churchill et al. (1985)	<i>JMR</i>	Meta-analysis	N/A	Motivation is third most important determinant of performance.	N/A	N/A
7	Tyagi (1985a)	<i>JAMS</i>	Cross-sectional survey	104 (63%)	Organizational stress variables contribute negatively to both IM and EM. Role ambiguity did not produce any effect on IM or EM, though this could be situational. Role conflict was shown to produce the strongest negative impact on IM and EM. The variable role overload had a much stronger impact on IM than on EM.	Expectancy theory	Developed his own

8	Tyagi (1985c)	<i>JM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	111 (62%)	Both job (re)design and leader's behavior affect salesperson IM and EM but to a different extent. Specifically, key job dimensions (job autonomy, variety, importance, task identity, feedback and agent's feedback) are more effective in impacting IM whereas leadership behavior is more effective in impacting EM. IM is more important predictor of salesperson performance, than EM.	Job design theory and expectancy theory	Developed his own
9	Sujan (1986)	<i>JMR</i>	Cross-sectional survey	1283 (32%)	Salespeople's motivation to work smarter has more important performance implications that motivation to work harder. An orientation toward extrinsic rewards leads salespeople to attribute their failures to a lack of effort which in turn motivates them to work harder. An orientation toward intrinsic rewards leads salespeople to attribute failures to poor strategies which in turn motivates them to work smarter.	Attribution theory	Developed his own (M)
10	Teas and McElroy (1986)	<i>JM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	N/A	The authors integrate expectancy and attribution theory.	Expectancy theory and attribution theory	N/A
11	Weitz et al. (1986)	<i>JM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	N/A	The authors propose a framework for motivation to practice adaptive selling.	Attribution theory and theory Z	N/A
12	Beltrami and Evans (1988)	<i>JPSSM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	933 (46.7%)	Contests have a potential to motivate salespeople, however, to serve a motivating purpose, they should be perceived as separate from the main compensation.	Not specified	A series of agree/disagree items adapted from (Churchill, Ford, and Walker 1974)
13	Cron et al. (1988)	<i>JM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	176 (78%)	Salesperson motivation varies depending on career stage – in line with career stages framework.	Expectancy theory	Used thermometer like scales and chances 0 to 100 on the expectancy, valence and instrumentality
14	Abbratt and Smythe (1989)	<i>IMM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	Study of 75 industrial firms in South Africa	The key salesperson motivators are satisfaction in the job well done and a desire for money.	Not specified	N/A.
15	Ingram et al. (1989)	<i>JPSSM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	231 (57.5%)	Salesperson's EM but not IM has a significant positive influence on effort which in turn has a significant positive influence on performance.	Expectancy theory	Tyagi (1985c) and Kohli (1985).

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Appendix summary table of key articles on salesperson motivation (Continued).

N	Study	Journal	Methodology	Sample size and response rate	Key relevant findings	Theory	Summary on motivation measures.
16	Badovick (1990)	<i>JAMS</i>	Cross-sectional survey	146 (94%) respondents who failed to make their monthly quota	Attribution theory is proposed as an additional theory of salesperson motivation. Feelings of self-blame after a failure of not completing a quota and feeling of satisfaction in performance (after completing a quota) directly influence motivation. When salesperson takes responsibility for their performance, then feelings of self-blame result in increased subsequent effort. Contrary to Weiner's Attribution theory, feelings of performance satisfaction resulted in subsequent decrease in effort.	Attribution theory	Sujan's (1986) smarter and harder
17	Spiro and Weitz (1990)	<i>JMR</i>	Cross-sectional survey (scale development)	268 (54%)	Scale development. IM is a part of the developed adaptive selling framework and measured as rewards arising from the task itself (e.g., selling is like playing a game).	Not specified	Developed their own (IM)
18	Chonko et al. (1992)	<i>JPSSM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	249 (24.9%)	Sales people report that pay rises are one of the most important motivators.	Not specified	N/A
19	Chowdhury (1993)	<i>JMR</i>	Laboratory experiments	N/A	Strong effect of self-efficacy on salesperson motivation and effort when sales tasks begin to increase in difficulty. However, this effect is only marginal for low quota levels or for easy tasks.	Expectancy theory, achievement motivation theory and goal setting theory	Not measured; motivation is used interchangeably with effort
20	Dubinsky et al. (1993)	<i>JPSSM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	212 (62%)	Minimal differences in male and female salespeople's perceptions of expectancies, instrumentalities, and valence for rewards.	Expectancy theory	Teas (1981) and Tyagi (1985a)
21	Keaveney and Nelson (1993)	<i>JAMS</i>	Cross-sectional survey	305 (43.6%)	Intrinsic motivational orientations decrease perceptions of role conflict and role ambiguity and enhance job satisfaction.	Causality orientations theory (SDT)	Developed their own (guided by Deci and Ryan 1985b)
22	Dubinsky et al. (1994)	<i>JBR</i>	Cross-sectional survey	218 (64.1%), 220 (62.9%) and 156 (34.7%)	Dramatic difference in motivational perceptions between the U.S. salespeople and Japanese and Korean salespeople.	Expectancy theory	
23	Oliver and Anderson (1994)	<i>JM</i>	Cross-sectional survey; dyadic data from sales managers and salespeople	347 (64%)	Control systems influence salespeople's affective and motivational states. Specifically, behavior-based control is linked with greater IM, whereas outcome-based control is linked with EM.	Sales force control framework	Developed their own (IM and EM)
24	Keck, Leigh, and Lollar (1995)	<i>JPSSM</i>	In-depth interviews and cross-sectional survey	92 (64.6%)	Motivation to earn money, personal enjoyment of selling, motivation to earn recognition from the peers and willingness to work hard are among several key agency success factors.	Not specified	N/A

25	Barling, Cheung, JAP and Kelloway (1996)	Cross-sectional survey	105 (87.5%)	The time-management behavior varies across individual levels of motivation.	Not specified	Spence, Helmreich, and Pred (1987) (achievement striving)
26	DeCarlo, Teas, JPSSM and McElroy (1997)	Cross-sectional survey	135 (87%)	Organizational support attributions following high self-ratings can increase salesperson motivation, whereas organizational support attributions following low performance self-ratings can decrease it.	Attribution theory and expectancy theory	N/A
27	Fine and Pullins JPSSM (1998)	Cross-sectional survey	165 (36.6%)	Significant differences on motivational variables between men and women in the mentor-protégé relationship. Specifically, female protégés with female mentors report higher motivation levels than male mentors with female protégés.	Not specified	Hackman and Oldham (1976)
28	Schulman (1999) JPSSM	Conceptual paper	N/A	Based on prior research, the authors conclude that optimism result in increased level of motivation.	Learned helplessness theory	N/A
29	Smith et al. JPSSM (2000)	Cross-sectional survey for study 1 and scenario-based experiment for study 2	161 (43%) for Study 1 and 251 (31%) for Study 2	Perceptions of fairness (perceptions of gaining or losing sales potential) in territory-alignment situations affect motivation. Salesperson motivation increases as managers take more actions (justice/fairness related).	Expectancy theory and organizational justice theory	Combination of working hard and working smart measures (Oliver and Weitz, 1991 and Sujjan, Weitz and Kumar, 1994)
30	Pullins et al. JBIM (2000)	Laboratory experiment	76	Individual differences in IM orientation (operationalized as causality orientation of autonomy) affect the cooperative negotiation tactics in negotiations between a seller and a buyer.	SDT	Deci and Ryan's (1985a) general causality orientation scale (SDT)
31	Grant et al. JAMS (2001)	Cross-sectional survey	148 (55%)	Satisfaction with territory design enhances IM which in turn reduces role ambiguity. Also, IM increases job satisfaction.	Not specified	Anderson and Oliver (1987), Oliver and Anderson (1994) and Cravens et al. (1993) (IM)
32	Low et al. (2001) JM	Cross-sectional survey	148 (55%)	IM directly reduces burnout, role conflict, role ambiguity, and increases job satisfaction. In turn, burnout has a significant negative impact on job satisfaction and performance.	Not specified	Anderson and Oliver (1987), Oliver and Anderson (1994) and Cravens et al. (1993) (IM)
33	Pullins (2001) IMM	Interviews	19	Managers think that less than half of the motivation comes from incentive pay and the rest (biggest part) comes from intrinsic rewards.	SDT	N/A

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Appendix summary table of key articles on salesperson motivation (Continued).

N	Study	Journal	Methodology	Sample size and response rate	Key relevant findings	Theory	Summary on motivation measures.
34	Dubinsky and Skinner (2002)	<i>IMM</i>	Conceptual paper	N/A	The authors build a proposition (among others) that salesperson IM is positively related to discretionary effort.	Expectancy theory	N/A
35	Pettijohn et al. (2002)	<i>P&M</i>	Cross-sectional survey	109 (50%)	Interaction between salesperson motivation and skill level significantly related to customer orientation levels.	Not specified	N/A
36	Menguc and Barker (2003)	<i>JPSSM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	102 (20.7%)	When extrinsic rewards (motivators) are strong, salespeople may compensate for the lack of intrinsic rewards in their jobs.	Agency theory and organizational control theory	N/A
37	Murphy (2004)	<i>JBR</i>	Cross-sectional survey	827 (53%)	In high motivation conditions, affective organizational commitment and relationship with supervisor lead to less tendency to engage in problematic behaviors.	Theory of planned behavior	N/A
38	Verbeke et al. (2004)	<i>JAMS</i>	Cross-sectional survey (scenario based)	93 (30.5%) in Study 1 and 250 (52%) in Study 2	Salespeople are affected by their emotions but they can control them to their advantage. Specifically, pride was found to stimulate performance-related motivations.	Not specified	Spiro and Weitz (1990) and (Sujan, Weitz and Kumar, 1994)
39	Brown et al. (2005)	<i>JPSSM</i>	Conceptual paper		Call for integrating the research domains of salesperson motivation, control systems, and compensation.	N/A	Goal theory and expectancy theory
40	Harris, Mowen, and Brown (2005)	<i>JAMS</i>	Cross-sectional survey	190 (84%)	Learning orientation has a positive impact on customer orientation, whereas performance orientation has a positive impact on selling orientation.	Control theory	N/A
41	Segalla et al. (2006)	<i>IJRM</i>	Cross-sectional survey (scenario based)	652 (62%)	Sales managers choose incentive pay to increase salesperson motivation, or salary to increase control and parity.	Expectancy theory, agency control theory, and social comparison theory	N/A
42	Jaramillo et al. (2007)	<i>JPSSM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	400 (66.7%)	Initiative strengthens the positive relationship between IM and adaptive selling. IM has a significant effect on adaptive selling. Also, customer orientation mediates the relationship between IM and adaptive selling.	Action control theory	Oliver and Anderson (1994) (IM and EM)
43	Miao et al. (2007)	<i>JBR</i>	Cross-sectional survey	175 (44.2%)	Activity control primarily impacts challenge seeking (the cognitive dimension of IM) and capability control mainly affects task enjoyment (the affective dimension of IM).	SDT	Amabile et al (1994)
44	Miao and Evans (2007)	<i>JPSSM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	175 (44.2%)	Cognitive and affective orientations of IM and EM have distinct impact on role conflict and role ambiguity and subsequently, behavioral and outcome performance.	Not specified	Amabile et al (1994)
45	Jaramillo and Mulki (2008)	<i>JPSSM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	344 (60%)	Supportive leadership has a direct positive effect on IM. IM is an important driver of salesperson effort. EM has a negative effect of effort. Female salespeople are less influenced by EM than male salespeople.	Path goal theory and social cognitive theory	Oliver and Anderson (1994) (IM and EM)
46	Miao et al. (2009)	<i>JPSSM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	175 (44%)	Cognitive orientations of IM and EM vary depending on salesperson's career stage, whereas affective orientations of IM and EM do not.	Expectancy theory and career stage theory	Amabile et al (1994)

47 Fu et al. (2009)	<i>JPSSM</i>	Longitudinal study	143 (17.9% final response rate)	The study indicates the importance of motivation hub (self-set goals and self-efficacy) in influencing salesperson's effort and new product sales.	Goal-setting theory	Self-reported measures of self-set goals and self-efficacy
48 Mallin and Pullins (2009)	<i>IMM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	275	Salesperson customer orientation has a direct positive impact on IM through feelings of fulfillment and enjoyment of being instrumental to the customer.	Cognitive evaluation theory (SDT)	Oliver and Anderson's (1994) (IM)
			Behavior activity control negatively moderates the relationship between the proportion of commission (in total compensation) and IM.			
49 Roman and Iacobucci (2010)	<i>JAMS</i>	Dyad: cross-sectional survey with salespeople plus telephone interviews for customers	210 salespeople (out of 300) and 630 customers	IM among others mediates the relationship between a salesperson's perception of the firm's customer orientation and salesperson's adaptive selling behavior.	Expectancy theory	Spiro and Weitz (1990) (IM)
50 Cadwallader et al. (2010)	<i>JAMS</i>	Cross-sectional survey	328 (100%)	The study incorporates three levels of motivation: global, contextual, and situational (Vallerand 1995, 1997). Global motivation positively impact on contextual motivation regarding technology and work. Then, the contextual motivation for both technology and work has a positive impact on innovation implementation. Employee feelings and beliefs have a significant impact on situational motivation to implement service innovation strategies.	SDT	Guay, Vallerand, and Blanchard (2000).
51 McCarthy Byme et al. (2011)	<i>IMM</i>	Interviews and cross-sectional survey	262 (68.6%)	Motivational dimensions of sales force forecasting (satisfaction, seriousness and effort) are influenced by the five environmental signals: training, feedback, knowledge of how the forecast is used, forecasting computer program, and others' level of seriousness. IM and EM have a positive impact whereas apathetic motivation has a negative impact on the intention to use sales- and marketing-related technology.	Developed their own (theory of industrial sales force forecasting)	Developed their own (for satisfaction, seriousness and effort)
52 Levin et al. (2012)	<i>JPSSM</i>	Quasi-experiment	194 (68.5%)		Not specified	Davis et al (1992) (IM and EM), Vallerand et al (1992) (apathetic motivation)

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Appendix summary table of key articles on salesperson motivation (Continued).

N	Study	Journal	Methodology	Sample size and response rate	Key relevant findings	Theory	Summary on motivation measures.
53	Miao and Evans (2012)	<i>IJRM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	195 salesperson-sales manager dyads (16.3-19.2%)	The combination of capability and outcome-based control systems has a positive combined effect on IM and salesperson knowledge. The combination of outcome and activity based control systems decrease IM but increase role clarity. IM diminishes the negative effect of role ambiguity on performance.	Expectancy theory and cognitive evaluation theory (SDT)	IM and EM scale was borrowed from (Miao, Evans, and Zou 2007), though EM is only a control variable
54	Kemp et al. (2013)	<i>EJM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	154 (51.3%)	Salesperson motivation is positively related to positive working environments and customer-oriented selling and negatively related to emotional exhaustion. Also, the relationship between manager support and salesperson motivation was not significant. However, the experience of positive emotions mediates the relationship between managers' support and salesperson motivation.	Not specified	Badovick et al. (1992)
55	Schmitz (2013)	<i>JAMS</i>	Cross-sectional survey	55 usable Level 2 and 222 usable Level 1 data records (77%)	The study found that the relationship between salesperson's motivation and their adoption of the company's product portfolio is positively moderated by a strong team group norm for cross-selling.	Social norm theory and reputation theory	Sujan et al. 1994
56	Yidong and Xinxi (2013)	<i>JBE</i>	Cross-sectional survey	302 (75.5%)	IM mediates the relationship between the perceptions of ethical leadership on an individual and group level and salespeople's innovative work behavior.	Cognitive evaluation theory (SDT)	Zhang and Bartol (2010)
57	Michel et al. (2015)	<i>JPSSM</i>	Interviews and cross-sectional survey	72 for interviews and 297 for survey	Salesperson-brand relationship and brand affect have a positive effect on salesperson motivation to sell.	Consumer-brand relationship theory	Spiro and Weitz (1990)
58	Tanner et al. (2015)	<i>JPSSM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	339 (97%)	The effect of motivation for compensation/motivation for recognition on performance was non-significant. However, motivation for recognition was found to have a direct positive effect on satisfaction with moderating (weakening) effect of ethical climate.	Expectancy theory and social cognition theory	Chonko, Tanner and Weeks (1996)
59	Bande et al. (2016)	<i>JBIM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	145 (96%)	IM mediates the positive relationship between servant leadership and salesperson adaptivity and proactivity.	Cognitive evaluation theory (SDT)	Cravens et al. (1993) (IM)
60	Hansen and Levin (2016)	<i>JBR</i>	Cross-sectional survey	210 (30%)	Apathetic motivation, IM and EM are distinct variables that can co-exist.	Expectancy theory and SDT	Levin et al (2012) (IM, EM and apathetic motivation)

61 Hohenberg and Homburg (2016)	<i>JM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	471 (76.7%) from across 38 countries	In all cultures both behavior-based and outcome-based steering instruments can increase salesperson's autonomous innovation-selling motivation and the financial performance of innovations. Individualism strengthens the positive relationship between variable compensation and financial innovation performance through IM, but the power distance and uncertainty avoidance weaken this relationship. Study findings offer a strong support for SDT.	SDT	Grant et al. (2011) (IM)
62 Sok, Sok, and De Luca (2016)	<i>IMM</i>	Cross-sectional survey	239 (44%)	"Can do" and "reasons to" motivations impact salesperson ambidexterity.	Regulatory mode theory and SDT	Spence and Robbins (1992) ("Reasons to" motivations), Kruglanski et al (2000) ("Can do" motivations)
63 Fu et al. (2017)	<i>JMTP</i>	Cross-sectional survey	136 (68%)	IM and EM positively impact affective brand commitment which in turn has a positive impact on effort. Though the relationship of affective brand commitment and effort is significant only when both IM and self-efficacy are high. Non-significant relationship between EM and effort. EM has a positive impact on affective brand commitment.	Theory of planned behavior and the motivation, opportunity, and ability theory	Miao, Evans and Zou (2007) (IM and EM)

Note. IM = intrinsic motivation; EM = extrinsic motivation; SDT = self-determination theory; JPSSM = Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management; JM = Journal of Marketing; JAMS = Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science; IMM = Industrial Marketing Management; JMR = Journal of Marketing Research; JBR = Journal of Business Research; LIRM = International Journal of Research in Marketing; JBIM = Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing; EIM = European Journal of Marketing; JAP = Journal of Applied Psychology; JBE = Journal of Business Ethics; JMTP = Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice; P&M = Psychology and Marketing.

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