
Identifying Ambidexterity Behavior: The Role of Organizational Support and Career Adaptability to Optimizing Salesperson Performance

Pramdigya Sasliandri Priantama¹, Rostiana²

Abstract:

Salesperson are considered as the frontline employees for companies in achieving superiority among other competitors and play an important role in the progress of a company. This study aims to determine whether organizational support and career adaptability plays a greater role in performance, either through direct relationships or through the mediation role of ambidexterity behavior. The high demands of work make salesperson need to display ambidexterity behavior in their work in order to improve performance effectiveness. Ambidexterity behavior refers to efforts to implement two strategic goals simultaneously, namely hunting orientation and farming orientation. When salespeople who have implemented ambidexterity behavior in their work, they aren't only oriented towards sales, but will also position himself as the frontline who is ready to provide the best service to customers. The results of this study explain that career adaptability plays a greater role in performance when mediated by ambidexterity behavior

Keywords: *Organizational Support, Career Adaptability, Ambidexterity Behavior, Performance*

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1. Introduction

Salesperson are considered as frontline employees for companies in achieving superiority over other competitors in a competitive business environment so that it can be said that salesperson play an important role in the progress of a company (Vieira, Perin, & Sampaio, 2018; Zhang and Glynn, 2015). In order to realize it, salesperson are often faced with several factors that become challenges in carrying out sales, including: (a) the role of dynamic global conditions affecting raw material prices and production costs, causing an increase in the selling price of goods, (b) competitive business competition between salesperson in the same company or with competing companies, and (c) lack of technical skills possessed by salesperson. Therefore, the role of salesperson's success in carrying out unit sales will have a significant impact on the success of the company's business (Arndt, Karande, and Harkins, 2012; Dolz, Iborra, and Safón, 2019; Guenzi and Nijssen, 2020).

The phenomenon currently being experienced by PT. X, a company engaged in car sales and services. PT. X management assessed that there was a decrease in sales

¹ Universitas Tarumanagara Jakarta, Indonesia. pramdigdya.707231014@stu.untar.ac.id

² Universitas Tarumanagara Jakarta, Indonesia.

figures which was suspected to be caused by the current sales force performance that unproductive. This is supported by the publication of sales projection data for the first quarter of 2024. Based on these data, 26% of salesperson who did not achieve their sales targets were at risk of termination and demotion. If this decrease in performance cannot be overcome properly, then it is likely that a similar phenomenon will repeated again on the next quarter. So it is necessary to know the factors that are suspected of being able to encourage salesperson in efforts to improve performance.

Van Zyl, Van Oort, Rispens, and Olckers (2021) argue that aspects of work behavior are often associated with individual performance. Individual competence in a field can be formed through the process of applying knowledge to work behavior that is carried out repeatedly in responding to the demands of completing tasks according to job demands. Koopmans et al. (2014) explained that a form of good performance is when an individual has innovative work behavior in completing tasks optimally. In addition, a salesperson is also required to be able to work creatively and actively in carrying out exploration activities for various opportunities in getting new customers, as well as maintaining good relationships with existing customers, therefore ambidexterity behavior needs to be possessed by salesperson as an effort to improve task performance (Sok et al., 2016).

Based on the explanation above, ambidexterity behavior is thought to be closely related to performance. This statement is in accordance with the research results of Kobarg et al., (2017) which explains that ambidexterity behavior predicts employee performance at work, where there is an active, adaptive and creative attitude displayed by employees with high ambidexterity behavior in an effort to complete the tasks given. A similar statement was also put forward by Rosing & Zacher (2017) in their research results which explained that the high and low levels of innovative performance in employees at work are influenced by the level of ambidexterity behavior possessed by employees.

Considering the importance of the role of ambidexterity behavior on salesperson performance, this study attempts to test the role of variables that are suspected to play a large role in shaping performance. These variables are individual and organizational. The individual variables to be studied are represented by career adaptability and the organizational variables are represented by organizational support.

Previous research conducted by Affum-Osei et al., (2021) explained that the more individuals have good career adaptability, the more individuals will display ambidexterity behavior at work, so that employees will tend to display better performance in providing services to their customers. However, the correlation results in previous studies were still at a low level ($\beta = 0.084$). Also previous research on organizational variables conducted by Ahmad et al., (2021) explained that the more support employees receive from the organization, the more they will display ambidexterity behavior at work. The correlation results in previous studies were also at a low level ($\beta = 0.099$).

Researchers argue that the role of ambidexterity behavior as a mediator is thought to be able to increase the role of organizational support and career adaptability on performance. Therefore, researchers hypothesize that organizational support and career adaptability will play a greater role on performance when mediated by ambidexterity behavior.

Based on the explanation above, the conceptual model of the role of organizational support and career adaptability on task performance with ambidexterity behavior as a mediator needs to be empirically re-examined to obtain updated results related to the correlation between these variables.

2. Theoretical Background

Organizational Support

Organizational support in the form of social relations between employees consists of support from supervisors and coworkers, both of them play a role in developing employee abilities at work. Supervisors as mentors play an important role in the success of a division in an organization, where a supervisor is required to be able to educate, help, and guide employees in their team so that they can contribute well according to the expectations and goals that the organization wants to achieve. The good and bad behavior and attitudes taken by the supervisor in guiding his employees will have a significant impact on the performance displayed by the employee (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Meanwhile, support from coworkers will display the perception of individual acceptance in the organizational environment. Coworkers play an important role in building positive relationships and strengthening teamwork in the work environment, so that individuals will feel enthusiastic and motivated in working (Le & Lei., 2019).

Career Adaptability

Career adaptability is an individual's readiness to overcome career transitions in uncertain situations, thus forming adjustments to these changes. There are four dimensions in the theory of career adaptability: (a) Concern, manifested in behavior to what extent individuals are aware of and prepare for their future careers; (b) Control, manifested in the belief in carrying out the tasks and responsibilities they have; (c) Curiosity, manifested in the belief in viewing challenges as opportunities for development; (d) Confidence, manifested in the belief in facing obstacles at work (Savicka, 2013). Career adaptability is classified as a form of psychosocial ability that shows that humans actually have a self-regulatory attitude in dealing with all forms of change that occur in a career, so that through a series of work and technical experiences experienced in the field, it can help individuals create adaptive strategies to achieve better career development results (Savicka and Porfeli, 2012).

Ambidexterity Behavior

The first concept of ambidexterity behavior was introduced by March in 1991 as the concept of ambidexterity in the organizational scope (organizational ambidexterity), where there are two dimensions in ambidexterity behavior: (a) Exploration, which is displaying a flexible attitude in activities to gain broad knowledge to get the latest opportunities and innovations and (b) Exploitation, which is displaying an efficient attitude towards improving and implementing existing resources. For this reason, it is hoped that the organization will be able to implement various different strategies at the same time to improve the company's performance in the business world competition (Mullins & Hall, 2020). The importance of ambidexterity behavior in global business development encourages the development of the ambidexterity concept to the individual stage. Research on ambidexterity behavior is mostly conducted on employees who work in the service sector, for example, salesperson. In the literature in the field of marketing, it is explained that there are two concepts used to explain ambidexterity behavior in individuals, such as the concept of (a) customer and selling orientations (Gabler et al., 2017); and (b) hunting and farming orientations (DeCarlo and Lam, 2016). The concept of ambidexterity behavior used in this study is based on the concept of hunting and farming orientations proposed by DeCarlo and Lam, 2016. This is because the concept is considered appropriate to the level of analysis of salesperson in implementing customer relationship management strategies; (a) Hunting orientation emphasizes the behavior of searching for new customers from the planning stage to obtaining new opportunities. While (b) Farming orientation emphasizes empowering existing customers to create efficiency in sales strategies because long-term relationships have been established.

3. Methodology

This research design uses non-experimental, with a correlational quantitative method approach and nonprobability sampling technique. This research will be conducted on employees who work as salesperson at PT. X, which is a company engaged in the automotive sector. Data will be collected using survey questionnaires, which will be distributed through online surveys via Google Forms. The data analysis technique employed in this study is processed using SPSS 15, and the hypothesis testing analysis used SmartPLS 4.

4. Empirical Findings/Result

Instrument Test

Validity test

Hair et al., (2019) recommends the standard value of the validity test on the outer loading results is greater than 0.70 and on the convergent validity results is greater than 0.50. Based on the results of the validity test, there are 3 items that were eliminated because they had low outer loading results, they are career adaptability items number 1 and 6 ($0.63; 0.65 < 0.70$) and organizational support item number 8 ($0.67 < 0.70$). Based on the convergent validity test all variables are greater than 0.50 ($AVE > 0.05$), so all variables have met the requirements for good convergent validity (See Table 1).

Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha is a very common measure used to assess the reliability or internal consistency of a measurement instrument, with a recommended standard score of 0.70. All research variables show Cronbach's alpha score results greater than 0.70, so the measuring instrument used in this study can be said to be valid and reliable (See Table 1).

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable	Reliability Value	AVE	Information
Organizational Support (X1)	0,945	0,695	Reliable
Career Adaptability (X2)	0,945	0,673	Reliable
Ambidexterity Behavior (Y1)	0,953	0,751	Reliable
Performance (Y2)	0,907	0,730	Reliable

Source: 2024 processed original data

Goodness of Fit

Goodness of fit in this study is based on the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and Normed Fit Index (NFI) indicators. The recommended SRMR value is $< 0,80$, and NFI $> 0,80$ (Hair et al., 2021; Henseler et al., 2016). In this study, the SRMR value is $p = 0,055 < 0,80$, and NFI value is $p = 0,807 > 0,80$, so this research model is said to be good/fit.

Direct Effect Analysis

Sarstedt et al., (2021) explained that the r square value is divided into four groups, namely: (a) Very Weak ($R^2 = 0,10$); (b) Weak ($R^2 = 0,25$); (c) Moderate ($R^2 = 0,50$); and, (d) Very Strong ($R^2 = 0,75$). The results of the r square analysis test in this study have a score ($R^2 = 0,475$), meaning that the ability of career adaptability and organizational support variables to explain performance is 47,5% and is in the weak category.

The direct effect on career adaptability and performance shows a positive relationship ($r = 0,222$) and shows a significant relationship ($\text{sig} < 0,05$, $p = 0,012 < 0,05$). These results explain that the more individuals have good adaptability, the more individuals will tend to show good performance. The direct relationship on organizational support and performance shows a positive relationship ($r = 0,108$) and shows an insignificant relationship ($\text{Sig} < 0,05$, $p = 0,153 > 0,05$).

The researchers also conducted tests to determine the effect size value produced in the direct effect analysis. According to Hair et al., (2021), explained that there are three groups of effect size values, (a) low ($f^2 = 0,02$), (b) moderate ($f^2 = 0,15$) and (c) high ($f^2 = 0,35$). The test results explain that the direct effect analysis displays f^2 value $< 0,15$, so the effect size is in the low category (see Table 2).

Table 2. Direct Effect Analysis

Variable	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	P-Values	f ²	R ²
Organizational Support > Performance	0,108	0,108	0,153	0,012	0,475
Career Adaptability > Performance	0,222	0,220	0,012	0,029	0,475

Hypothesis Testing

The results of the r square test on the indirect effect ($R^2 = 0,702$), meaning that the ability of the career adaptability and organizational support variables to explain performance through the mediation of ambidexterity behavior is 70,2% and the results is in the high category (see Table 3).

Table 3. Indirect Effect Analysis

Variable	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	P-Values	v	R ²
H1. OS > AB > P	0,091	0,093	0,004	0,008	0,702
H2. CA > AB > P	0,284	0,280	0,000	0,080	0,702

Note : OS (Organizational Support); CA (Career Adaptability); AB (Ambidexterity Behavior); P (Performance).

The results of the hypothesis analysis in this study are reviewed from the results of the mediation analysis and effect size. In the SmartPLS 4 program, effect size testing is only available for direct effects between variables and cannot display the formula for testing indirect effect sizes or intervening effect sizes. Based on this, the researcher conducted an effect size test on indirect relationships using the method proposed by Lachowicz et al (2018), namely the upsilon mediation effect size (ν) or upsilon statistics (ν), where the results obtained from this effect size method are considered free from bias, efficient and have consistent results. The calculation method for the upsilon statistic (ν) is obtained from: $\nu = \beta_{2MX} \beta_{2YM.X}$. Where β_{2MX} is the path coefficient of the role of X on M, and $\beta_{2YM.X}$ is the path coefficient of the role of M on Y. There are three categories of Interpretation recommended by Ogbeibu et al (2021): (a) 0.01 (low mediation effect); (b) 0.075 (moderate mediation effect); and (c) 0.175 (high mediation effect).

Hypothesis testing results in this study are using the Bootstrap BCS (Bias-Corrected and Accelerated Bootstrap) technique on SmartPLS 4.

Hypothesis 1 : Organizational support plays a greater role on performance when mediated by ambidexterity behavior.

Based on the results of the analysis of Hypothesis 1, it is known that the indirect effect of organizational support on performance through the mediation of ambidexterity behavior displays a positive relationship ($\beta = 0,091$) and shows significant results ($\text{sig} < 0,05$, $p = 0,004 < 0,05$). Analysis of the effect size of the upsilon statistic (v) on Hypothesis 1, $(0,219)^2 \times (0,416)^2 = 0,008$. The results explain that the mediation role of ambidexterity behavior is classified as a low mediation level ($v = 0,008 < 0,075$). The results of Hypothesis 1 explain that organizational support has a low role on performance, both when through direct effects ($f^2 = 0,012 < 0,15$), and when mediated by ambidexterity behavior. Based on these results, Hypothesis 1 is rejected.

Hypothesis 2 : Career adaptability plays a larger role on performance when mediated by ambidexterity behavior.

Based on the results of the analysis of Hypothesis 2, it is known that the indirect effect of career adaptability on performance through the mediation of ambidexterity behavior displays a positive relationship ($\beta = 0,284$) and shows significant results ($\text{sig} < 0,05$, $p = 0,000 < 0,05$). Analysis of the effect size of the upsilon statistic (v) in Hypothesis 2, $(0,683)^2 \times (0,416)^2 = 0,080$. The results explain that the mediation role of ambidexterity behavior is classified as a moderate mediation level ($v = 0,080 < 0,175$). The results of Hypothesis 2 explain that career adaptability has a greater role on performance when mediated by ambidexterity behavior. Based on these results, Hypothesis 2 is accepted. The explanation of the research model can be seen in Figure 1.

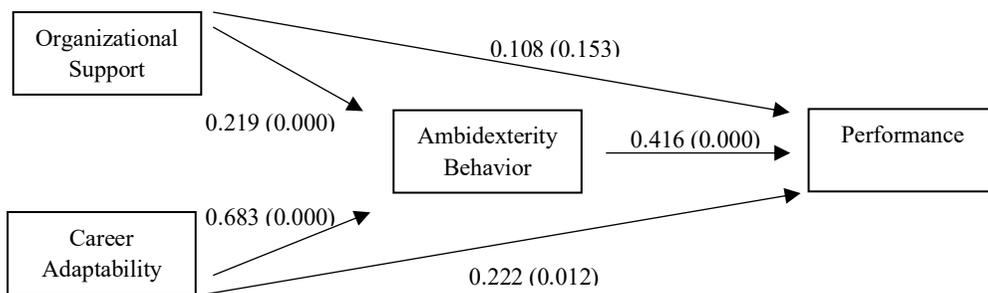


Figure 1. Diagrammatic Path Interpretation

5. Discussion

This study examines the role of organizational support and career adaptability on performance through the mediation of ambidexterity behavior. This study was conducted based on previous research conducted by Affum-Osei et al., (2021) to obtain the latest findings that have not been answered in previous studies. Researchers

formulate organizational support as an external factor, and career adaptability as an internal factor to find out which role influences salesperson performance. In addition, researchers also formulate ambidexterity behavior as a mediator (intervening).

The results of this study explain that career adaptability plays a greater role in performance when mediated by ambidexterity behavior, so that Hypothesis 2 is accepted. These results are in accordance with the concept of career construction theory (CCT) that ambidexterity behavior and performance are the results formed by good career adaptability (Savicka, 2013). Researchers argue that individuals who have good career adaptability will tend to display ambidexterity behavior at work, resulting in an increase in individual performance. The results of this study provide updated results from previous research conducted by Affum-Osei et al., (2021), where the role of career adaptability on performance through mediation of ambidexterity behavior in previous studies was at a low level ($\beta = 0.084$).

6. Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, individual factors play a greater role in performance, both directly and indirectly. Currently, there is still little research available that discusses ambidexterity behavior at the individual level and relates it to explaining employee performance. Therefore, the researcher suggests that further researchers can conduct re-testing by considering other variables that are suspected of forming or increasing the role of ambidexterity behavior on employee performance.

The researcher realizes that this study is far from perfect and still has limited, such as the limited number of participants, as well as the limited literature discussing the role of ambidexterity behavior, both as exogenous, endogenous, mediator, and moderator variables. The researcher hopes that the results of this study can continue to be developed and provide updated results so that they can be useful for the community. The researcher greatly hopes that this study will become a source of literature and can enrich the readers' insights so that it can be used as a basis for further research. The researcher suggests that further researchers conduct similar research longitudinally so that it is hoped that they can get updated results and minimize research bias.

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