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Co-Value Based Selling as a Bridge Between Social Media Use and Sales Performance

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Abstract:

Despite widespread use of social media in marketing, research on its impact on sales performance is limited and many firms lack guidance on using it effectively. This study examines how social media usage affects sales performance through co-value based selling in SMEs in the food and beverage sector.

A quantitative survey of 150 food and beverage SMEs was conducted using a task technology fit approach to examine how social media usage affects sales performance through co-value based selling. The study addresses a gap in literature on linking social media use to sales performance.

The results show that social media usage has a positive effect on co-value based selling, and co-value based selling in turn has a positive effect on sales performance.

The study is limited to 150 food and beverage SMEs, so results may not apply to other sectors, Still, it suggests that using social media alongside co-value based selling can help improve sales performance.

Managers should provide training and support for social media use and encourage co-value based selling, as aligning these tools with sales tasks helps improve customer value and boots sales performance.

It fills a research gap by showing how co-value based selling mediates the effect of social media usage on sales performance in foof dan beverage SMEs

Keywords: *Social Media Usage, Co-Value Based Selling, Sales Performance, SMEs Food and beverage industry*

INTRODUCTION

Social media is gradually changing the way companies market themselves, and the development of these digital tools is causing a paradigm shift in the way companies to do business, communicate, and sell. The use of social media, search engine marketing, and web analytics is making business-to-business (B2B) international sales transactions redefined. Today's sales force finds it easy to target profitable international business opportunities, but can also easily manage customer relationships when they have direct online access to large volumes of data and have accurate knowledge of customer preferences. Companies that adopt digital media can reduce service costs by 40-60% and can increase growth five times greater than their counterparts, besides that geographical barriers are also reduced and allow companies to do global business more easily, however in practice the use of digital media social status remains low among salespeople (Bill et al., 2020).

Social media is a technology used to increase the social interaction of sales professionals to produce content (such as blogs, microblogs, or wikis). In addition, social media can also develop networks, such as social networks and online communities (Agnihotri et al., 2012). Meanwhile Tiwary et al., (2021) explained that social media provides an opportunity for businesses to create shared value for themselves and their stakeholders. Previous studies have explained that salespeople use social media to assist them in marketing branded products and drive positive sales results (Agnihotri et al., 2016; Guenzi and Nijssen, 2020; Bowen et al., 2021).

Previous studies have shown how social media, which is a digital tool, is central to marketing and sales and functions in various business contexts (Lamberton and Stephen, 2016). In addition, more and more salespeople are using social media in their work (Itani, Agnihotri, and Dingus, 2017). Ogily One Global Survey found that almost half of buyers saw an increased role of social media in the buying process (Featherstonebaugh, 2010). However, only 9% of salespeople focus on selling using social media. Furthermore, Muller et al. (2018) explained that more and more salespeople are using social media to engage with customer prospects and create value, besides that companies are also implementing both digital and traditional sales communication tools.

Social media technology has been accepted as part of the marketing strategy and operating culture in various companies. For example, database search, it shows that marketers are using social media as part of their strategy package. Currently, Twitter and Facebook are social media tools that are experiencing growth and are becoming the main strategy for many marketers (Schultz et al., 2012). Furthermore Schultz et al. (2012), stated that social media has great potential for companies to connect with their clients so as to increase revenue, reduce costs, and increase efficiency. Regardless of market structure, the use of social media to reach B2B clients is a relatively new and largely under-researched phenomenon. The power of social media is expected to influence marketing and sales.

In a business environment that offers products and services, salespeople have the opportunity to provide unique advantages through social media in the B2B market. For example, blogs can be used by salespeople to leverage industry knowledge and influence sales and Twitter can be used to seek new

business opportunities by building professional relationships (Hansen, 2012). Traditional marketing media offer mass media to interact with customers. Meanwhile, social media offers one-on-one methods to meet and interact with prospects and customers (Safko, 2011). Interactions with customers that salespeople perform can not only build better relationships and improve performance but allow salespeople to better mobilize resources outside the company. B2B companies are currently experiencing continuous growth in the use of social media (Jackson, 2018), this is because the costs incurred for using social media are relatively low, can support salesperson activities, and can increase buyers' use of social media during their buying journey (Bill, Feurer, and Klarmann, 2020). Previous B2B studies have extensively explored social media, where the use of social media is carried out for marketing activities, sales processes, and marketing strategies (Lacka and Chong, 2016; Keegan and Rowley, 2017). However, the influence of certain social media platforms on B2B companies is still under-researched (Salo, 2017; Leek, Houghton, and Canning, 2019) and the effective use of LinkedIn or similar media platforms requires further investigation.

The use of social media in the sales function becomes important if its use can be linked to sales results. Onyemah et al. (2010), stated that the use of technology in sales has a positive effect on sales performance, and sales studies from the U.S., U.K., Brazil, and China found that social media is an integral part of sales success (Fetherstonhaugh, 2010). In a business-to-business (B2B) context, only a few empirical studies have successfully implemented and utilized social media (Moore, Hopkins, & Raymond, 2013). Although the evolution of social media has significantly increased its impact on the marketing environment, research examining how social media relates to critical sales areas is still lacking. Meanwhile, de Vries, Gensler, and Leeflang (2017) explained that the use of social media in marketing and sales in previous studies focused more on the business to consumer (B2C) market. It is this research gap that this study will fill.

This research investigates how social media is used by salespeople in completing their tasks, and focuses on interactions that will facilitate the use of resources in value creation. by testing two research questions, namely the first, is the extent to which the focus of salespeople in using social media when associated with sales performance and the second is the extent to which salespeople use social media is associated with sales performance through co-value based selling.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theory of task-technology fit (TTF) by Goodhue & Thompson (1995) defines the extent to which technology functions in accordance with the needs of tasks and individual abilities, where there is a match between the needs of tasks, individual abilities, and technology function. The priority in TTF theory is the interaction between tasks, technology and individuals, where a variety of definite/routine tasks requires a variety of definite technological functions. Achievements obtained from individual performance are a series of individual tasks that are supported by existing information technology, which have an impact on the effectiveness of task completion and help improve performance and make users more productive and creative. Meanwhile the TTF theory provides a means to measure the effectiveness of technology in a system by assessing the relationship between technologies. Furthermore, Goodhue et al. (2000) explained that technology-supported tasks. In the

TTF theory, the technology used by individuals to perform a particular task or set of tasks, the premise of the model is that the value or performance of the technology is created by the suitability, task requirements, and characteristics of the technology that enable the user to perform the task. Meanwhile, Ammenwerth et al., (2006) explained that specifically the characteristics of the tasks considered in relation to the technology used to support the tasks are broken down at different levels of detail depending on the complexity of the tasks to be done. In addition, the TTF theory (Goodhue & Thompson, 1995) was used to develop a conceptual model linking social media use and salesperson performance (Terho et al., 2022).

1) Social Media Usage

The use of social media has recently become a necessity for businesses. Even the use of social media in China such as Taobao and Weibo is a special thing and choice for the advertising business, because it allows interaction between individuals who are on a platform, such as product descriptions and customer reviews (3; 32). Social media is used to carry out activities including posting product information, carrying out the purchasing process, conducting customer reviews, and after-sales service (33-35). Recently, more and more companies are using social media to manage relationships with their clients (Houssem, 2013) and 59% of salespeople stated that they use social media in doing their work and that social media platforms are part of their sales strategy and when they achieve agreement to use the LinkedIn platform. In fact, the majority (89%) of these salespeople have good performance (LinkedIn, 2019). So it can be said that social media has good potential for salespeople in carrying out their sales activities.

Social media is a digital community where participants socially and virtually interact with one another by creating and consuming content, ideas, interests, information, etc. As consumers flock online, brands are unwittingly participating in it by generating and distributing content about themselves. So it can be interpreted that social media can help build brand trust and build customer loyalty (Nisar and Whitehead, 2016). In addition, social bonds that are established from online interactions on social media will influence consumer buying behavior, this happens because with the high perceived interactivity of advertisements on social media, advertisements can be entertaining and lead to online product or service purchases (Alalwan, 2018; Yang and Che, 2020).

Social media is a tool or service that uses the internet to facilitate conversation, in the exchange of information between buyers and sellers but it is also a process that facilitates the conversations that exist in social media, highlighting potentially critical relationships with sellers and opportunities to use strategy within sales organizations. Social media has been around for almost a decade, but the increase in communication channels using social media in companies is still in its infancy, although this phenomenon is growing and sales areas in business organizations are relatively slow to adopt social media (Lager, 2009). Meanwhile, Tsai (2009) notes that only a small percentage of salespeople believe that social media can be used to help increase sales.

Although adoption in the sales area has been slow, there is a growing appreciation of the relevance of social media in business-to-business (B2B) selling. This perspective reflects the existence of concept development in selling using social media which shows that the driving force of sales changes from "who the seller knows to what the seller knows about who they know"

(Sexton, 2012). Social media is useful in gathering and sharing valuable customer information. Besides being able to collect customer-generated information, social media can also facilitate two-way communication between customers and companies. Through social media, customers can communicate directly with companies and companies can then respond to customers quickly (Groza, Peterson, et al. 2012).

Traditional business-to-business (B2B) sales literature mostly focuses on the linear sales model where the sales process goes through several different stages, while currently traditional sales are shifting and starting to accommodate more digital sales practices including social media (Age, 2011). ; Rodriguez, Ajjan, & Peterson 2016; Itani et al., 2017; Ancillai et al., 2019). Business-to-business (B2B) salespeople currently utilize social media in several stages of the sales process to perform their tasks, including finding and retaining their customers, even the three main tasks in the B2B sales process are value-oriented prospects, adaptive sales, and Proactive services are also starting to be encouraged to use social media.

Social networking capability is one of the characteristics of social media for organizations (Trusov, Bucklin, and Pauwels 2009). Users (i.e. customers) in the world of social media are connected with other users through their personal networks. Social networks consist of like-minded individuals in at least some capacity, and who are interested in offering similar services and products. Based on the explanation above, the first hypothesis proposed in this study is:

H₁: The better social media used by salespeople, it will further improve salesperson performance

2) Co-Value Based Selling

In the existing literature, producing value is a function that is largely responsible for building and maintaining customer relationships and creating customer value. Therefore, it plays an important role in the value-creation process. Sales are known to provide significant value for customer value creation, one might expect the role of creating value in the sales function to be more clearly conceptualized and fully explained, but also hope that an understanding of value creation in business relationships should impact an understanding of the role of sales in value creation in those relationships.

Value-based selling is a sales approach in which sellers work with customers to develop market offers which are then translated into monetary terms which lead to their contribution to customer profitability (Terho et al., 2012). Value-based selling is centered on an innovative value proposition that proactively offers potential economic use-value for customer businesses (Hinterhuber, 2017). Sellers can drive customer value through three events, namely offers that generate superior customer value, changes in customer processes related to offering implementation, and matching business processes between buyers and sellers (Terho et al., 2017). Value-based selling is built on a business model that utilizes performance-based pricing contracts (Sjodin et al., 2019; Raja et al., 2020).

According to Haas et al. (2012), four aspects in the value creation process are as follows, first jointness, namely value in business relationships that is produced because there are two sets of connected resources, namely joined and interfaced. The second is a balanced initiative, namely the two parts of the relationship with the resources and competence to lead and produce value. The third

is interacted value, namely interaction that is carried out continuously to produce solutions of values that have not been anticipated but can be stabilized by the interaction between the parties involved. The fourth is socio-cognitive construction, namely, value phenomenologically depends on social and cognitive processes in producing and understanding values. Based on the explanation above, the fourth hypothesis proposed in this study is:

H₂: The better social media used by salespeople, the co-value-based selling will increase

3) Sales Performance

Increasing reliance on digital tools such as social media is used to facilitate exchanges in a business-to-business (B2B) environment, making the B2B sales process more complex than ever before (Hartmann et al., 2018; Agnihotri, 2020). This research is more focused on the use of social media by salespeople, where the results of previous research indicate that salespeople who use social media drive positive sales results (Bill et al., 2020; Guenzi & Nijssen, 2020; Bowen et al., 2021), but in practice, the use of social media among salespeople is still low (Bill et al., 2020).

Sales performance is defined as the level of profit gained by comparing several periods. Meanwhile, sales are activities that involve the sale of goods and services which in the end will receive monetary rewards or in other forms that occur from transactions between the seller and the product owner. Sales aim to expand the number of communications through advertising strategies among potential customers and companies through sales promotions, publicity, and public relations which are expected to create new sales channels or create new goods and advertisements, which are expected to increase service levels and customer satisfaction and end on increasing sales.

Previous studies explained that performance is separated into two categories, namely sales relationship performance, which is used to measure salesperson performance (eg growth in average bills, increase in sales productivity, and overall revenue generation). Next, is sales performance based on relational sales performance which focuses on behavior to strengthen the relationship between buyers and sellers (Hunter and Perreault, 2007). So that it can be interpreted that if the relationship sales performance is superior, then it must be able to encourage sales performance to produce superior results. Furthermore, Onyemah et al. (2010), explained that the use of technology in sales has a positive effect on sales performance, and sales studies from the U.S., U.K., Brazil, and China found that social media is an integral part of sales success (Fetherstonhaugh, 2010).

Zhan and Kim (2017) in their research stated that companies that are more active in social media can increase their value even more. For example, activities that can help marketing managers better communicate, the financial benefits/benefits accrued by finance managers from marketing expenditures, and providing marketing budgets as investments and not costs. In addition, companies can also adjust their marketing and advertising strategies using social media because technological investments in social media provide substantial relationship management benefits. Based on the explanation above, the five and six hypotheses proposed in this study are:

H₃: Getting better co-value-based selling, it will further increase sales performance

4) Framework Model

Figure 1 below shows the frame of social media salespeople use on sales performance through co-value-based selling. The researcher illustrates that the theory of task-technology fit can explain the impact of the use of social media on salespeople can form sales based on shared values between salespeople, so as to create a faster process of doing tasks, due to compatibility between tasks and technology, where salespeople can do their job easier and faster with the existence of technology, which in this way will be able to increase sales performance.

This model describes the use of social media in selling activities played by salespeople by establishing a match between tasks and technology that will improve salesperson performance, thereby facilitating and enhancing the selling process based on the value created from close relationships in a business-to-business context. Buss & Begorgis, 2015; Katona & Sarvary, 2014; Singh, Kashyap, Kothandaraman, & Agnihotri, 2012; Swani, Milne, & Brown, 2014). A process based on building compatibility between tasks and technology is expected to be a good process for increasing sales performance.

The empirical research model below was generated from an intense literature review using reference studies, as presented in the following figure:

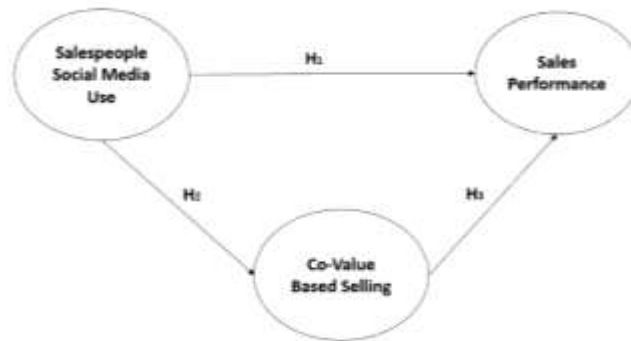


Figure 1. Research Model
Source: Research Result

METHOD

This study uses samples of food and beverage salespeople SME’s in DKI Jakarta, Indonesia, with total sample of 150 respondent. Collecting data and testing hypotheses using a questionnaire. The scale used in this study is a Likert scale with five alternative answers, namely strongly agree, agree, don’t know, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Table 1. Measurement Items

Constructs	Items	Statement Item	Coefficient Correlation
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Salespeople Social Media Use (SSMU)	SSMU1	We use social media to share and find information	Adoption from Fang <i>et al.</i> (2021),
	SSMU2	We use social media for advertising and promotion	Calantone <i>et al.</i> (2019)
	SSMU3	We use social media to develop customer relationships	
Co-Value Based Selling (VBS)	VBS1	We routinely analyze how customers use our products/services	Adoption from Terho <i>et al.</i> (2015),
	VBS2	We try to better understand the needs of our customers	Kienzler & Kindström (2018)
	VBS3	We regularly assess customers' perceptions of the value we offer	
Sales Performance (SPER)	SPER1	How is your ability to interact with customers	Adoption from bowen <i>et al.</i> (2021),
	SPER2	How is your ability to plan your work	Kienzler & Kindström (2018)
	SPER3	How did the sales you achieve compare to the targets set by the company?	

Source: Elaboration of several studies (2026)

Validity testing was carried out on 10 respondents. Respondents' answers were then tabulated to obtain the score of each instrument item and the total score. From the data tabulation, it is then calculated using the Product Moment Correlation. Reliability testing uses 10 respondents. Respondents' answers were then tabulated to obtain score items from each instrument and total score. Data tabulation is then calculated using Cronbach alpha, if Cronbach alpha is greater than the critical value (> 0.06) then all instruments are reliable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main discussion regarding the research results will be presented in two parts, namely descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. Descriptive analysis was performed using index values and inferential analysis was performed using the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approach.

1) Descriptive Analysis

The description of the tendency of respondents' answers to the variables of salespeople's social media use, co-value-based selling, and sales performance is carried out using the index value approach. The following is the result of calculating the index on each variable.

Table 2. Measurement Items

Constructs	Index	Remark
Salespeople Social Media Use (SSMU)	48.7	Moderate
Co-Value Based Selling (VBS)	46.1	Moderate
Sales Performance (SPER)	47.4	Moderate

Referring to the results of calculating the index value, it is known that the tendency of respondents' answers is moderate for each research variable.

2) Inferential Analysis

Inferential analysis was carried out to test the research model and the influence of variables with the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach.

a. Confirmatory Analysis

Confirmatory analysis was carried out to confirm whether the indicators used as measurement tools can reflect the observed variables. The criteria required for confirmatory analysis are Standardized Estimate values > 0.5; CR value > 1.98 (at $\alpha = 5\%$), and significance value < 0.05.

Table 3. Results of Research Model Analysis

	Std Estimate	Estimate	S.E	C.R	P
X1 ← Salespeople Social Media Use	.735	1.000	.128	7,730	***
X2 ← Salespeople Social Media Use	.796	.992	.127	7,424	***
X3 ← Salespeople Social Media Use	.789	.945			
X4 ← Co Value-Based Selling	.885	1.000	.095	8,555	***
X5 ← Co Value-Based Selling	.751	.812	.092	8,966	***
X6 ← Co Value-Based Selling	.778	.822			
X7 ← Sales Performance	.747	1.000	.117	7,719	***
X8 ← Sales Performance	.794	.906	.103	7,839	***
X9 ← Sales Performance	.851	.806			

By paying attention to the criteria mentioned above, it can be concluded that the indicators can reflect the observed variables.

b. SEM Assumptions

1. Normality

The SEM analysis approach requires that the data is normally distributed. The criterion for the normality test is the multivariate CR value in the range of ± 2.58 . Calculation of the research model produces a multivariate CR value of 0.909 so that it can be interpreted that the research data is normally distributed.

2. Multivariate outliers

Multivariate outliers analysis was performed by comparing the calculated Mahalanobis distance value (32.046) which is smaller than the Chi Square table value at (df = 15 and $\alpha = 0.001$) of 37.697. It can be concluded that there are no outliers in the research data.

3. Multicollinearity and singularity

Multicollinearity and singularity are carried out to determine the closeness of the relationship between exogenous variables. However, in this model there is only one exogenous variable so this assumption is not carried out in this study.

4. Residual Analysis

Residual analysis was carried out to observe errors resulting from testing the research model so that it is possible whether or not a modification of the model is needed. The required residual value is ≤ 2.58 . The model calculation results do not produce a residual value that is greater than 2.58 so that it can be concluded that there is no residual problem.

5. Reliability Construct dan Variance Extracted

The requirement for the Reliability Construct value is > 0.5 and Variance Extracted is > 0.5 . Following are the calculation results for Reliability Construct and Variance Extracted.

Table 4. Reliability Construct and Variance Extracted

Variable	Reliability Construct	Variance Extracted
Social Media Use (SMU)	48.7	Moderate
Co-Value Based Selling (VBS)	46.1	Moderate
Sales Performance (SPER)	47.4	Moderate

The results of the calculation of Reliability Construct and Variance Extracted for each variable already meet the required criteria so that it can be concluded that the assumptions of Reliability Construct and Variance Extracted are met.

6. Goodness of Fit Testing

This study develops a research model that explains salespeople's use of social media on sales performance, which will be tested using SEM analysis techniques. The following is the first step taken in testing the research model. The goodness of fit test conducted in this study indicated that the CMIN/DF value was 0.906 (< 2); goodness of fit index is 0.892 (< 0.90); and the foot mean square error of approximation is 0.000 (< 0.080).

Table 5. Results of Goodness of Fit Test

χ^2	P value	CMIN/DF	GFI	RMSEA
< 0.09	< 0.05	0.906	0.892	0.000

GFI: Goodness-of-the fit index, RMSEA: Root mean square error of approximation

Taking into account the calculated Chi-Square value (74.307) $<$ Chi-Square table (104.139) and the probability value (0.715) $>$ 0.05, it can be concluded that the model can explain the estimated population.

7. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is done by analyzing the probability value with criteria < 0.05 .

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis Testing Results	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P Value
Sales Performance \leftarrow Salespeople SM use	0.905	0.774	0.817	***
Co-value Based Selling \leftarrow Salespeople SM use	0.926	0.926	0.848	***
Sales Performance \leftarrow Co-value Based Selling	0.703	0.826	0.638	***

C.R: Construct reliability, S.E: Standard estimate, P value: Significance level

Departing from the results of testing the hypothesis presented in the table above, the following findings are obtained:

- a) Salespeople's social media use is proven to have a significant positive effect on sales performance.
- b) Salespeople's social media use is proven to have a significant positive effect on co-value-based selling.
- c) Co-value-based selling is proven to have a significant positive effect on sales performance

So it can be concluded that testing the three hypotheses on the model above has a significant positive effect

CONCLUSION

This research was conducted to determine the influence of salespeople's use of social media on sales performance at MSME's food & beverage in DKI Jakarta. Taking into account the results of the hypothesis testing presented earlier, it can be concluded that the three hypotheses have a significant influence, meanwhile, when viewed between co-value-based selling on sales performance, it has a CR value of 0.638 and a P value of 0.00. These results indicate that social media use salespeople can increase MSME's food and beverage sales performance through co-value-based selling.

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