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TESTING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SALES TEAMS' CORE COMPETENCIES AND DYNAMICS, AND TEAMS' PRODUCTIVITY

Key Words

***Salesmen
Competencies; Sales
Teams; Team
Productivity; Sales
Team Dynamics; Team
Communication; Team
Leadership***

Abstract

The use of sales teams is a method that has become increasingly demanding (Dixon, Gassenheimer, and Feldman, 2003) with world class selling competencies (Lambert et al., 2009) and performing like "mini-CEO". This research suggests a conceptual framework that incorporates sales professionals' core competencies and dynamics, and team productivity. The article then reports an empirical examination of the framework in the Internet industry in Egypt. The relationship between sales professionals' core competencies and dynamics and sales team's productivity is examined. The study proves that sales core competencies (i.e., aligning customer/supplier strategic objectives, listening beyond the product needs, understanding the financial impact of decisions on both the customer's organization and the service provider, orchestrating organizational resources, consultative problem solving to create new ideas, establishing a vision of a committed customer/supplier relationship, engaging in self appraisal and continuous learning) and dynamics (i.e., team leadership, team communication, teamwork and team relations) are significantly related to sales teams' productivity in terms of quality of work, creative ideas, being industrious and working at good pace, meeting targets and deadlines, focusing on high priority projects, planning and organizing work effectively, and others. Finally, the study concludes with discussion of results, recommendations, implications for managers, and suggestions for future research.

Introduction

Revenue growth is a major concern of business leaders. Consequently, sales strategies are always being developed and implemented. The management of sales teams is viewed as vital to the success of business organizations (Bell *et al.*, 2011; Barnes *et al.*, 2011; Ingram *et al.*, 2010; Cravens *et al.*, 1993). The need for sales teams' management is surprisingly increasing. A growing number of organizations are adopting a team approach to sell their products and services that range from selling airplanes to airlines, medications to telecommunication, industrial to consumer products,... etc. Those companies usually organize their salespeople into teams and depend on the team's performance in identifying the compensation of the team and even the individual salesperson (Ingram *et al.*, 2010; and Weitz and Bradford, 1999). Many scholars agree that the model of the individual salesperson: "the lone wolf" has become old and classic (Dixon *et al.*, 2003).

The relatively limited literature about sales teams' management represents a knowledge gap as the management of sales teams should be well understood. On one hand, well organized and effectively managed sales teams can provide remarkable competitive advantages to their sales departments and their companies. On the other hand, when sales team mem-

bers are not well selected, do not possess vital sales team core competencies, and the team dynamics and interpersonal processes are ineffective, their productivity will be influenced. They can be strategically destructive by remarkably reducing overall competitiveness, consequently damaging the sales force resource, increasing real costs and /or increasing opportunity costs (Homberg *et al.*, 2002). For example, a 2002 McKinsey study published in the Wall Street Journal (Hensely, 2003) concluded that sales teams members' wrong selection, mis-allocation, and mis-management is found in many industries such as the pharmaceutical industry. In addition, "the opportunity cost of retaining a single low-performance district manager who runs below average teams can be as high as \$20 million a year" (Elling, 2002). In a productivity study of sales teams conducted in seven countries (UK, US, Germany, Spain, France, Australia, and South Africa), it was found that the sales force productivity is alarmingly low in the pulp and paper industry, the chemical industry, the food and beverage industry, and the textile industry. Organizations do not spend much time providing value to the customer (Whitmore, 2004). Glass (2008) studied negative productivity reasons and what can be done about it.

To achieve high sales team productivity, researchers and scholars raised three questions: "How a sales team should be managed? How a sales team can function? And what competencies a sales team member needs to acquire?". The differences that exist among team members in terms of mixed loyalties and conflicting goals is a complicated issue (Webb and Lambe, 2007). In addition to the different skills and abilities needed for a team structure such as team related leadership, planning, goal setting and conflict management skills (Weitz and Bradford, 1999); many researchers focused on challenges and obstacles a sales team is expected to face, if it wants to achieve success. For example, Marchetti (1997), in a study of Fortune 500 companies, revealed that only 13% of sales teams were rated as highly productive.

Two strategies appear to hold promise for improving sales teams' productivity: selecting the sales team members with sales teams' core competencies, and improving the sales teams' dynamics.

Few researchers have studied the construct of the core competencies of the members of a sales team and/or have investigated the construct of the group dynamics of a sales team with respect to the sales team productivity. Such research is needed since it will

shed light on: (1) the degree to which the selection of sales team members with core competencies is related to enhancing sales team productivity, and (2) the degree to which a sales team's dynamics such as team leadership, team relations, team communication, and teamwork are related to enhancing sales team's productivity.

This research offers valuable insights for both industry and academia since it provides useful guidance for practicing managers and executives who seek to enhance sales team members' competencies, sales team's dynamics, and consequently, sales team & sales force productivity.

The study begins by introducing the selling team or sales team's concept then relating research on sales team core competencies and dynamics to sales team productivity literature, with a focus on how the literature suggests that both might serve as key antecedents of sales team productivity. From that platform, hypotheses that comprise the conceptual model, are developed. Then, the research discusses the method for empirically testing the conceptual model, and results of the research analysis. The research concludes by discussing the implications of findings, and directions for future research.

Theoretical Foundation

Ingram *et al.* (2010, and 2002) revealed that selling and sales management in the new millennium are changing and progressing. Progressive sales organizations are becoming more strategic in their approaches to the initiation, development, and enhancement of customer relationships.

The customer -focused approach requires change to an organization's existing structure to be successful. In the new structure, team members, who are considered core in meeting customer needs, are selected from various departments within the organization such as marketing, sales, customer service, product/ service development, and operations (Homberg *et al.*, 2002).

"The use of teams aims at realizing the following advantages: increased efficiency of organizational processes, increased innovativeness through the bundling of different competencies and perspectives within a team, and improved management of the boundaries with other companies" (Stock, 2004).

Sales Team Core Competencies and Dynamics, and Team Productivity

The concept of selling or sales teams is that several members of an organization are assigned to a particular key account and are tasked by management to develop and execute a growth strategy for that particular

customer. Research has identified many key drivers that are critical for sales teams' success. Team selling or sales teams are more likely to occur under the following conditions: (a) the sales are potentially large, (b) the customer requires a special focus, (c) product or service complexity exceeds an individual's cognitive limits, (d) the customer is purchasing a complex offering for the first time, (e) a large number of people are engaged on the buy side of the equation, (f) the product or service is key to the seller's portfolio of offerings, and (g) the buyer has a need for enormous amounts of information (Jones *et al.*, 2005).

"Sales teams or selling teams usually take a problem solving or consultative approach to selling. They facilitate the development of supplier-buyer relationships that are based on communication and knowledge sharing rather than ones based on telling and selling" (Arnett *et al.*, 2005). A study indicated that self managed teams were associated with a 9.3% increase in sales output per employee (Batt and Keefe, 1999).

Sales teams core competencies.

Sales teams core competencies is a significant stream of research within the management, organizational behavior, human resource management, and marketing disciplines. Sales force competencies researchers have fo-

cused primarily on today's emerging core competencies as salespeople can no longer succeed with traditional skills. Business and management academics have researched and reported the competencies, skills, and characteristics of successful salespeople.

Goyal and Akhilesh (2007) developed a model to explain the innovativeness of work teams in terms of three group abilities: "cognitive intelligence", "emotional intelligence" and "social capital" of the team/group members. 20 years ago, Blustein (1992) called for the need for sales force with nontraditional skills and abilities to achieve sales effectiveness. Nigel et al. (1999) examined the determinants of sales organization effectiveness in a sample of British companies following recent empirical studies in the US and Australia. But still the continual need for innovative skills and competencies sales teams should aspire to sell in tough economic conditions and when financial crises do exist. Thus, this paper focuses on cognitive intelligence in specific.

Most of the literature regarding the selection of the new salespeople has focused on the "five big personality traits": agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience, extraversion, neuroticism and/or emotional stability (Reday et al., 2008). The literature on effective sales performance

refers to the fact that salespeople must have the characteristics of persuasiveness, tact, and competitiveness, and occasionally aggressiveness (Honeycutt and Ford, 1996).

Kang et al. (2006) investigated the importance of team member characteristics, particularly cognitive and demographic, on team effectiveness and which characteristics matter more in team activities, especially where labor turnover is high, in such industry as the software development industry in South Korea. Their analysis showed that team effectiveness is more influenced by cognitive, than demographic similarities.

Lent et al. (2006) developed a measure of collective efficacy and administered it to two samples of teams. They found that collective efficacy was a stronger predictor of team performance. Hertel et al. (2006) developed and validated the Virtual Team Competency Inventory (VTCI), an Internet-based measure for selection and placement of members in virtual teams. Analyses at the team-level revealed significant correlations between individual team members' performance and team effectiveness; and that the mean, and variance aggregations of VTCI are predictors within the teams.

Driskell et al. (2006) classified the core teamwork dimensions underlying

team productivity. Then, predictions were derived linking team member personality facets to specific teamwork requirements and effectiveness.

Reday *et al.* (2008) added that both industrial and consumer markets increasingly involve high levels of technology that may call for additional skills and attributes, beyond those associated with the traditional sales function, required to transfer the technology embodied within many products and services to their consumers.

Rosenbaum (2000) introduced seven emerging competencies that successful salespeople today use. Those seven emerging competencies were identified in an exhaustive study that compared the skills of the top one-third of salespeople with the bottom two thirds in 20 diversified companies. The study of over 1,000 salespeople concluded that the salesperson of today must perform like a "mini-CEO," focusing on issues like the customer's strategic objectives rather than on tactics like establishing rapport, overcoming objectives or closing. The competencies assume that salespeople have a grasp of the basic selling skills such as listening, building, and executing strategic account penetration plans. Consequently, it can be concluded that sales teams should perform like "junior board of directors" too.

The seven emerging competencies include: (1) Aligning Customer/Supplier Strategic Objectives by identifying new opportunities and applications that add value to the customer organization and enhance the value of the relationship with the organization, (2) Listening beyond product needs by identifying business process improvement potential and opportunities to add value to the organization and our customers, (3) Understanding the financial impact of decisions on the customer's organization and on the salesperson's organization by quantifying and communicating the value of the relationship, (4) Orchestrating organizational resources by identifying key contributors, communicating relevant information and building collaborative, customer-focused relationships, (5) Consultative Problem Solving to create new solutions, customized products and services, and paradigm changes, while being willing and able to work outside the norm when necessary, (6) Establishing a vision of a committed customer/supplier relationship by identifying value-adding products, processes and services, (7) Engaging in self-appraisal and continuous learning by securing feedback from customers, colleagues and managers. The study urges all salespeople to pay particular attention to the seventh competency.

Sales Teams Dynamics. Marks *et al.* (2000) investigated how dynamics including team leadership and team members' interaction, relations and communication positively influence team performance in both routine and creative and innovative environments. Findings indicated that both team leadership and team communication predicted team performance more strongly in creative and innovative rather than in routine environments. Dricks (2000) empirically examined the relationship between leadership and team performance and proved that leadership is a determinant of team performance and organizational performance. Ozcelik *et al.* (2008); Rulke and Galaskiewicz (2000); and Chalos and Poon (2000) tested the relationship between team communication and team performance, and a strong positive relationship was proven.

Hoegl and Proserpio (2004) provided evidence that team members' proximity is significantly related to teamwork quality framework, i.e., communication, coordination, balance of member contributions, mutual support, effort, and cohesion. Dixon *et al.* (2003) mentioned that sales team members prefer to work together when making decisions and setting goals, have more patience for group process, see others as more effective, and usually value others' ideas. Re-

search investigating successful sales teamwork proved an impact on team productivity and on organizational commitment.

Sales teamwork. Harris and Barnes-Farell (1997) examined the relationship between Dickinson's (1993) components of teamwork and ratings of team members' contributions to team success. They found out a strong relationship between teamwork components and perceptions of contributions to team productivity, team viability, teamwork, and overall team performance.

The use of teams and self-managing teams (SMTs) in the electronics and hi tech manufacturing industry in the UK and the USA has developed significantly over the last years. The use of such groups and experimentation in socio-technical systems has emanated largely from the subsidiary operations of the US and Japan in this sector (MaCalman, 1999). Fleisher *et al.* (2008) found that the use of cross functional teams led to better market performance and higher profits.

The teamwork dimensions are a prerequisite for effective team performance across a variety of types of tasks, teams and sectors such as the airline industry (Wirtz *et al.*,2008; Rodgers, 1991), Hi Tech industry (Chau and Witcher,2008; and Hard-

aker and Ward, 2007), and in the banking industry (Sanfillippo, 1996).

Sales Team Leadership. Management and sales leadership research provided insights for joint agendas for sales management in the 21st century including the emerging sales leadership models, leader-member exchange (LMX) model, transformational leadership, and behavioral self-management (BSM). As sales departments operate in a more strategic mode and adopt new technologies, individual sales leaders play an important role in shaping salesperson attitudes and behaviors (Dubinsky, 2001; Ingram *et al.*, 2002).

Guillory (2007) studied the effective role of twenty first century leadership in the integration of knowledge, people, and cooperation in sales. Kuo (2004) concluded that transformational leadership causes the most significant impact on team effectiveness.

Sethi (2006) proposed a "Balanced Team Leadership (BTL) Model" as a guide for achieving the strategic balance between organizational profit and ethical equity in global trade and the Internet. Yun *et al.* (2005) linked leadership to team effectiveness, as moderated by relatively specific situational contingencies and suggested that an empowering leader provided more learning opportunities than did a directive leader. Miller *et al.* (2007)

provided evidence that good team-work is essential to the delivery of high-quality of service and that leadership intervention (shared leadership) improves team-work in multidisciplinary teams.

Jones *et al.* (1996) empirically found that sales managers' leadership behaviors - directly and indirectly - influence job satisfaction, which influences salespeople's propensity to leave the organization, actual turnover, and productivity.

Sales team communication. Communication is the primary vehicle through which task groups accomplish their goals (Marks *et al.*, 2000). Team members must exchange ideas and information in a clear and timely manner. Research suggested that effective team performance is related to the quantity and quality of communications-effective teams communicate more and better than less effective teams. Effective communication behaviors include exchanging information in a timely manner, acknowledgment of information, double-checking that the intent of messages was received (closed-loop communication), clarifying ambiguity, and the appropriate use of verbal and nonverbal cues (Marks *et al.*, 2000; Kanki and Smith, 2001). Sethi (2003) provided a map of appropriate

skills and tools needed to practice team communication strategies.

Sales team relations. Another aspect of team selling or sales teams is team relations and the possibility of conflict between team members. Dixon *et al.* (2003) noted, "Within sales teams comes incongruence between individual and teamwork values or styles creating situations in which conflict is inevitable". The researchers examined the impact of team members' responses to conflict and to sales teams' outcomes. Their model also suggested that when sales teams experience intra-team conflict, individual responses to conflict may increase (decrease) relational distance, which results in diminished (enhanced) perceptions of team outcomes and prompts team members to exit (not exit) the team.

Goal differences are the most glaring source of team conflict. Conflict often increases when the self interests of the various team members arise. Consequently, team members tend to distrust each other, and the team becomes dysfunctional (Thompson *et al.*, 2001). It has been suggested that the goal congruency is an important factor in the organization of cognition in general (Martin and Stewart, 2001). On the other hand, task-oriented conflict within a team can produce beneficial results. It is based on the

assumption that conflict will allow team members to consider alternative views to provide a more thorough output (Dixon *et al.*, 2003).

Although conflict has traditionally been considered destructive, especially in collectivist societies like China, recent studies have indicated that valuing and approaching conflict can contribute to effective teamwork and employee citizenship (Tjosvold *et al.*, 2003). Tjosvold (2005) provided support that cooperation and competition through managing conflict cooperatively is a foundation for team effectiveness in China as well as in the West.

Sales team productivity. A number of researchers and scholars in the fields of management and sales management practices such as Ingram *et al.* (2010); Cousins *et al.*(2008); Ingram (2004); Whitmore (2004); Syoboda (2003); and Nigel *et al.*(1999) have interpreted the subject of sales teams productivity. Bateman (2000) argued that a sales team offers obvious potentiality and productivity if such issues as the team leader/sales leadership, communication and motivation remain effective. If such issues are not addressed, team productivity will decrease.

The team as a whole should be evaluated, in addition to assessing individual member productivity. Team productivity can be measured

by team members as well as by the sales manager (Trent and Monczka, 2004). Ingram (2004) proved significant relationship of sales team performance to organizational positive outcomes, and provided an example of a multidimensional approach team members can use to evaluate teammates' critical skills and behaviors. The measurement allows sales managers to develop a composite performance appraisal, merging each team member's viewpoint. The process helps strengthen teams, enhance morale, and contribute to a healthy working climate. In addition, the team and its members must be evaluated against predetermined productivity criteria.

Proposed Integrative Framework

Following the work of Blustain (1992) who called for assessing the sales force accurately and developing sales teams with nontraditional sales skills and competencies, a number of scholars and researchers such as Bateman (2000) called for the need of research on the factors that influence sales team productivity. Therefore, this paper proposes a model to investigate the relationship of core competencies and dynamics to sales teams' productivity (See Figure1).

The proposed model includes sales teams' core competencies and dy-

namics of sales teams as independent variables and sales team productivity as dependent variable. The core competencies include seven variables, and the dynamics involve four variables.

A model of sales effectiveness is determined by sales force outcome performance and behavioral performance, as well as by the use of a behavior-based approach including group dynamics and sales force skills and competencies as inputs. The following part will introduce the research hypotheses.

The Research Hypotheses

The proposed model was used to develop the research hypotheses. Three hypotheses were developed. They are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between the sales teams' core competencies and dynamics, and sales teams' productivity.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between the sales teams' core competencies and the sales teams' productivity.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between the sales teams' group dynamics and the sales teams' productivity.

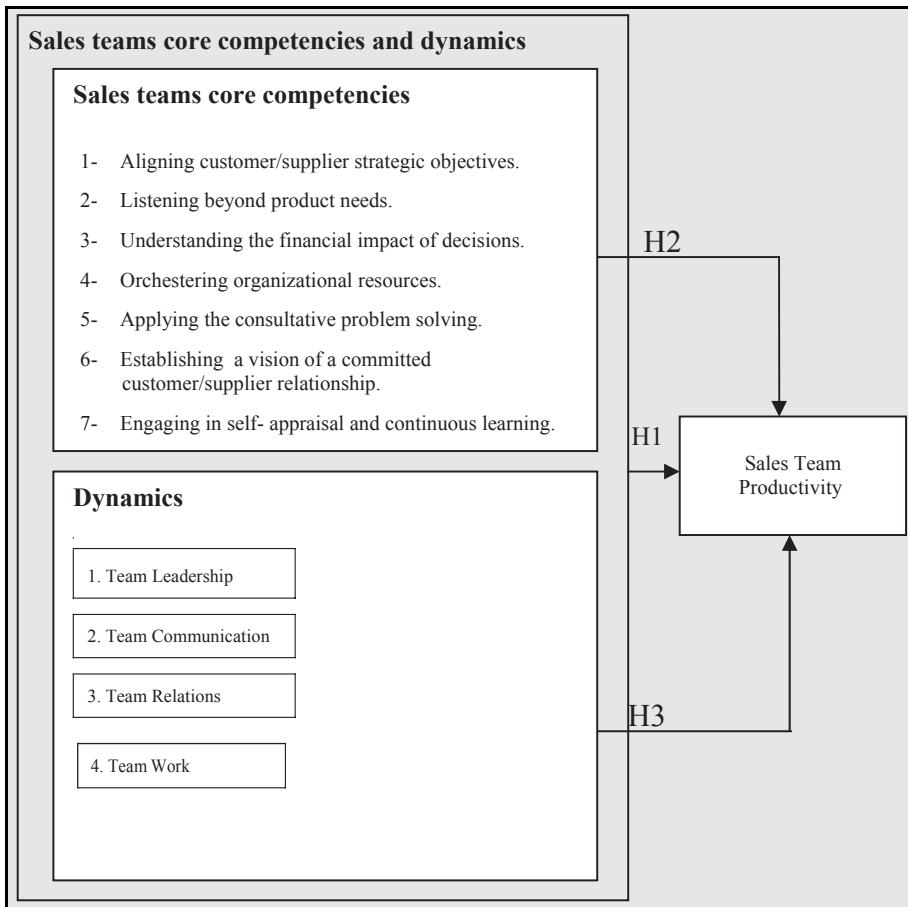


Figure 1: The Relationship between Sales teams' Core Competencies and Dynamics and Sales Teams' Productivity

Methodology

Context, Sample Selection, and Data Collection

In the year 2010, the Middle Eastern Internet users were about 56 million; 16 million of them were from Egypt (www.zawya.com). The Internet industry in Egypt is growing (Internet in Egypt, 2011). It is classified

according to the nature of service providence: class A, class B, and class C (Telecommunication services on navigation lines, 2011). Class A comprises of three companies that possess the infrastructure. They sell to class B (ISPs) that include eight companies that, in turn, sell to class C (ISPs). Class C is formed of two hundred and twenty companies.

The research population is 189 sales teams charged with Business to Business (B to B) sales in the Internet industry in Egypt. A random sample of 86 teams, representing 46% of the population, is chosen. The team is composed of not less than 3 members, and not more than 7 members with an average of 5 members per sales team.

The questionnaire was translated into Arabic and modified to suit the Egyptian environment and the Internet industry in Egypt. Consequently, the questionnaire was distributed among 11 teams to pretest it. Data was gathered through personal interviews.

The questionnaire was distributed among the randomly selected sample units: 86 sales teams. 74 teams filled in the questionnaires. 66 sales teams completely answered the questionnaires that are usable. The response rate is about 77%. The data collected was revised and analyzed using the SPSS statistical software package.

Measurement Instruments

A measurement instrument consisting of a multi-item scale is used to measure the constructs and related variables under investigation. Three constructs are included in this study: (1) Core competencies, (2) Dynamics (team leadership, team communication, team relations, and teamwork),

and (3) Team productivity. A 5-point Likert scale was used throughout the questionnaire where 5 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree (see appendix).

Core competencies. A multidimensional 7-item measure (21 items) developed by Rosenbaum (2000) is used. Core competencies are consisting of 7 competencies: aligning customer/supplier strategic objectives, listening beyond product needs, understanding the financial impact of decisions, orchestrating organizational resources, consultative problem solving, establishing a vision of a committed customer/supplier relationship, engaging in self-appraisal and continuous learning. Subjects were asked to indicate the degree to which statements precisely describe their beliefs (as a component of their attitudes).

Sales Teams Dynamics. Dynamics were developed by Ingram *et al.* (2004) containing 4 variables (including 39 items): team work, team communication, team leadership, and team relations.

Team productivity. Team productivity was measured through a 9-item scale developed by Ingram *et al.* (2004).

Data Analysis

Data collected was analyzed using various techniques; including factor

analysis, reliability analysis, multiple regression analysis, and correlation analysis. To test the proposed model, the study uses various statistical tests to examine the relationships between the variables observed. These statistical tests include the *F* test and *T* test.

The scale validity was examined. The face validity of the scale was administered especially after translating the scale from English to Arabic. A reverse translation test from Arabic to English again was done by some colleagues.

In order to further assess the adequacy of the measurement model, Fornell and Larcker (1981) advocate the use of composite reliability and estimated variance extracted statistics. Composite reliability assesses the internal consistency of a measure and is analogous to coefficient alpha. The variance extracted estimate measures the variability due to the construct in relation to random measurement error. Table 1 provides estimates for composite reliabilities and variance extracted, as well as standardized factor loadings and reliabilities for the model. All items loaded highly on their intended factor, and the scales displayed high reliability and variance extracted.

Discriminator validity of each construct was assessed in several ways.

First, all constructs exhibit discriminator validity because each correlation is less than one by an amount greater than twice its respective standard error (Bagozzi and Warshaw 1990). Second, an examination of the theta matrix confirmed that no item loaded higher on another construct than on its associated construct. Discriminate validity of each construct was then assessed by calculating the shared variance between all possible pairs of constructs and demonstrating that they were lower than the average variance extracted for the individual constructs. All possible pairs of independent measures passed Fornell and Larcker's (1981) test, which indicates discriminated validity among the measures.

The Categorical or nominal variables were coded. As a result, gender was coded 0 for male and 1 for female. Position was coded 0 for salesman, 1 for senior salesman. Educational background was coded 0 for higher/technical school and a 2-year college degree, 1 for bachelor degree, and 2 for professional or higher diploma. Age was coded 0 for 20-29 years old, 1 for 30-39, and 2 for 40-49. Total years of experience in sales were coded 0 for 5 years or less, 1 for 6-10 years, 2 for 11-15 years, 3 for 15 years or more. The respondents profile is shown in table 2.

Table 1
The Output of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Original variables	Standardized loading	Reliability	Variance extracted
Core Competencies:	-	.96	.78
Aligning	.90	.74	
Listening	.85	.72	
Understanding	.87	.76	
Orchestrating	.91	.81	
Consultative	.86	.83	
Establishing	.89	.81	
Engaging	.90	.85	
Group Dynamics:	-	.93	.79
Teamwork	.92	.79	
Team communication	.90	.76	
Team leadership	.92	.72	
Team relations	.85	.71	
Team Productivity:	-	.94	.72
Quality of work	.88	.70	
Creative ideas	.85	.77	
Industrious	.83	.76	
Meeting deadlines	.90	.72	
High priority projects	.89	.75	
Perseverance	.90	.74	
Plans and organizes effectively	.89	.73	
Accurate work	.87	.71	
Stays within budget	.82	.70	

Table 2
Respondents' Profile

Characteristics	No	%
Gender		
Male	195	59%
Female	135	41%
Position		
Salesman	172	52%
Senior Salesman	158	48%
Educational Background		
Higher/Technical school or a 2-year College	33	10%
Bachelor	231	70%
Professional/Higher Diploma	66	20%
Age		
20-29	239	72%
30-39	89	27%
40-49	3	1%
Years of experience in sales		
5 yrs or less	152	46%
6-10 yrs	76	23%
11-15 yrs	79	24%
More than 15 yrs	23	7%

Results

Table 3 shows the correlation between scaled variables: independent and dependent variables under investigation.

Table 4 shows the results of testing the relationship between sales teams core competencies and dynamics to team productivity.

Table 4 shows that the overall model is proven significant when the

independent variables: the core competencies and dynamics were entered into the regression equation. The results prove support for the relationship in hypothesis 1 (Overall model: $F = 31.771$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.001$; $R = .756$, $R^2 = .572$, adjusted $R^2 = .554$). R-Squared measures the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that is explained by changes in all of the explanatory variables. In the full model, the relation-

Table 3
The Intercorrelation between scaled variables

Variables	Com- peten	align- ing	Liste- min.	Under- sta.	Or- chestr.	Con- sulta.	Estab- lish.	enga- ging	dynam- ics	Team- work	T- Team- muni	T- Tea- ders.	TRela- tions	Tpro- duct	Quality	Cre- ative	Indus- trial	Dead- line	HPrio- rity	Per- seve.	Pla- n&Org.	Accur- acy	WBud- get	
Competenc:	1																							
aligning	.572**	1																						
Listemin.	.668**	.192	1																					
Understia.	.643**	.423**	.356**	1																				
Orchestr.	.622**	.198*	.185	.292**	1																			
Consulta.	.697**	.258**	.416**	.292**	.447**	1																		
Establish.	.729**	.418**	.346**	.429**	.330**	.389**	1																	
engaging	.790**	.424**	.575**	.360**	.340**	.440**	.582**	1																
dynamics	.554**	.320**	.416**	.391**	.227*	.246*	.521**	.519**	1															
teamwork	.478**	.172	.410**	.320**	.191	.277**	.462**	.414**	.881**	1														
tcommuni	.510**	.342**	.358**	.429**	.189	.234*	.492**	.415**	.863**	.700**	1													
tleaders	.467**	.365**	.223	.313	.253	.096	.480**	.520**	.845**	.713**	.665**	1												
tRelatio.	.432**	.322**	.350*	.344**	.240*	.401**	.450**	.492**	.801**	.702**	.616**	.342**	1											
tproduct	.483**	.300**	.304**	.255*	.330**	.233*	.411**	.442**	.760**	.649**	.654**	.695**	.617**	1										
Quality	.527**	.162	.162	.211*	.824**	.474**	.272*	.260**	.270**	.233*	.247**	.281**	.305**	.326**	1									
Creative	.444**	.209*	.066	.197*	.820**	.291**	.190	.219*	.114	.105	.058	.145	.587**	.218*	.546**	1								
Industrio.	.482**	.251*	.169	.286**	.298**	.659**	.214*	.410**	.183	.185	.160	.159	.722**	.202*	.375**	.143	1							
Deadlin.	.621**	.253*	.306**	.286**	.361**	.657**	.499**	.551**	.238*	.160	.196	.237*	.629**	.178	.377**	.205*	.464**	1						
HPriority	.373**	.078	.338**	.087	.271**	.712**	.140	.065	.111	.210*	.134	-.106	.656**	.120	.255*	.229*	.102	.067	1					
Perseve	.507**	.279**	.251*	.312**	.302**	.412**	.675**	.188	.226*	.237*	.252*	.153	.544**	.176	.292**	.154	.223*	.229*	.352**	1				
Plan&Org.	.563**	.358**	.221*	.412**	.291**	.165	.808**	.459**	.493**	.436**	.421**	.491**	.897**	.420**	.156	.253*	.098	.307**	-.009	.399**	1			
Accurac.	.552**	.289**	.303**	.230*	.157	.330**	.734**	.594**	.402**	.330**	.397**	.373**	.677**	.286**	.186	.016	.177	.549**	.037	.238*	.339**	1		
WBudget	.490**	.346**	.225*	.178	.230*	.246*	.475**	.640**	.375**	.360**	.252*	.423**	.522**	.285**	.186	.143	.327**	.348**	-.051	.157	.372**	.484**	1	

** Significant at .001

* Significant at .05

Table 4
The Results of ANOVA^a

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1585.432	4	396.358	31.771	.000 ^a
	Residual	1185.158	95	12.475		
	Total	2770.590	99			

a. Predictors: (Constant), competencies, team communication, teamwork, and team leadership, and team relations

b. Dependent Variable: team productivity

ship between the core competencies and dynamics of sales teams and sales teams' productivity is supported. Therefore, H1 is supported. The global test assures that the independent variables have the ability to explain the variation in the dependent variable (Lind et al., 2006). Thus, there is enough evidence that both the sales teams core competencies and dynamics are significantly related to sales teams' productivity.

Table 5 shows the results of testing the relationship between the sales teams core competencies and team productivity: the output of Multiple Regression Analysis.

As hypothesized, sales teams core competencies have a significant relationship to team productivity ($F = 4.926$, $DF = 7$, $P < 0.001$).

The regression method is used to test the relationship between sales teams core competencies and sales teams' productivity: work quality, providing creative ideas, work accuracy, meeting deadlines, perseverance, plan-

ning and organizing work effectively, working within a budget, setting high priorities, being industrious and working at a good pace. Table 5 shows that there is a significant relationship between core competency 4: orchestrating organizational resources, core competency 6: establishing a vision of a committed customer/supplier relationship by identifying value-adding products processes, and services, core competency 7: engaging in self appraisal and continuous learning, and team productivity at .001 significance level. Competency 1: aligning customer/supplier strategic objectives, competency 2: listening to customer needs, and competency 5: consultative problem solving proved a significant relationship to sales team productivity at .05 significance level. Thus, H2 is supported as there is sufficient evidence that the 7 core competencies have a significant relationship to sales teams' productivity.

Table 6 shows the examination of the relationship between the sales teams' dynamics and productivity.

Table 5
The Relationship Between Core Competencies and Team Productivity:
The Output of Multiple Regression Analysis*

Model*	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	10.662	5.684		1.876	.064
Aligning	.465	.477	.103	.974	.030
Listening	.328	.355	.107	.924	.035
Understanding	.255	.430	.014	.129	.098
Orchestrating	.587	.300	.202	1.957	.001
Consultative	.300	.386	.086	.777	.050
Establishing	.668	.423	.185	1.580	.001
Engaging	.696	.453	.203	1.536	.001

*. Dependent Variable: Team productivity.

Table 6
The Relationship between sales teams Dynamics and Team Productivity:
The Output of Multiple Regression Analysis

Model*	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.661	3.540		.187	.852
Tcommunicat.	.242	.113	.214	2.131	.001
TRelations	.180	.120	.201	1.914	.001
Teamwork	.149	.115	.138	1.302	.001
Tleadership	.403	.102	.392	3.937	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Team Productivity.

The multiple regression method is used to test the relationship between the sales teams dynamics: teamwork, team communication, team relations, team leadership, and sales teams' pro-

ductivity. Table 6 shows that teamwork, team leadership, team relations and team communication demonstrate strong relationship to sales teams' productivity at .001 significance level.

It can be concluded that there is sufficient evidence that teamwork, team communication, team relations and team leadership are significant predictors and potential explanatory variables of sales teams' productivity. Therefore, H3 is supported.

Conclusion

This research proposes a model that incorporates the sales team's core competencies and dynamics, and sales teams' productivity. Then, it examined the relationship between the sales team's core competencies and dynamics and sales teams' productivity. The reliability analysis proved that the model is reliable at 99% confidence level. The correlation analysis proved a positive and significant correlation between independent and dependent variables.

The correlation analysis reveals:

(a) A high positive correlation between sales teams' core competencies and team productivity: quality of work, meeting deadlines, perseverance, planning and organizing work effectively, and accuracy of work. *Competency 1:* Aligning customer/supplier strategic objectives is positively related to providing creative ideas, industriousness, meeting deadlines, perseverance, work accuracy, and working within a budget. *Competency 2:* Listening beyond the product

needs is positively related to meeting deadlines, working on high priorities, perseverance, planning and organizing effectively, accuracy, and work within budget. *Competency 3:* Understanding the financial impact of decisions on the customer's organization and on the sales team's organization, is correlated to the quality of work, creative ideas, industrious work at good pace, meeting deadlines, perseverance, planning and organizing, and accuracy of work. *Competency 4:* Orchestrating organizational resources, is positively highly correlated to work quality, and creative ideas, and positively correlated to being industrious, meeting deadlines, determining high priorities, perseverance, planning and organizing effectively, and work within budget. *Competency 5:* Consultative problem solving is highly and positively correlated to being industrious, meeting deadlines, setting high priorities, and positively correlated to quality of work, creative ideas, perseverance, accuracy of work and working within a budget. *Competency 6:* Establishing a vision of a committed customer/supplier relationship is highly positively correlated to planning and organizing work effectively, work accuracy, perseverance, and positively related to meeting deadlines, working within a budget and work quality. *Competency 7:* Engaging in

self-appraisal and continuous learning and is highly and positively correlated to working within a budget, work accuracy, meeting deadlines, and positively correlated to planning and organizing work effectively, being industrious, work quality, and coming out with creative ideas. (b) Positive correlation between sales teams dynamics and team productivity: work quality, meeting deadlines, perseverance, planning and organizing work effectively, work accuracy and working within a budget. Team leadership is positively correlated to work quality, meeting deadlines, planning and organizing work effectively, work accuracy, and working within a budget. Team communication is positively correlated to work quality, perseverance, effective work planning and organizing, work accuracy, and work within budget. Teamwork is positively correlated to the work quality, setting high priorities, perseverance, effective work planning and organizing and work accuracy. Team relations are positively correlated to work planning and organizing, work quality, and meeting deadlines.

In the full model, the relationship between the sales team core competencies, focusing on cognitive intelligence ability (Goyal & Akhilesh, 2007), and dynamics and sales teams' productivity is supported.

There is enough evidence that the sales teams' core competencies and dynamics are significantly related to sales teams' productivity. Thus, sales team's core competencies and sales teams' dynamics are capable of effectively estimating sales teams' productivity.

Therefore, the selection of the sales team members and formation of sales teams' in the internet organizations in Egypt should focus on examining those seven competencies because there is sufficient evidence that they have a significant relationship to sales teams' productivity.

In addition, it can be concluded that there is sufficient evidence that teamwork, team communication, team relations and team leadership are significant predictors and potential explanatory variables of sales teams' productivity at 0.01 confidence level.

Concerning the research limitations, this research examines the relationship between sales teams' sales core competencies and dynamics, and sales teams' productivity in the internet industry in Egypt that serves about 28% of the total number of the Middle East internet service subscribers (www.zawya.com).

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, some useful recommendations can be suggested. Business organizations that depend on sales teams should professionally select their sales force. There is a compelling need for a sales force that possesses most up-to-date knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies which make them capable of achieving continuous revenues and profit.

Improving sales teams' productivity in terms of work quality, providing creative ideas, work accuracy, meeting deadlines, perseverance, planning and organizing work effectively, working within budget, setting high priorities, being industrious and working at a good pace necessitates effective recruitment, selection, training, career development and performance appraisal. In recruiting and selecting new salespeople, managers need practical means in the form of tests and interviews, etc. They need to examine the degree to which the job candidates acquire the sales core competencies and can act like mini CEO. Selection tests should also examine the teamwork, team communication, team relations and leadership skills (in case of actual or potential leadership position) for selecting competent new members to join sales teams.

For continuously improving team productivity and performance, it is recommended that the selected sales team leaders and sales supervisors must acquire the ability to achieve effective group dynamics. Effective group dynamics can be achieved through assuring teamwork values, spirit, skills, and abilities such as adaptability, shared situational awareness, coordination, communication, group decision making, effective team management, effective interpersonal relations, and effective performance monitoring and feedback. Brainstorming sessions between team leaders and team members, and among team members themselves, are useful in a variety of situations.

Maintaining and developing sales team productivity requires continuous tailor made training programs as a result of an effective training needs assessment of the sales teams and based on job description and performance appraisal reports (preferably 360 degree feedback). Sales managers can also recommend developing certain competencies essential for 21st Century selling through coaching or another performance improvement plan. Sales team members competencies must be developed to be able to play multiple roles such as a strategist, consultant, manager, analyst and administrator to achieve world class selling.

Areas for Future Research

The following are some suggestions for future research:

- More variables could be added to the independent variables such as measuring the sales team leadership styles models (Ingram et al., 2002) and measuring the 5 big personality traits (Bass, 1990), and the relationship to dependent variables such as the sales team effectiveness can be tested in the same industry.
- The relationship between the sales core competencies and dynamics, and the sales teams' productivity can be studied in other industry (ies), sectors, and/ or fields.
- More sub-variables can be added to the actual variables, for example more teamwork dimensions can be added to measure teamwork (Canon-Bowers et al., 1995).
- A comparative research can be made between the sales' core com-

petencies required for achieving effective sales team productivity, for the production sector and those required for the service sector or in two different industries in the production or the service sectors.

- The effects of more competencies such as the 10 fundamental competencies introduced by Lambert et al. (2009) on sales performance can be tested separately or be added to the present competencies.
- Emerging models of sales leadership and extensive sales supervision research indicate that emerging leadership models-such as leader-member exchange (LMX), transformational leadership, and behavioral self-management (BSM), and combinations of the three models-are worthy of further investigation.

APPENDIX

The Questionnaire

Dear sales team,

Kindly indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements concerning your sales team core competencies, your sales team group dynamics, and team productivity using the following scale where 5 means strongly agree, 4 means agree, 3 means neutral, 2 means disagree, and 1 means strongly disagree.

Sales Core Competencies:	5	4	3	2	1
A. Aligning customer/ supplier strategic objectives:					
1. We gather information to understand customer's business strategies and view of market opportunities.					
2. We stay up-to-date with new developments and innovations in customer's markets.					
3. We keep current with emerging trends and initiatives of customer's competitors.					
B. Listening beyond product needs:					
1. We keep the customer regularly updated with information and changes that might be important.					
2. We suggest ways we can bring added value to our customers.					
3. We help customers think differently about their future needs.					
C. Understanding the financial impact of decisions:					
1. We look actively for ways to contribute to the customer's.					
2. We search actively for more cost-effective ways to serve customers.					
3. We focus on the financial consequences of approaches to meeting customer needs.					
D. Orchestrating organizational resources:					
1. We communicate customer needs, suggestions, and concerns to appropriate resources in our organization.					
2. We work cooperatively with people in other parts of the customer organization who can be useful sources of ongoing information, resources, and support.					
3. We ensure that our product sales, and service units work together to deliver value.					

E. Consultative problem solving:

1. We anticipate possible problems and invite discussion about how they can be overcome.
2. We determine the cause of the problem and identify constraints before recommending a solution.
3. We propose innovative solutions that go beyond the immediate application of the product or service.

F. Establish a vision of a customer/ supplier relationship:

1. We create a relationship that supports the goals and values of both organizations.
2. We develop relationships that recognize the needs of all contributing functions in both organizations.
3. We communicate objectives for the relationships that are achievable and challenge the creativity of both organizations.

G. Engaging in self appraisal and continuous learning:

1. We demonstrate an understanding of what is working, what is not working, and how I can do things differently.
2. We stay up-in my field of expertise.
3. We ask for and welcome feedback to assess my performance and the degree to which I am.

II. Group Dynamics:	5	4	3	2	1
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A. Teamwork:

1. Our sales team is competitive/wants to win.
 2. Our sales team takes reasonable risk.
 3. Our sales team has confidence in team members' abilities.
 4. Our sales team places success before individual recognition.
 5. Our sales team contributes "extra effort" to team success/effort.
 6. Our sales team implements or supports all team decisions.
 7. Our sales team shares "credit" with other team members.
 8. Our sales team members work well with each other.
 9. Our sales team members have personal "chemistry" with each other.
 10. Our sales team is resilient; bounces back and regains momentum after setback.
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B. Team leadership:

1. Our sales team leader is assertive and persuasive.
2. Our sales team leader has trust and respect of team members.
3. Our sales team leader sets good examples, he is a role model.
4. Our sales team leader is consistent in attitude, action, and behavior.
5. Our sales team leader provides recognition and encouragement to others.
6. Our sales team leader volunteers take initiative on assignments.
7. Our sales team leader makes effective decisions/uses good judgment.
8. Our sales team leader has high, positive expectations of self and team members.
9. Our sales team leader is firm but fair.

C. Team Communication:

1. Our sales team members communicate clearly and specifically.
2. Our sales team members allow sufficient time for communication.
3. Our sales team members listen effectively.
4. Our sales team members keep others informed and provide feedback.
5. Our sales team members are concise and to the point.
6. Our sales team members organize written and verbal communication.
7. Our sales team members initiate discussion on important matters.
8. Our sales team members are open minded and receptive to others' ideas.
9. Our sales team members generate or confirm important communication in writing.
10. Our sales team members respond promptly to request for information.

D. Team Relations:

1. Our sales team members are sensitive to the needs of each others.
 2. Our sales team members are supportive and concerned.
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3. Our sales team members keep commitments.
 4. Our sales team members have positive attitudes.
 5. Our sales team members are pleasant, courteous, and tactful.
 6. Our sales team members maintain control and have high threshold of frustration.
 7. Our sales team members are able to level with others.
 8. Our sales team members cooperate with each other.
 9. Our sales team members are flexible in approach and relationships.
 10. Our sales team members have patience and accept each other's shortcomings.

III. Team Productivity:

1. Our sales team produces quality of work.
 2. Our sales team provides creative ideas and proposals.
 3. Our sales team is industrious and works at good pace.
 4. Our sales team meets targets and deadlines.
 5. Our sales team focuses on high priority projects.
 6. Our sales team has discipline and perseverance.
 7. Our sales team plans and organizes work effectively.
 8. Our sales team produces accurate work.
 9. Our sales team stays within budget (Resources and /or parameters).
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الملخص

اختبار العلاقة بين جدارات وديناميكية فرق العمل في المبيعات وإنتاجية الفريق

نرمين مجدي عطية

الأكاديمية الحديثة لعلوم الكمبيوتر وتكنولوجيا الإدارة

إن الاعتماد على فرق المبيعات التي تتميز بجدارات عالية وعالمية، وتعمل بديناميكية عالية، وتحقق إنتاجية عالية يعد في ازدياد مستمر في منظمات الأعمال. ولتحقيق هذه الإنتاجية العالية هناك حاجة إلى اختيار عناصر متميزة، وكفاء، وفعالة وتدريبها وتمكينها من أجل زيادة المبيعات وتحقيق الربحية العالية، ومن ثم تحقق نجاح المنظمة. هذه الدراسة استكشافية، فهي تختبر الفرض الرئيس الذي ينص على أن هناك علاقة بين جدارات (نقاط التميز) وديناميكية و فرق العمل في المبيعات وإنتاجية الفريق. لذلك تم اختيار عينة عشوائية تمثل ٤٦٪ من مجتمع الدراسة: فرق المبيعات المسؤولة عن البيع للمؤسسات (B to B) في شركات خدمات الإنترنت في مصر. وقد توصل البحث إلى أن إنتاجية فرق المبيعات يمكن أن تزيد من حيث جودة العمل، الإصرار والعزيمة على الإنجاز، الالتزام بمواعيد التسليم، والالتزام والإنجاز حسب الموازنة المخططة، التخطيط والتنظيم للعمل بفاعلية، تقديم أفكار مبتكرة ومقترحات وعروض، الإنجاز السريع، والعمل بدقة إذا تم التركيز على اختيار عناصر لفرق العمل تتميز بسبع جدارات (نقاط تميز): الاهتمام بالأهداف الإستراتيجية للعميل والمؤسسة معاً، التناغم بين موارد المنظمة، التركيز على تقييم الذات والتعليم المستمر، الاستماع لما هو أبعد من احتياجات العميل من المنتج، تفهم تأثير القرارات المالية على المؤسسة ومؤسسة العميل معاً، اتباع الأسلوب التشاوري لحل المشكلات لإبتكار أفكار جديدة، ترسيخ رؤية واضحة وطويلة الأجل لعلاقة العميل والمؤسسة معاً؛ تعمل من خلال ديناميكية (تحرك) فرق المبيعات من خلال: قيادة الفريق، علاقات الفريق، العمل الجماعي، واتصالات الفريق.

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