DOCTORAL THESIS

UCAM
UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA
DE MURCIA

INTERNATIONAL DOCTORAL SCHOOL

Doctoral Programme in Social Sciences

Sales enablement program's positive and negative impacts on sales performance in SaaS Industry: An empirical investigation based on the job demands-resources model

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THESIS SUPERVISORS' AUTHORISATION
FOR THESIS SUBMISSION

Prof. Dr. Maria D. De-Juan-Vigaray, Prof Dr. María Concepción Parra Meroño and Prof. Dr. Jörg Westphal, as Supervisors[1] of the Doctoral Thesis 'Sales enablement's positive and negative impacts on sales performance in SaaS Industry: An empirical investigation based on the job demands-resources model' by Mr Fabian Lauzi in the Doctorate Programme Social Sciences, **authorise its submission**, given that it meets the required conditions for its defence.

Which I hereby sign in compliance with Spanish Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January, in Murcia, on 27 May 2024

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ABSTRACT

In both the academic and practical worlds, sales performance is an urgent topic. Numerous studies state the massively increased challenges for salespeople which results in only every second salesperson achieving their quota across industries. One industry stands out with particularly tough challenges: the Software-as-a-Services (SaaS) industry. This includes the world's leading software companies, whose solutions affect all our everyday lives. Only every third salesperson is able to hit the quota in the SaaS industry. Against this, sales enablement (SE) is suggested as the ultimate solution to improve sales performance to solve this major challenge, which would be a tremendously theoretical and managerial contribution. Therefore, a SE program (SEP) is described as a set of cross-functional initiatives within one organization to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the sales force. While the impact of SE is becoming increasingly relevant for companies, and the SE market is expected to grow to $13b by 2030, there is only very limited academic literature. There is no comprehension of how a SEP is understood and implemented across functions and hierarchies within one organisation – which seems paradoxical, because SE is celebrated as precisely this overarching initiative. Likewise, there is no concept of a SEP that covers its positive and negative implications, which seems surprising, because this initiative includes many tasks for salespeople that could have an impact on their workload, stress, and motivation. obviously. In addition, there is no concept in theory or practice to make the actual positive and negative implications of a SEP on sales performance measurable - which seems paradoxical, as this is the ultimate raison d'être for SE. Consequently, the **primary objective** of this dissertation is to develop and test a robust, measurable model for the impact of SEP on sales performance in the SaaS industry.

The research **methodology** is structured into three components: First a deductive literature review. Second a theory-based model and hypothesis conceptualization. Third an online survey in the SaaS industry to proof the model (including preliminary test),was analysed with partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM).

Based upon 464 literature sources within this doctoral program, an interview guide and a model were developed. Within the publication of this doctoral program, the **first findings** are generated by 25x 30 minute expert interviews within one SaaS company across SE-related functions and hierarchies. It was clearly proven that everyone considers SEP to be extremely important for sales performance, but there was no common understanding across functions and hierarchies. In addition, no one can measure the impact of SEP. This could lead to inefficiencies. The model to make SEP on SSP measurable was developed based upon the heavily tested Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model. To gain relevant data, the anonymous online survey was made available to 43,564 SaaS salespeople, while 385 fulfilled surveys have been used. The preliminary test of the survey led to minor changes. Subsequently, all constructs and items were confirmed within the comprehensive PLS-SEM. The positive and negative effects of SEP could actually be measured. The impact on SSP could also be measured.

Theoretical and economic implications are important compared to the relevance of the research gap: For the first time, SE was investigated across functions and hierarchies within one organisation to gain a deep understanding. This has already led to a publication in the journal Industrial Marketing Management. For the first time, positive and negative implications of SEP for SSP could be made measurable in a model within the SaaS industry. The model was tested against the world's largest sample of an academic study of salespeople in the SaaS industry, as well as JD-R models for sales research.

Future research should continue to optimize the model across other industries too. Presumably, the model can simply be transferred to other sectors. As there is no such model for a single industry to date, it is immediately highly relevant for all industries that have corresponding sales departments.

Key words: Sales Enablement, Job Demands-Resource Model, Software-as-a-Service, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling

RESUMEN

Tanto en el mundo académico como en la práctica, el rendimiento de las ventas es un tema urgente. Numerosos estudios constatan el aumento masivo de los retos para los vendedores, que hace que sólo uno de cada dos vendedores alcance su cuota, en todos los sectores. Destaca una industria con retos especialmente duros: la industria del software como servicio (SaaS). Aquí se incluyen las principales empresas de software del mundo, cuyas soluciones afectan a toda nuestra vida cotidiana. Sólo uno de cada tres vendedores es capaz de alcanzar la cuota en la industria SaaS. Frente a esto, la capacitación en ventas (SE) se sugiere como la solución definitiva para mejorar el rendimiento de las ventas y resolver así este importante reto, lo que supondría una enorme aportación teórica y de gestión. Por lo tanto, un programa de SE (SE) se describe como un conjunto de iniciativas interfuncionales dentro de una organización para mejorar la eficacia y la eficiencia de la fuerza de ventas. Aunque el impacto del SE es cada vez más relevante para las empresas y se espera que el mercado del SE crezca hasta los 13.000 millones de dólares en 2030, la literatura académica es muy limitada. No se comprende cómo se entiende e implementa una SE a través de las funciones y jerarquías dentro de una organización, lo que parece paradójico, porque la SE se alza precisamente como esta iniciativa global. Asimismo, no existe un concepto de SEP que abarque sus implicaciones posi-tivas y negativas, lo que parece sorprendente, porque esta iniciativa incluye muchas tareas para los vendedores que, obviamente, deberían tener un impacto negativo en su carga de trabajo. Además, no existe ningún concepto en la teoría o en la práctica que haga mensurables las implicaciones positivas y negativas reales de un SEP en el rendimiento de las ventas, lo que parece paradójico, ya que ésta es la razón de ser última del SE. En consecuencia, el **objetivo principal** de esta tesis es desarrollar y probar un modelo sólido y mensurable del impacto del SE sobre el rendimiento de las ventas en el sector del SaaS.

La **metodología** de investigación se estructura en tres componentes: Primero una revisión bibliográfica deductiva. Segundo un modelo basado en la teoría y la conceptualización de hipótesis. Tercero una encuesta en línea en la industria del SaaS para probar el modelo (incluida la prueba preliminar), analizada con el modelo de ecuaciones estructurales por mínimos cuadrados parciales (PLS-SEM).

Basándose en 464 fuentes bibliográficas dentro de este programa de doctorado, se desarrolló una guía de entrevistas y un modelo. Dentro de una publicación de este programa de doctorado, se generan los **primeros hallazgos** mediante entrevistas a expertos de una duración de 25 a 30 minutos, dentro de una empresa SaaS a través de funciones y jerarquías relacionadas con la SE. Se demostró claramente que todo el mundo considera que la SE es extremadamente importante para el rendimiento de las ventas, pero no había un entendimiento común en todas las funciones y jerarquías. Además, nadie puede medir el impacto de la SE. Esto podría dar lugar a ineficacias. El modelo para hacer mensurable la SEP en la SSP se dessarolló a partir del modelo Job Demands-Resources (JD-R), ampliamente probado. Para obtener datos relevantes, la encuesta anónima en línea se puso a disposición de 43.564 vendedores de SaaS, mientras que se han utilizado 385 encuestas cumplimentadas. La prueba preliminar de la encuesta dio lugar a cambios menores. Posteriormente, todos los constructos e ítems se confirmaron dentro del PLS-SEM exhaustivo. Se pudieron medir realmente los efectos positivos y negativos de la SEP. También pudo medirse el impacto sobre la PSE.

Las **implicaciones teóricas y económicas** son importantes en comparación con la de la laguna en la investigación: Por primera vez, se investigó la SE en todas las funciones y jerarquías de una organización para obtener una comprensión profunda. Esto ya ha dado lugar a una publicación en la revista Industrial Marketing Management. Asimismo, por primera vez se pudieron medir las implicaciones, tanto positivas como negativas, de la SE para la SSP en un modelo dentro de la industria del SaaS. El modelo se puso a prueba con la muestra más grande del mundo de un estudio académico de vendedores del sector SaaS, así como con los modelos JD-R de investigación de ventas.

La **investigación futura** deberá seguir optimizando el modelo también en diferentes industrias. Presumiblemente, el modelo puede transferirse de forma sencilla a otros sectores. Dado que hasta la fecha no existe un modelo de este tipo para una sola industria, es de gran relevancia inmediata para todas las industrias que cuenten con sus correspondientes departamentos de ventas.

Palabras clave: Habilitación de ventas, modelo de demandas de trabajo-recursos, software como servicio, modelización de ecuaciones estructurales por mínimos cuadrados parciales.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to sincerely thank my dissertation supervisors Prof. Dr. Maria D. De-Juan-Vigaray, Prof Dr. María Concepción Parra Meroño and Prof. Dr. Jörg Westphal for their unwavering support over the last few years. While I changed jobs during the course of my PhD, we bought a house and had a baby. They were always there for me and stood by my side. I would especially like to thank Prof Dr. Jörg Westphal, as he provided me with excellent guidance and his exclusive international network of the leading researchers in my area of research was invaluable. I would also like to thank Prof Dr. Maria D. De-Juan-Vigaray and Prof Dr. María Concepción Parra Meroño, who provided me with the best possible support and insights from UCAM. I was also able to call them at any time of the day or night and ask for help. I would also like to thank Professor Dra. Mercedes Carmona Martínez and the entire Universidad Católica San Antonio de Murcia (Spain). Your reliable support and immediate help with problems have greatly simplified the administrative part. Of course, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the international office of the FOM University of Applied Sciences in Essen (Germany) for their close cooperation.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my parents and parents-in-law for the fact that we could always rely on them when they took over our little daughter so that I could write my doctoral thesis. I would especially like to thank my mother and my father from the bottom of my heart for always being role models for us three children. All the values they have exemplified for us have carried me through the challenging time of my doctoral thesis along with a very demanding international job and starting a family.

Most of all, I would like to say thank you to my incredible wife, who has always had my back, who has encouraged me to keep going even when it was actually too much and without whom I would never have been able to do it. She is

the most impressive person to me! Last but not least, I would like to thank our little daughter, or rather apologise: ‘that's it now, daddy is coming to play!’

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A

AVE	Average variance extracted

B

B2B	Business to business
B2C	Business to consumer

C

CR	Composite reliability measure
CRM	Customer-relationship-management

D

DC	Dynamic capabilities
DT	Digital transformation

J

JD-R	Job demands-resource

M

MRQ	Main research question

P

PLS-SEM	Partial least squares structural equation modelling

R

RBV	Resource-based view
RQ	Research question

S

SaaS	Software-as-a-Service
SE	Sales Enablement
SEM	Sales Enablement related motivation
SEP	Sales Enablement program

SES	Sales Enablement related stress
SEW	Sales Enablement related workload
SSP	Salesperson's sales performance

I – INTRODUCTION

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1.1 IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The competitiveness of business-to-business (B2B) sales organisations is being challenged by the high complexity and dynamism of today's sales processes (Westphal et al., 2022). Current academic studies confirm the increasing customer requirements while at the same time digital transformation projects are being implemented in sales departments and ultimately there are major challenges in sales across industries (Chaker et al., 2024; Guenzi & Habel, 2020; Hartmann & Lussier, 2020; Pitman et al., 2024; Rajabi et al., 2024; Rangarajan et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2020). The challenges are partly accelerated and partly intensified by the global pandemic within the years 2020 – 2023 (Charoensukmongkol & Pandey, 2023; Guenzi & Nijssen, 2021; Hartmann & Lussier, 2020; Rangarajan et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2020).

"Our clients are often shocked to hear that the average quota attainment for B2B sales organizations is only 47%." (Marrs, p. 1, 2023). This is not a quote from academic literature, it is from a principal analyst at Forrester Research, one of the leading global research and advisory companies for the IT industry (Forrester, n.d.). However, this quote is already highlighting the managerial urgency of the overall topic of today's sales performance. The economic impact for companies is tremendous if the quota achievements are at that low level. The practitioner's quote and its impact are supported by extensive literature across industries (Borg & Young, 2014; CSO Insights, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019a; Ferry, 2021; Hartmann et al., 2018; Paesbrugghe et al., 2018; Prater, 2021; Xactly, 2021).

Across industries, only 53% of salespeople met their quota in 2019, suggesting problems for their organisations in supporting them to do their jobs properly (CSO Insights, 2019a; Efti, 2020). This development has been captured by CSO Insights (2015, 2017, 2018, 2019b) for several years. Another survey of over 2,000 sales managers uncovered that 58% of them are facing voluntary turnovers of their

sellers (Xactly, 2021), while Prater (2021) highlighted in a study that 44% of the sellers reported plans to resign from their jobs in the next two years. In contrast, another study reported that customers do not view their salespeople as a resource that adds value to solving problems (Ferry, 2021). Even 72% of B2B buyers would prefer to purchase without a salesperson (Gartner, 2023).

For practitioners, the issue is very acute because the daily-life of salesperson is getting harder with increased buyer expectations. While new sales-supporting technologies are available which are causing techno-stress, the sales cycle is becoming more complex and longer and a larger number of people are involved in the buying process (Borg & Young, 2014; Christ-Brendemühl & Schaarschmidt, 2020; Guenzi & Nijssen, 2021; Hartmann et al., 2018; Paesbrugghe et al., 2018). These trends result in the circumstance that buyer expectations cannot be met by the sales skills, processes, and structure (Thaichon et al., 2018).

Across all of the previous mentioned studies about sales challenges and performance across industries, there is one industry that stands out for salespeople due to a mix of special challenges, accelerated by very short product life-cycles, abstract products and high competitiveness while the industries' economic relevance and impact to people's daily lives are constantly increasing: The software-as-a-service (SaaS) industry (Buxmann et al., 2008; Capchase, 2023; Cusumano, 2008; Dempsey & Kelliher, 2018; InnoVyne Technologies, 2020; Ojala, 2013; Poyar et al., 2023; Poyar & Kalevar, 2021; Tsai et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2013). SaaS accounts for a large and growing share of global software sales and is understood as an internet and cloud-based subscription model for the licensing and distribution of software (Buxmann et al., 2008; Dempsey & Kelliher, 2018). Global players like Google, Salesforce and Oracle are just some popular vendors. While in other industries around 47% to 53% of sales staff achieve their annual target (CSO Insights, 2019a; Efti, 2020; Marrs, 2023), the situation in the SaaS industry is much more dramatic: In the empirical study conducted for this research, only 28% of 385 salespeople from the SaaS industry achieved their annual target. In this research, the empirical study is described in detail.

Across industries, but especially within the SaaS industry, the assumption arises that current obstacles for sales organisations, and in particular for their salespeople are too big. This is because it seems as if the sales-supporting technologies available to date, such as customer-relationship-management (CRM) systems (Bligh & Turk, 2004; Bohling et al., 2006; Dannenberg & Zupancic, 2008; Zupancic, 2019) or various sales concepts, such as adaptive selling (Spiro & Weitz, 1990; Weitz, 1981; Weitz et al., 1986), SPIN selling (Rackham, 1995), trust-based selling (Green, 2005) and challenger sales (M. Dixon & Adamson, 2013), are no longer sufficient. E.g., the current use of technology like CRM systems in sales is falling short, when 60% of chief-sales-officers are not satisfied with their current sales tech stack and 59% of B2B sellers agree that technology is a hindrance (Gartner, 2023).

At the same time companies increase their spending on technology per salesperson to set up modern sales technology stacks beyond classic CRMs, which enhances usable data across their entire sales force to analyse sales performance (Salesforce, 2020). Point solutions like CRM are more and more embedded in broader technology platforms to empower organisations to stay competitive (Gottlieb et al., 2020; Mullins & Agnihotri, 2022). The centrally aggregated data is used across several applications like sales engagement platforms or marketing automation (J. Singh et al., 2019), while the execution takes place via diverse channels across social media, chats, webinars, etc. (Dwivedi et al., 2021). All of these factors clearly lead to the assumption that sales organizations need to help their salespeople become more productive in their jobs, which should affect their quota attainments positively to boost their sales performance.

It is understandable that the COVID pandemic exacerbated these challenges, e.g. the crucial processes of onboarding, training, and coaching of new hires had to be done virtually, which has created even new challenges for sales organizations (Wiseman et al., 2022). These processes are vital to equip salespeople with the right skills, tools and content to be empowered to generate value for customers, which happened in a surprisingly limited way according to the studies mentioned before.

In contrast to this, sales organizations possess enormous stocks of knowledge that could be used to improve the revenue generating staff (Gartner, 2023; R. M. Peterson et al., 2021; Rangarajan et al., 2020). Until now, there has been a lack of an overarching concept that would enable organizations to objectively coordinate the internal sales support resources and capacities that contribute (in)directly to the sales process – across functions and hierarchies. For example, there is research about the (missing) sales- and marketing alignment (Hughes et al., 2012), the increasingly important role of strategic frontline employees as a central pivot for external and internal sales (Plouffe et al., 2016) or even regarding social networks within sales organizations as a vital role for sales performance (Bolander et al., 2015). All have the aim of being beneficial for sales performance, but the concept of transforming organizational processes into an overarching corporate strategy is still hard to achieve.

Since practitioners have to look for a solution to overcome this problematic state of their customer-facing teams with such low quota attainments, attention for sales enablement (SE) is growing (Rapp & Beeler, 2021). In short, SE intends to align multiple resources within an organisation to optimize sales efforts and to increase sales effectiveness (R. M. Peterson & Dover, 2020). SE contains many components that have been extensively researched for decades, like sales and marketing coordination, optimal training and coaching strategies, technology usage etc. (Bagozzi, 1978; Krohmer et al., 2002; Robinson et al., 1967; Webster & Wind, 1996).

It is obvious that SE can be characterized as a digital transformation with its included technology (Gartner, 2021; Gottlieb et al., 2020; Plangger et al., 2020; Terho et al., 2022). The added value of SE is achieved by the summarized consideration of the aforementioned individual elements in a comprehensive business strategy to optimize sales performance (Rangarajan et al., 2020). Consequently, the business strategy needs to include several functions and hierarchies within one organization. Accordingly, SE is defined as "a set of cross-functional initiatives within an organization aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the sales force" (Lauzi et al., 2023, p. 48). This definition serves as the basis for the entire research.

There is a steady increase in organizations that have a dedicated SE person, department, or initiative. While in 2013 it was still 19.3% of the organizations, in 2019 it was already 61.3% (CSO Insights, 2019a). SE vendor driven studies showcase a clear development. One of the biggest SE vendors, Highspot (2020), reports an increase of 343% of companies being interested in SE between 2015 and 2020. Another managerial source reported an estimated growth of the SE platform market from $1.7b in 2020 to $7.8b in 2028 (Watson, 2021). Another recent source estimates a SE market of $12.78b in 20230 (Grand View Research, 2022) These trends are in line with the findings of Gartner Peer Insights, the leading peer review and ratings platform for enterprise software and enterprise services decision makers (Albro, 2019; Gartner Peer Insights, n.d., 2023).

In summary, the increased complexity of the sales process (Rangarajan et al., 2021) as well as the finding that salespeople frequently do miss their quotas (CSO Insights, 2019a), relates to a burgeoning level of interest from sales professionals in understanding how to effectively leverage and implement SE within an organisation (Lauzi et al., 2023). At the same time commercial vendors of SE solutions suggest strong improvements regarding sales performance, efficiency, scaling of excellence, etc. (Highspot, 2023b; Seismic, 2023a; Showpad, 2023b). It seems as if SE only brings positive aspects with it and massively improves sales performance in a quasi-self-fulfilling way if one looks at the general prevailing view in practice and present academic literature.

1.2 PROBLEM OUTLINE AND OBJECTIVES

Accordingly, the question arises why are there still so many challenges for salespeople and why sales performance is behind expectations so dramatically while companies massively invest in sales enablement programs (SEP).

As stated, the desire of SE is the improvement of the salesperson's sales performance. With all the new SEP procedures, technology, trainings, onboarding, content and more, it seems reasonable that SEP could increase the workload of the salespeople. Therefore, it is astonishing that there is no broad research in the SE

literature at all. In addition, there is no academic literature which covers the desired positive as well as negative aspects of a SEP within an organization. Particularly relevant could be the workload associated with SEP and its potentially very negative impact on the main reason for the increasing global demand for SE: the expected improvement of sales performance. Especially in the SaaS industry, which has it in its DNA to adopt the latest sales technologies very early on, while salespeople are very technology-friendly and have to deal with short product lifecycles, doubts consequently arise about the impact of SEP on the salesperson's workload and sales performance (Capchase, 2023; Cusumano, 2008; Dan, 2007; InnoVyne Technologies, 2020; Jain & Jaiswal, 2015; Zhang et al., 2013).

The approach of SE is coined by commercial providers; e.g., one of the first documentations of SE was done by Santucci (2010) within Forrester Research, which is a technology research service like as Gartner Peer Insights. Since there was not an academic focus on SE, even as this business strategy has been shaping the sales landscape over the past decade, there is a gap between knowledge generation in theory and dissemination among practitioners (Rangarajan et al., 2020). Lately there has been a burgeoning stream of academic research for SE (Bowen et al., 2022; Chaker et al., 2024; Dasser, 2019; Keeling et al., 2020; Lauzi et al., 2023; R. M. Peterson & Dover, 2020, 2021; Plangger et al., 2020; Plank et al., 2018; Rangarajan et al., 2020, 2021; Rapp & Beeler, 2021; J. Singh et al., 2019; Westbrook & Peterson, 2020; Westphal et al., 2022).

This is outstanding since years ago marketing research already highlighted the big need for optimized sales and marketing alignment in organisations to improve performance (Cespedes, 1993; Day, 1994; Guenzi & Troilo, 2006; Homburg et al., 2008; Rouziès et al., 2013; Rouziès & Hulland, 2014)

The present SEP is not only about sales and marketing alignment because it includes efforts across functions and hierarchies to align multiple resources of an organisation (Peterson et al. 2021; Rangarajan et al. 2020). One central pillar of SE within current academic research is the involvement of multiple stakeholders including units who are responsible for recruitment, onboarding, training, coaching,

content creation, technology implementation, maintenance and analytics, as well as strategic tasks (Rapp & Beeler, 2021). One of the leading academics in SE, R. M. Peterson et al. (2021), mapped out cross-functional approaches based upon insights across industries about the evolution of the SE function, while the other global leading SE expert, Rangarajan et al. (2020), described various topics of interest to sales academics by creating a conceptual framework for SE. Outside of the academic world, SE vendors clearly manage expectations by promising a strong increase in several aspects of sales performance and hereby solving the mentioned critical challenges of sales organisations (Highspot, 2023b; Seismic, 2023a; Showpad, 2023b).

So far, academic literature about SE has either researched how SE is perceived generally across industries or several companies (R. M. Peterson et al., 2021) or has been of a more conceptual nature (Rangarajan et al., 2020). However, statistics show clearly that organizations are investing more and more in technology per salesperson and technology beyond CRM is being implemented (Salesforce, 2020, 2022; Watson, 2021).

Therefore the need arises to address all stakeholders within one organisation to achieve a state where the single SE components like organizational learning, content creation, change management, CRM, etc. are in total more than just the sum of them (Mullins & Agnihotri, 2022; R. M. Peterson et al., 2021). As stated earlier, SE is overarching and integrates several organizational perspectives (R. M. Peterson et al., 2021; Rangarajan et al., 2020; Rapp & Beeler, 2021). Accordingly, SEP should include a multi-hierarchical and functional approach.

Lauzi et al. (2023) contribute to closing this gap. It was discovered within an organisation that everyone across functions and hierarchies considers SE to be very relevant, but that there is no common understanding of what SE actually is. Furthermore, no one can actually measure SE.

By combining the current academic research and the perception in practice, SE awakens clear expectations to have a positive impact on the real-life challenges

of salespeople not hitting their quotas, customers who miss value, etc. Consequently, SEP should improve the sales performance of the salespeople as well as their quota attainment and accordingly the revenue organization. Indeed, sales performance itself is a vague term with varying understandings within the academic world (Churchill Jr. et al., 1985; Limbu et al., 2016; Ohiomah et al., 2020; R. Singh & Koshy, 2010; Walker JR. et al., 1977). Therefore, sales performance in the context of SE needs to be specified to be measurable.

If one follows the current academic literature and the view in practice, the summary is simple:

A SEP has a positive impact on the salesperson's sales performance.

If one follows the literature, this effect appears to be a self-fulfilling prophecy, as there is barely any model in the literature that actually proves a positive impact on sales performance. SE is almost exclusively characterised by positive implications. In contrast, the results by Lauzi et al. (2023) show that there is no unified understanding of SE across functions and hierarchies. This could lead to inefficiencies. Especially if the effect of SEP is not measurable at all. The assumption arises that there could be negative implications for SE.

If sales performance is understood as the level of achievement of sales goals and objectives within a specific period of time (Ohiomah et al., 2020) and SE could improve the sales performance of salespeople, organisations have to set up a SEP in the most optimal way. Conversely, SEP can be described as a resource by the organisation for the salespeople. It should include all components which salespeople need and expect to fulfil their expectations and positively influence their motivation to improve their sales performance

It is generally assumed that SEP increases the motivation of salespeople and ultimately improves sales performance. This is due to SEP, which consists of various components, like faster onboarding, better training, better content, direct marketing and sales alliances, targeted sales analytics, etc. (Guenzi & Habel, 2020;

Guenzi & Nijssen, 2021). The individual who is confronted with all these components is ultimately the salesperson. It is important to consider what these components of the SEP mean for the salesperson's workload. This is because all the measures lead to increased time expenditure and increased complexity. It is therefore reasonable to assume that a SEP not only increases the workload for the salesperson, but also increases the associated stress. The stress caused by the SEP could undermine the desired positive effect on sales performance. To summarise, the following would also apply:

SEP increases the SE related workload, which causes SE related stress.

This opens a huge research gap in the practical and theoretical understanding of SE. Until now, the components of SEP in an individual organisation have only been vaguely described. As highlighted before, current academic research has only been focused on SE perceived across various industries (R. M. Peterson et al., 2021) or in conceptual nature (Rangarajan et al., 2020). Although it is necessary to explore in more detail how SE is defined and deployed as a program in one organization across functions as well as hierarchies and what it contains of.

Additionally, SE is viewed almost exclusively positively, both in practice and in theory. As an approach that was primarily developed in practical terms by software vendors with a corresponding profit motive, this is understandable. Nonetheless, it is more important that the negative aspects of SE are properly assessed in the academic world.

A first proof point for the central hypothesis was done by Peterson and Dover (2021), who captured practitioners' challenges around the effectiveness of their SEPs in a global survey. This indicates a strong need for a good balance between the positive and negative aspects of a clearly understood SEP. However, it remains unclear how SE is understood within an organization across functions and hierarchies.

In order to investigate the central hypothesis, a scientifically established model is consequently required that can depict the relationships between several

complex constructs simultaneously. If the central hypothesis is broken down into its individual components, the following structure emerges:

- SEP indicates itself as one construct that pretends to be a resource for salespeople to empower them and should have a positive impact on their motivation.
- SEP potentially has an impact on SE-related motivation as another construct, while this motivation should affect sales performance.
- Simultaneously SEP should generate a workload for salespeople, which demands resources from them.
- The related workload could very likely cause strain like stress, which could negatively affect the salesperson's motivation as well as their sales performance .
- Consequently, sales performance would be a construct too, potentially affected by motivation and stress

Accordingly, to achieve a better understanding, a proven scientific model, which investigates relationships between a resource like a SEP while including the demand of the SE workload, the related SE stress, the related SE motivation, and the related SE outcome.

The established Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) lends itself to this since it covers these requirements extensively (Bakker et al., 2003, 2004, 2023; Bakker & de Vries, 2020; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2014, 2016; Demerouti et al., 2001). Within academic literature it gained high popularity (Allison et al., 2016; L. L. Beeler et al., 2020; Christ-Brendemühl & Schaarschmidt, 2020; Crawford et al., 2010; Fleming et al., 2022; Guenzi & Nijssen, 2021; Kuester & Rauch, 2016; Lesener et al., 2019; L. Matthews et al., 2018; Miao & Evans, 2013; Schaufeli, 2015; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014; Taris & Schaufeli, 2016; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007; Zablah et al., 2012). With the Job Demands-Control (JD-C) model from Robert A. Karasek (1979) and the Effort Reward Imbalance (ERI) model from Siegrist (1996), the JD-R model is one of the leading job stress models. The three models have in common that the employee's health and well-being are dependent on a balance of negative (= demands) and positive (=

resources) job characteristics (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), which sounds like a very good fitting model for the present research.

However, the JD-R differentiates by not restricting itself to specific job demands and resources (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Furthermore, its scope is much broader because it is based upon the assumption that any demand and any resource can have an effect on the employee's health as well as its well-being and it seems reasonable that well-being ultimately contributes to sales performance. Bakker et al. (2023) recently published that they found 191 new JD-R studies since 2014 with various research topics. Therefore, the JD-R can be used for varying scenarios which results in one of its potential weak points. Based on its potential for very broad use, there is no single JD-R model since it has a heuristic nature. It is an open model in the sense of thinking about how the employee's health, well-being and motivation are influenced by their job and personal characteristics. Consequently two studies could be set up on similar assumptions of the JD-R model, while there is no overlap between their concepts (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Nevertheless, the advantages and the conceptual proximity to the research question of this study outweigh the disadvantages.

This results in the idea of an adjusted JD-R model for SE with a focus on salespeople. In regards to the JD-R model, SE can be understood as a positive job characteristic since its existence is founded on the empowerment of the salesforce. Accordingly, within the JD-R model, it becomes a resource. Westbrook & Peterson (2020) already did an adaptation of a JD-R model including SE as the resource with its direct effects on hindrance stressors, burnout, turnover intentions, and performance. While their focus was more on burnout, the salesperson's motivation was not in their spotlight. However, their model is the first which tries to measure the impact of SEP on sales performance – in the broadest sense.

The focus of this research is on:

- SEP
- SEP related workload (SEW)
- SEP related stress (SES)

- SEP related motivation (SEM)
- SEP related sales performance (SSP)

The observations so far and the subsequent central hypothesis led to the following main research question (MRQ):

What are the positive and negative effects of SEP on salesperson's SSP in the SaaS industry?

This question is raised in the specific context of SaaS industry due to its special characteristics and challenges for salespeople as mentioned earlier. Subsequently this MRQ is divided into several more specific research questions (RQ) based upon each's research gap in the following table:

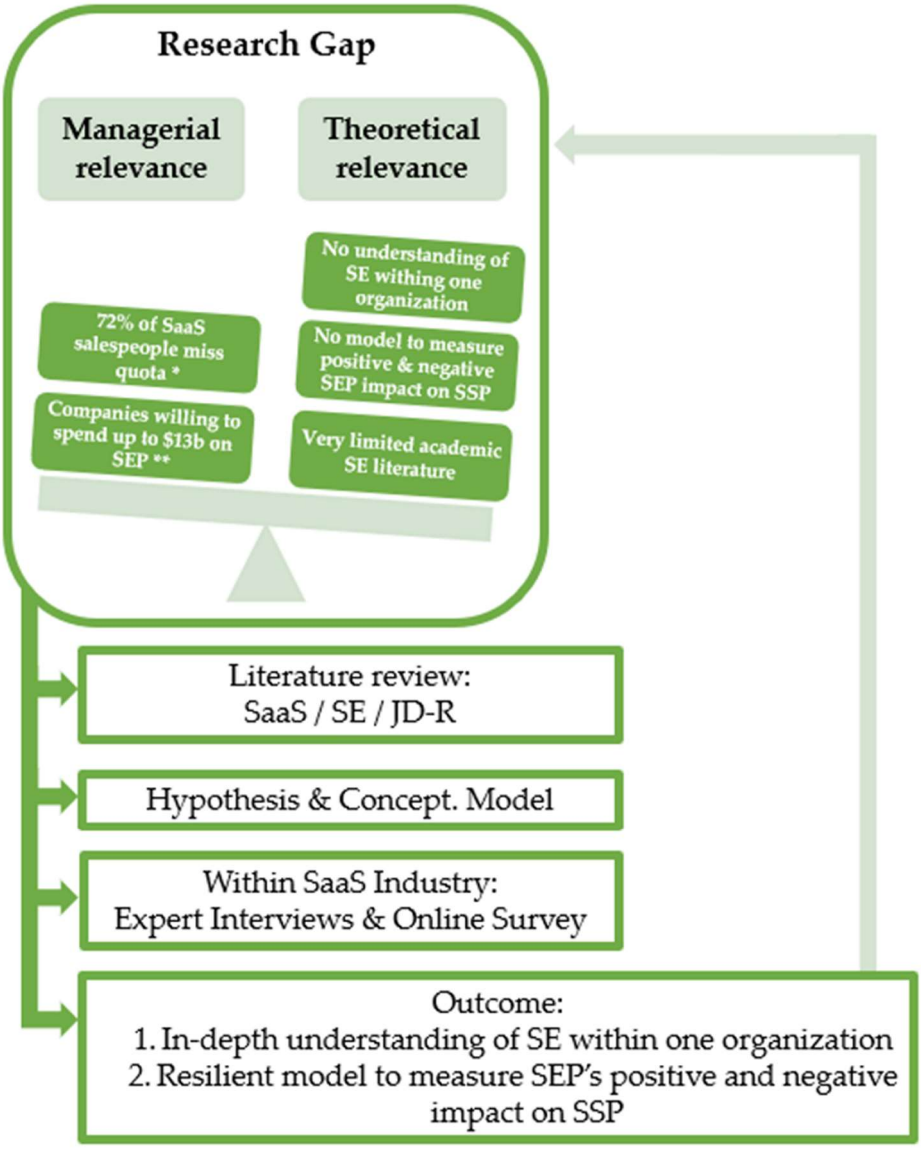
Table 1: Overview research gaps and research questions

Research gap	Research question
Besides the industry agnostic empirical work from Westbrook & Peterson (2020) there is no understanding of SEP's positive impact within one industry, in particular in SaaS industry.	**RQ1:** What is the positive impact of SEP on salesperson in SaaS Industry?
In addition to the almost exclusively positive portrayal of SEP, there is no research on potentially negative effects of it on the sales performance, not across industries and not withing SaaS industry.	**RQ2:** What is the negative impact of SEP on salesperson in SaaS Industry?
Due to the lack of research into the potentially positive and negative impact of SEP on the salesperson, there is no comprehensive holistic assessment of SEP on actual sales performance and most of all, there is no model to measure SEP's impact on SSP	**RQ3:** How does SEP with its potentially positive and negative correlations impact the SSP in SaaS industry?

Source: Own elaboration

In summary, the following figure visualizes the research gap, split up into managerial and theoretical relevance. It shows how closely theory and practice are interlinked. Furthermore, the figure shows what is done within this survey to close the research gap.

Figure 1: From research gap to research outcome



Source: Own elaboration

1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology is optimized to achieve the aim of this dissertation. The following table summarises the concept:

Table 2: Methods for addressing the research question

Method	Areas of action	RQ
(1) Theory-based	Literature research and systematic review	---
(2) Theory-based	Model conceptualisation and hypotheses development	---
(3) Practical procedure	Online survey (385x)	RQ1 – RQ3

Source: Own elaboration

A deductive approach is used for the literature research (Döring & Bortz, 2016; Sedlmeier & Renkewitz, 2018). In this way, the current state of academic research is first used to derive the RQs and hypotheses. The initial starting point is extensive literature research and a systematic review of the existing academic literature. After an introduction to the SaaS industry and its challenges for salespeople, the first part of the methodology is primarily focused on SE with its definition, approaches, theoretic foundation, and parts of a SEP. The second focus is on the JD-R model with its definition, approaches, applied sales models, and components. Since the literature for SE is limited and has very high practical relevance, non-academic sources such as websites or reports were also used. The greatest possible care was taken to ensure that their quality was sufficient for a scientific study (Salméron et al., 2018). Wherever possible, non-academic sources were not used. Overall, a total of 464 literature sources were analysed within this research (accordingly to the author's Mendeley bibliotic for this research).

Based upon a systematic literature review and the findings of the qualitative research (Lauzi et al., 2023), the JD-R model is conceptualized and the hypotheses are developed.

To test the model and answer RQ1 – 3 a quantitative research method is used. While RQ1 is about the understanding within one SaaS organisation, RQ1 – 3 require data across the SaaS industry. An anonymous online survey was done with salespeople of the SaaS industry via the tool "Survey Monkey" (SurveyMonkey, n.d.). While the questionnaire follows general academic standards (Döring & Bortz, 2016; Mardsen & Wright, 2010; Oksenberg et al., 1991; Presser et al., 2004), it was accessible to 43,564 sales related people in the SaaS industry over the world's largest professional network LinkedIn, with around 850 million users in over 200 countries (S. J. Dixon, 2023; LinkedIn, 2024).

The partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used since it has various advantages, as described in the following chapter (Döring & Bortz, 2016; J. F. Hair et al., 2022; Urban & Mayerl, 2014; Weiber & Mühlhaus, 2014). It increases the accuracy of predictions by maximising the explained variances and therefore, does not need strict distributional assumptions. Furthermore, it is used predominantly for the development of theories in exploratory research (Döring & Bortz, 2016; J. F. Hair et al., 2022). In addition, the research aim is exploratory, because there is no clear consensus on the relationships that exist between the variables (Bowen et al., 2022; Lauzi et al., 2023; Westbrook & Peterson, 2020; Westphal et al., 2022). For testing the hypotheses, bootstrapping methods are applied, so that p-values can be calculated too. SmartPLS 4.0 software is used within the study to determine the model (Ringle et al., 2022, 2023).

The constructs and items have been set up and defined accordingly to the JD-R specific requirements of Guenzi & Nijssen (2021). A detailed table shows the summary of the measurement and scale used in this study, including references to the applied items from JD-R model literature as well as their origin literature source (table 15).

To ensure successful quantitative research, a preliminary test was done (Buschle et al., 2021; Hunt et al., 1982; Oksenberg et al., 1991; Presser et al., 2004), which resulted in minor changes. The full measurement model assessment includes several quality gates to ensure a robust model and precise feedback on all RQs as

well as hypotheses. Descriptive statistics of the normalised variables were initially examined before the Pearson correlation (Pearson, 1895) as well as outer loading were examined. Following by the respective Cronbach's alphas (Cronbach, 1951; Cronbach et al., 1965) and composite reliability measures (CR) (Jöreskog, 1971; Werts et al., 1974) to measure internal consistency as a kind of reliability. The Fornell-Larcker Criterions (Fornell & Lackner, 1981) and cross factor loadings have been used to ensure the validity of the model.

1.4 RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

The main contribution of this research is to solve a research gap with theoretical and managerial importance: 72% of salespeople do not hit their quota in the SaaS industry, and companies are willing to pay up to $13b by 2030 (across industries) for SEP, while academic literature is still very limited on SE itself rather than SEP. There is no holistic model for SEP in place that includes its positive and negative impacts. The development of a model that could make SEP measurable, including positive and negative implications for SSP, would contribute to theory and practice.

A recent article from Rapp & Habel (2024) outlined the question of how to create tension in sales research. The understanding is that creating tension describes the identification of a fundamental research gap in research as well as practice. In general, readers should perceive the resolution of the research gap or conflict as important. The author’s principles are listed in the following table and are compared with what was done in this study:

Table 3: Author guidelines for tension in sales research

Guidelines for authors by Rapp & Habel (2024)	Applied to this research
(1) To identify a research gap which prior academic literature did not close	No understanding of SEP within one organisation across hierarchies and functions, no holistic SEP model, no research on negative implications, etc. – across industries and in particular not in SaaS industry
(2) To answer this question has a big theoretical and managerial importance	In SaaS industry only one third of salespeople hit quota while theory offers no model to measure SEP's impact
(3) Closing this research gap is not obvious	It is completely open whether the constructs in the conceptualised model actually endure, what their relationships are and how the effect of SEP can actually be measured with regard to SSP

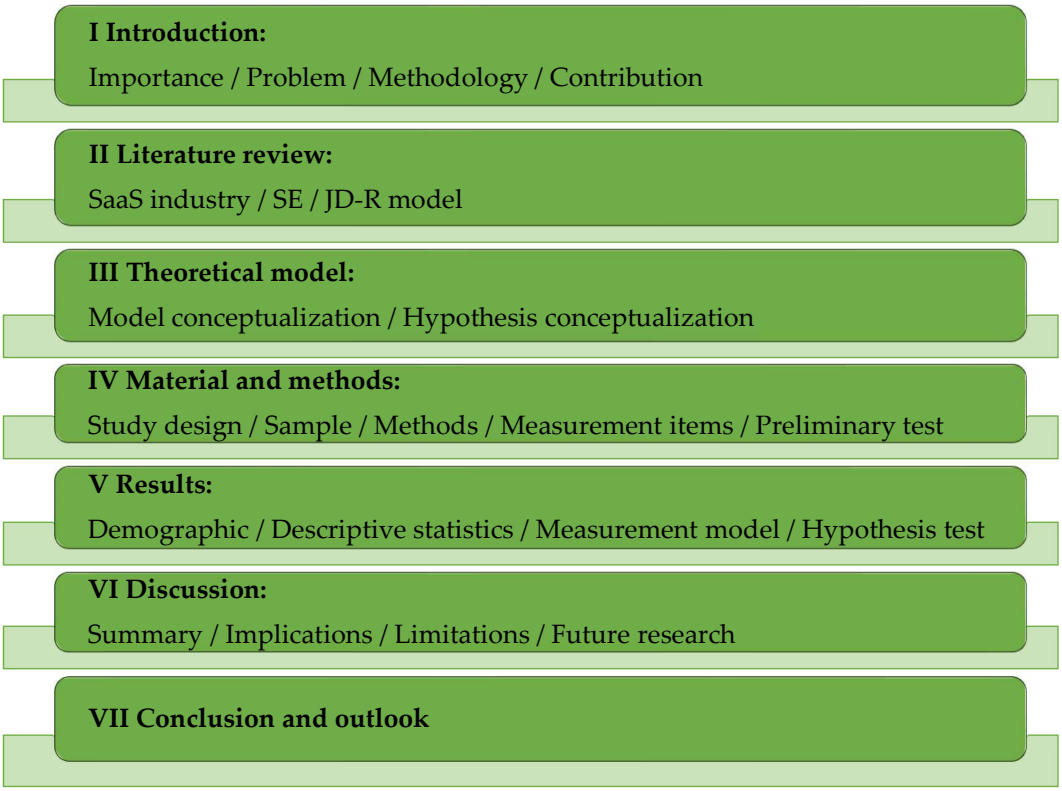
Source: Own elaboration accordingly to Rapp & Habel (2024)

Consequently, this research fulfils at least the requirements of Rapp & Habel (2024) according to creating tension in sales research. Overall this study contributes to the burgeoning stream of academic literature on SE (Bowen et al., 2022; Dasser, 2019; Keeling et al., 2020; Lauzi et al., 2023; R. M. Peterson & Dover, 2020, 2021; Plangger et al., 2020; Plank et al., 2018; Rangarajan et al., 2021, 2020; Rapp & Beeler, 2021; J. Singh et al., 2019; Westbrook & Peterson, 2020; Westphal et al., 2022) as well as the increasing role of new technology in sales literature (Ahearne et al., 2004; Chaker et al., 2022; Dasser, 2019; Guenzi & Nijssen, 2021; Hartmann & Lussier, 2020; Plangger et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2020; Terho et al., 2022; Thaichon et al., 2018).

1.5 RESEARCH STRUCTURE

While chapter one included the research's importance, research gap, contribution, and methodology, chapter two focused on the literature review. Starting with the SaaS industry, before doing a deep-dive into current SE literature. Afterwards, the literature on the JD-R model and, in particular, applied JD-R models in sales research is examined. All constructs of the JD-R model are very detailed. Chapter three includes the development of model and the hypotheses conceptualization. Chapter four includes the material and methods of the online survey. Chapter five entitles the results from the online surveys to test the hypothesis. Chapter six is the discussion around the research results, the theoretical and managerial implications as well as limitations and future research. Chapter seven includes the conclusion and outlook. The whole structure is visualized in the following figure.

Figure 2: Structure of doctoral thesis



Source: Own elaboration

II – LITERATURE REVIEW

II - LITERATURE REVIEW

The dissertation explores the positive and negative impacts of SEPs on SSP in the SaaS industry based on the JD-R model. Accordingly, the SaaS industry is categorised and explained first in chapter 2.1. In addition, the challenges for salespeople in this industry are summarised once again.

Subsequently, chapter 2.2 SE literature is examined in detail. Firstly, the SE definitions available in the literature are summarised from various perspectives in order to finally determine a specific definition of SE for this research work. As SE has its roots in practice and a clear demarcation is sometimes difficult, it is then differentiated from CRM from a technological perspective and from adaptive selling from the perspective of sales approaches. The theoretical approach of SE is then explained before SEPs are analysed in greater depth. These are first categorised within the current literature before taking a closer look at the individual categories and components. The expectations of SE fuelled by commercial SE vendors with regard to the SSP are then summarised. Afterwards, the workload to be expected for salespeople as a result of SEP is analysed. The chapter of SE literature is closed with the SE understanding across hierarchies and functions. This chapter describes the publication done within the doctoral program. It examines how hierarchical and cross-functional SE understanding is within one SaaS organisation.

Chapter 2.3 takes a detailed look at the basis of the model by summarising the available literature on JD-R models. Firstly, a standardised definition of the model is compiled from the literature. Various approaches to the model and their development are then described. In order to build a bridge to sales research, the JD-R models already used in sales research are then summarised. Finally, each individual component of the JD-R model is analysed in detail, and it is considered which constructs or items have already been used in other JD-R models from sales research.

2.1 SAAS INDUSTRY

Within the IT industry, there is the overarching concept of cloud computing. It consists of three segments of: platform-as-a-service, infrastructure-as-a-service and SaaS (Dan, 2007; Statista, 2023a; Tyrväinen & Selin, 2011; Zhang et al., 2013). A Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) is a type of public cloud service that offers software applications via the internet on a subscription basis (Jain & Jaiswal, 2015; Ojala, 2013; Tsai et al., 2014). These software applications can be accessed via the web browser. This makes the usually complex and time-consuming local installation obsolete. Consequently, this business principle eliminates the need to purchase, install and update the software, as well as the need to maintain accurate computing power on the local computer (Cusumano, 2008). Instead, you can focus on the pure use of the software, which leads to an increase in user-friendliness (Xin & Levina, 2008). It is considered particularly convenient that updates run virtually automatically, and users can focus purely on fulfilling their tasks. A common example of SaaS is the SaaS application suite Microsoft Office 365 offered by Microsoft, in which solutions such as Excel, Word and PowerPoint are purchased on a subscription basis and made accessible via the web browser as previously explained (Statista, 2023a, 2023b). In contrast to increased convenience, there is controversy regarding the cost model, as the software is no longer purchased once, but is charged in revolving fees, similar to a rental agreement (Dempsey & Kelliher, 2018; Tyrväinen & Selin, 2011). Conceptually, there are also overlaps with the sharing economy in terms of on-demand features (Schaefers et al., 2022).

While cloud computing overall had a stellar revenue development from $42.8b in 2010 to an estimated $678.8b in 2024 (Statista, 2023d), SaaS has an expected share of about $244.9b in 2024 (Statista, 2023b). A current global categorization of the SaaS industry arrives at the following key figures (Howarth, 2024): It can be stated that there are around 30,000 SaaS companies worldwide, 60% of which have their headquarters in the USA. Salesforce has the largest SaaS market share as a single company with just under 10%. Globally, the SaaS market is estimated to be worth around $307b by 2026.

The particular challenges faced by salespeople in the SaaS industry are primarily based on the general business model (Tyrväinen & Selin, 2011). Within the SaaS model, external IT service providers offer their customers the use of application software via the internet (Statista, 2023c). Customers usually connect to the cloud service via a client programme or a web browser, and there is no need to install the software locally. Compared with traditional software licensing, SaaS companies do not sell packaged software on a storage medium such as a disk anymore (Ojala, 2013). In this case, the service provider takes on all maintenance, updating, and administration tasks, and customers only pay a fee to the service provider for using the software. It is understandable that the transition itself from a packaged software vendor to a dynamic, software hosting company includes big new challenges for the sales departments as well as the whole organisation (Tyrväinen & Selin, 2011). The upcoming challenges like new pricing models, made-or-buy decisions, etc. already became known in 2008 (Cusumano, 2008). About 15 years later a service provider for SaaS companies did a study with roughly 1,200 SaaS companies to summarize the salespeople's' challenges (Capchase, 2023):

1. Longer sales cycles, by almost one month from 2022 to 2023
2. Higher spendings to close a deal, increased by +180% from January 2021 to June 2023, which shows it takes way more time to recoup the losses
3. Drop of the customer lifetime value vs. customer acquisition costs, by -47% from January 2021 to June 2023, which means to get less revenue out of the customer
4. Cooled down average contract value growth by -22%, which indicates customers are more challenging

For sure, it has to be questioned if the service provider's survey fulfils academic standards since it seems reasonable to assume that the company intends to generate profits and therefore wants to sell its services better using the targeted study. However, the findings are very much in line with other recent reports (Carrier et al., 2023; H. McGrath et al., 2023; Poyar et al., 2023) and theorists (Klein

et al., 2024; S.-P. Lee et al., 2023). Further SaaS industry specific challenges for salespeople are the fast evolving business models, permanent product updates, constant changes due to mergers, acquisitions and partnerships, strong competition while products are not easy to differentiate, low market-entry-barriers, etc. (InnoVyne Technologies, 2020). Consequently, it is understandable that by far the biggest concern of SaaS executives is go-to-market execution, as a recent study of a global leading SaaS benchmark agency published (Poyar et al., 2023). While in 2021, 59% of them were worried about it, the share has risen sharply to 73% in 2023.

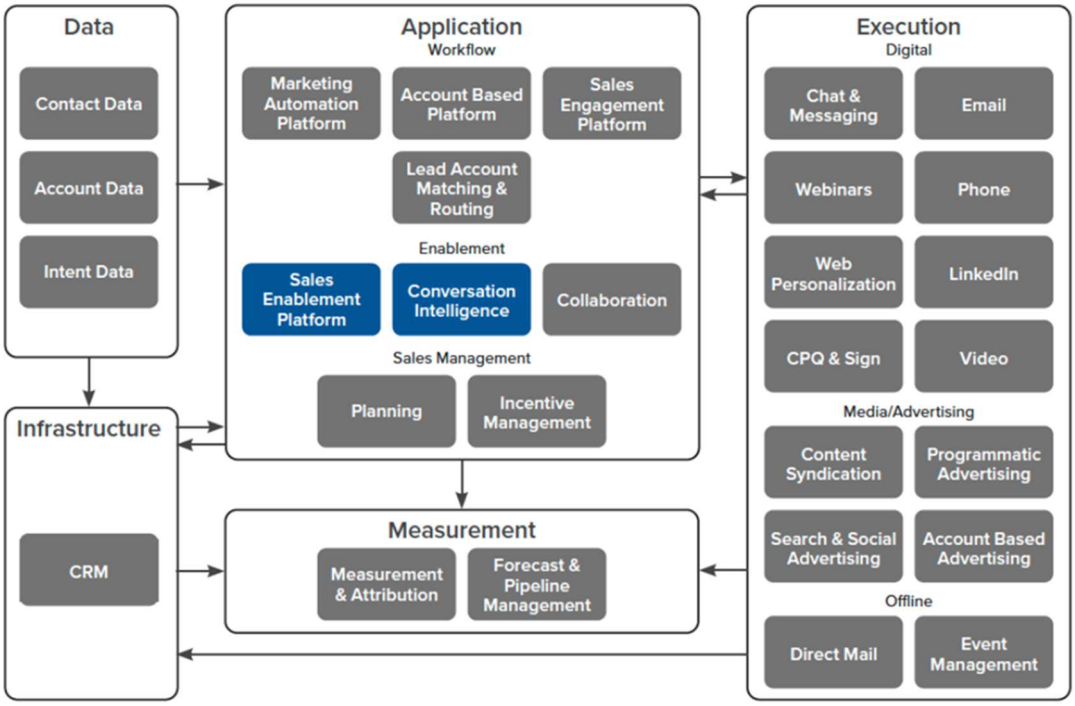
2.2 SALES ENABLEMENT RESEARCH

2.2.1 Sales enablement definition

There are several different definitions of SE in the academic literature available. Because of numerous interpretations as well as descriptions of the term, Peterson and Dover (2020) have collected and analysed twelve different definitions. They structured the definitions regarding fields of thought like sales operations, training, marketing, management and strategic. Out of twelve definitions five come from IT vendors, four from market research institutes and three can be assigned to the extended SE community. Based upon their research, Peterson and Dover (2020) developed a 13th, more strategic definition: "Cross-functional assimilation (marketing, training operations, management, automation, etc.) of content, processes, and technology that readies a firm to more productively assist the customer's journey." Recently there have been other publications within the academic community about SE (Dasser, 2019; Keeling et al., 2020; R. M. Peterson et al., 2021; J. Singh et al., 2019). The Definition of Rangarajan et al. (2020) has a similar implication since they describe it "…as a strategic, organizational initiative, which includes people (both frontline and back office) serving in their roles while engaged in a set of underlying processes which, when coordinated, will have an impact on the performance of the sales organization."

From a more technical perspective, SE can be described as an application within an aligned sales and marketing tech stack, which is shown in the following figure (Gottlieb et al., 2020). CRM can be described as an infrastructure, where data comes from contacts, leads, accounts and salespeople who are using this infrastructure (Bohling et al., 2006; Gunasekaran, 2014). This data is exchanged with several applications for workflows like marketing automation platforms, for sales management like planning and for enablement where you find the SE platform itself. The execution, which can be seen as the interaction with customers can happen digitally, like via webinars, via media, advertising or offline, like with direct mail.

Figure 3: Aligned sales and marketing tech stack



Source: Gottlieb et al. (2020)

SEPs should follow a multi-functional, multi-hierarchical approach that takes into account different management levels with differing tasks and perspectives, as

SE is by definition seen as overarching and integrates several organizational perspectives (R. M. Peterson & Dover, 2020; Rangarajan et al., 2020; Rapp & Beeler, 2021).

Among other things, the multifunctional point of view can also be grounded in the CRM element in the publication by Peterson et al. (2021). CRM involves various functions, e.g., marketing, services, sales, etc. Consequently, it raises the issue of how to benefit from the failures in the implementation of CRM and what might be the driving force for success in value-added SE.

As described earlier, one of the very first definitions of SE came from a global market research firm that labelled it as a function and role within an organization to facilitate sales activities (Santucci, 2010). Taking this definition as a starting point is based on the challenges of establishing a designated SE team that works across traditional boundaries and reporting levels, as marketers, coaches and salespeople have different responsibilities, goals and objectives (Santucci, 2010). This naturally requires internal harmonisation between the departments responsible for marketing, training, sales, etc. (Massey & Dawes, 2007; R. M. Peterson et al., 2015). Lauzi et al. (2023) created an overview of existing academic articles on SE, sorted by findings, fields and article types. The recent literature overview, which is shown in the following table, includes 10 articles, of which 9 have been published since 2020.

Table 4: Extant research findings about SE

Author(s)	SE findings	Main SE field	Article type
Wiersema (2013)	SE with a more operational focus of shared responsibilities between sales and marketing, and smoothly functioning marketing-sales interface to develop successful customers and/or launch new products better.	Sales strategy	Empirical (interviews with 72 executives)
R. M. Peterson & Dover (2020)	SE to assimilate cross-functional departments such as marketing, training, management, automation, etc. to obtain necessary content, processes, and technologies to be more productive across the customer journey.	Sales strategy	Empirical (Conclusion out of 12 different definitions)
Plangger et al. (2020)	Latest technology allows SEPs to become automated knowledge transfer tools (dedicated for supply chain partners) instead of using salespeople.	Sales technology	Conceptual
Rangarajan et al. (2020)	Framework for SE as a firm-wide strategic initiative based upon people, process, and performance (3 Ps).	Sales technology	Empirical (interviews with 8 sales professionals)
Westbrook & Peterson (2020)	SE as the connection to integrate efforts of sales and marketing on joint activities to refine customer-centric processes. Especially SE in	Sales strategy	Empirical (Perceptions of 302 sales professionals)

	regards of the impact on hindrance stressors, burnout, and turnover intentions.		
R. M. Peterson et al. (2021)	SE as a multi-faceted phenomenon to coordinate knowledge across silos to an integrative strategy for sales incl. change management, technology adoption, customer relationship management and organizational learning.	Sales strategy	Empirical (interviews with 41 SE professionals)
Rapp & Beeler (2021)	SE as process to provide content, data, and tools to empower salespeople to sell more effectively on a macro level as the company's strategic decision that the sum of independent sales enablement components will be bigger than the individual parts.	Sales technology / strategy	Conceptual
Dilg Beachum (2021)	SE as technology tools to differentiate companies, sustain sales growth and gain competitive advantages with focus on how salespeople use these tools (supervisor support is crucial for adoption, outcome variables are salesperson self-efficacy and sales performance).	Sales technology	Empirical (150 questionnaires from salespeople)
R. M. Peterson & Dover (2021)	Primary focus of SE initiatives are salespeople and account managers but offered services by SE teams vary worldwide, e.g., KPIs/goals are heterogeneous within SE initiatives.	Salespeople as human resources	Empirical (561 questionnaires from salespeople and account manager)

Chaker et al., (2022)	SE to empower inside sales to optimize their sales performance, incl. managerial implications to align marketing with inside sales functions to provide dedicated digital resources and empowerment for inside sales (e.g., regarding social media)	Salespeople as human resources	Empirical (interviews with 33 inside sales and sales leaders)
Lauzi et al. (2023)	SE as a set of cross-functional initiatives within an organization aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the sales force	Sales strategy	Empirical (interviews with 25 SE stakeholders across functions and hierarchies in one organization)

Source: Own elaboration, following Lauzi et al. (2023)

Contemporary academic perspectives on SE can be broken down into three major domains: sales technology, sales strategy and sales people as human resources (Rapp & Beeler, 2021). A most significant finding is that SE is primarily viewed as a sales technology or sales strategy. At the time of the publication of Lauzi there was only one study that focused on the proper use of SE and its implications for sales performance (Dilg Beachum, 2021). The research includes the technology acceptance model (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000).

Overall, research on SE relies primarily on findings from multiple companies or on a conceptual construct (Lauzi et al., 2023). No matter if the academic literature views SE predominantly as a sales technology, strategy, or a human resources perspective (Rapp & Beeler, 2021), the importance of aligning the different roles and functions within an organization is always essential to strengthening customer-focused teams. Lauzi et al. (2023) claim there is no academic article to the best of their knowledge that delivers an in-depth analysis of how the multiple stakeholders throughout an organization view the concept of SE, how they implement it in their daily routines, and how that relates to the organization's strategic objectives. It seems reasonable to assume that a varying understanding of SE in multiple functions and at multiple hierarchical levels could result in inefficiencies in the deployment, adoption, and consequently, effectiveness of those SE initiatives.

2.2.2 Differentiation of sales enablement to CRM

It is obvious that CRM and SE are understood in the same way, but there are clear differences. SE is still a relatively young category within sales research. As shown within the prior chapter, one of the first definitions of SE is from 2010 and describes it as a role and a function within an organization to support sales activities (Santucci, 2010). This explanation is based on the challenges of setting up a team that works across traditional boundaries and reporting levels of an organization, since trainers, marketers and salespeople have different portfolio responsibilities, goals and customer definitions (Santucci, 2010). It is obvious that the internal alignment between the responsible departments for sales, marketing, operations,

training, etc. is difficult to achieve, since they have different goals and perspectives (Massey & Dawes, 2007; R. M. Peterson et al., 2015). However, this first definition is a good indicator to showcase that SE is coined by commercial IT vendors and a clear demarcation is not always straightforward. For this reason, SE is differentiated in the following ways from CRM since CRM has already been an established sales and marketing instrument for many years (Bligh & Turk, 2004; Dannenberg & Zupancic, 2008; Maklan & Knox, 2009; Payne & Frow, 2005; Salesforce, 2022; Williams et al., 2017).

As the sales process has evolved technologically, point solutions such as CRM have started to emerge as part of wider technology platforms (Gottlieb et al., 2020; Mullins & Agnihotri, 2022). From within these platforms, data is collected centrally from different resources to be used in different applications such as sales engagement platforms or marketing automation (J. Singh et al., 2019) Execution is done through various channels, such as social media platforms, chats, webinars, etc. (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Nearly two decades ago, an important CRM risk indicator was reported to be poor cross-functional coordination (Bligh & Turk, 2004). In their "Dynamic Capability Approach", Peterson and Dover (2021) examine CRM as an aspect of SE. They argue that CRM is often used in a way that does not add value if it is only used as a SE element separate from other elements. Nevertheless, the authors conclude that the capability to use CRM in a value-adding way within the framework of a SEP can be attained through the integration of all enablement elements. Lacking this dynamic capability, even the very best CRM will likely fall short (Maklan et al., 2011; Maklan & Knox, 2009). Research in variety of settings and cases has confirmed this assertion, as CRM is frequently not implemented and embedded in day-to-day operations in a way that adds value (Salesforce, 2022).

Within an environment in which coordination and alignment occur, there is a scattering of influence or distribution of power across functions (Krohmer et al., 2002). Indeed, newer research looks at one cross-functional coordination: the role of marketing in the sales context, in particular the effects of marketing and sales

alignment (Lauzi et al., 2023; R. M. Peterson et al., 2015). Findings indicate a relatively high return on investment for organisations devoting resources and time to enhance the links between the marketing and sales functions.

A further reason for the CRM implementation challenges is the lack of managerial understanding of a CRM strategy (Bohling et al., 2006; Payne & Frow, 2005). In the absence of such strategic understanding, which should provide a basis and frame, it is not remarkable if staff do not form a strategic appreciation of the potential benefits. As a result, a strategic initiative all too often deteriorates into a simplistic instrument. Peterson et al. (2021) foresee this hazard for SE as well and thus characterise change management as an additional critical component to prevent short-sighted SE actions. Payne and Frow (2005, 2006) already advocate the need for accompanying change management for the implementation of CRM in order to deal with the inherent complexity and generate value (Bohling et al., 2006).

To summarize: one can fundamentally question whether the components of SE are new. The answer is probably that the individual components such as CRM, sales methodologies, coaching, training, etc. are not new. What is new, however, is the holistic view and coordination that SE is intended to bring about across functions and hierarchies to achieve more than just the sum of the individual components.

2.2.3 Theoretic foundation of sales enablement

There are several concurrent theories that can explain SE. On the one hand, the resource-based view (RBV) understands resources to be key to superior organizational performance (J. Barney, 1991; J. B. Barney, 2001). While every organization has a unique set of resources and capabilities, some of them determine what makes organizational performance different (Song et al., 2007). The ability to convert resources into valuable, hard-to-imitate capabilities resulting in financial performance, conditions the distinction between firms (Lieberman & Dhawan, 2005). As

RBV research investigates the direct effect of marketing capabilities on organizational performance (Angulo-Ruiz et al., 2018), it has significantly contributed to understanding the performance-enhancing role of marketing capabilities (Morgan et al., 2009; Vorhies et al., 1999).

Consequently, derived from the value of marketing capabilities, RBV provides a basis for explaining the value of sales capabilities to the organization (R. M. Peterson et al., 2021; R. M. Peterson & Dover, 2021). Through the RBV in terms of marketing capabilities, one obtains an approach to understanding SE: thus, an organization's marketing capabilities can be understood as the accumulated knowledge and skills of the marketeers to create customer-satisfying outcomes as well as alignment with business performance (Day, 1994). In this regard, the key to the company's ability to generate, preserve, and sustain financial results is its employee resources (Greenley et al., 2005; Srivastava et al., 2001).

Salespeople and employees from other departments need to develop capabilities that enable the organization to integrate knowledge within the organization and then relate it to marketing capabilities and strategies that are current (Day, 1994; Srivastava et al., 2001; Teece et al., 1997). Consistently, capabilities can be defined as "complex bundles of skills and accumulated knowledge that enable organizations (or strategic business units) to coordinate their activities and leverage their assets" (Day, 2007, p. 38)

Accordingly, the combination of resources that are embedded in the organization and its processes is called capability (Helfat et al., 2007; Teece et al., 1997). To achieve a specific outcome, the organization performs a coordinated set of tasks (Zollo & Winter, 2002). The result of this capability, in the case of SE, is the satisfied exchange between customer and supplier (R. M. Peterson & Dover, 2021). To gain "superiority in identifying customers' needs and in understanding the factors that influence consumer choice behaviour" (Dutta et al., 1999, p. 550), marketing acts in the relationship with the customer (Day, 1994). Consistently, the marketing approach suggests that all the resources of the company should be allocated so that one can obtain an optimal customer journey. This is consistent with the basic idea

of SE: "to create, maintain, and grow the capabilities for customer-facing groups." (Peterson & Dover, 2021, p. 156).

While RBV is a resilient theory, it nevertheless lacks some of the elements covered by the more newly developed theory of 'dynamic capabilities'. Specifically, the relevance of learning and reconfiguring resources to provide superior services to the customer, as opposed to concentrating on 'resource allocation' (R. M. Peterson et al., 2021; R. M. Peterson & Dover, 2021). In contrast to RBV, dynamic capabilities (DC) theory assumes that respective organizational performance can be attributed to how a firm's heterogeneous resources are deployed while the market is constantly evolving (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Morgan, 2012; Teece et al., 1997; Vijaya et al., 2018). Through collective learning and problem solving, the process-based activity behind the term "capability" develops over time within a company (Helfat et al., 2007; Schreyögg & Geiger, 2016). A capability exists when "the organization (or its constituent parts) has the capacity to perform a particular activity in a reliable and at least minimally satisfactory manner" (Helfat et al., 2007, p. 1244). Since it is oriented towards change, this capability is referred to as "dynamic" (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Teece et al., 1997).

In summary, the DC theory examines a company's ability for learning, reconfiguring its resources, and improving its capabilities so that it is adaptable to meet customers' or the market's demands (R. M. Peterson & Dover, 2020) According to DC theory, in order to consistently deliver superior solutions, a company's resources and capabilities must be continuously developed and improved (Lado et al., 1997; J. E. McGrath et al., 1995).

A company's ability to figure out why and how its resources should be reconfigured and its capabilities improved depends on the extent to which the company can promote, organize, and use individual, group, and organizational learning about the company's current and potential market (Kogut & Zander, 1992; Mahoney, 1995). To rapidly respond to customer challenges in volatile environments, sales must reorganize external and internal competencies (Zollo & Winter,

2002). This can be done by integrating, reconfiguring, gaining, and releasing resources (Helfat et al., 2007). In order for DC to address this, the employees' capabilities and potential resource allocation are essential (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). As firms quickly become obsolete in highly dynamic and unpredictable environments, DC is necessary for survival so that competitive resources can be built up quickly enough (Helfat et al., 2007).

Within DC theory, resources are divided into intangible (e.g., knowledge, reputation, etc.) and tangible (e.g. equipment, production facilities) (Amit & Schoemaker, 1993). Market offerings can be made through available resources. Resources are obtained through capabilities, which are processes for resource absorption and dissemination (Capron & Hulland, 1999). Since sales organizations have appropriate capabilities to hire, train, and give the appropriate tools to salespeople on a day-to-day basis, it is reasonable to assume that SE is a DC of the organization. In contrast, the needs of the sales organization itself as well as the alignment of the sales strategy with the customer journey must be considered as additional required capabilities of a company.

In a constantly changing customer environment with changing personnel, which makes coordination of all these capabilities essential, this clearly fits into the concept of dynamic capability (R. M. Peterson et al., 2021). Thus, in everyday life, salespeople are empowered accordingly to interact with the customer in the face of changing challenges. Consequently, DC can explain this process and help drive theory development. It could equally be inferred that SE extends far beyond a lapidary departmental or functional model (R. M. Peterson & Dover, 2021).

2.2.4 Sales enablement program

2.2.4.1 Understanding of sales enablement programs

As described before the current academic literature about SE is still limited. Indeed the existing research agrees that SE is still an undeveloped phenomenon (R. M. Peterson et al., 2021). As of now, research has focussed on setting up a process

model to explain how organisations develop SE as a dynamic capability (R. M. Peterson et al., 2021), while others have investigated a SE framework around people, process and performance (Rangarajan et al., 2020).

Thus, the academic literature about the strategy of SE is very limited. By looking up the term "SE strategy" at Google Scholar only one result had the term included in the title, while only 9 results had the term included within their text (search query from 29th December 2022 3:45 PM CET). Besides academic research, the managerial understanding of SE can be described as: "a strategic, collaborative discipline designed to increase predictable sales results by providing consistent, scalable enablement services that allow customer-facing professionals and their managers to add value in every customer interaction." (CSO Insights, 2017, p. 8).

This implies the importance of SE for the organization's value-creation. Therefore, it is even more important to gain a better understanding of the strategy of SE or the general composition of a SEP from a theoretical and managerial perspective. Following from a practitioner's standpoint organizations look at SE from three perspectives to set up a SEP (Bowen et al., 2022; R. M. Peterson & Dover, 2020; Rangarajan et al., 2020):

1. How to make salespeople more effective?
2. How salespeople engage within organisation's other functions?
3. Which tools are needed to make SE possible?

Based upon these essential components for SEP, it should include the following three capitals (Bowen et al., 2022):

1. Human capital
2. Networking capital
3. Systems capital

The following table structures the three capitals and maps the managerial findings from CSO Insights (2017, 2018, 2019a) to each domain.

Table 5: The three capitals of SEP

Human capital	Networking capital	Systems capital
Management style Sales coaching Training: - Sales job - Market insights - Buyer perspective Senior executive sponsorship and support	Orchestration of enablement services across organizational functions Formal collaboration between functions Bi-directional conversation between functional areas Aligned social strategies between marketing and sales	Instated governance model Defined operating engine: - Definition of activities - Definition of relevant content - Production and deployment of resources - Technology use Use of analytical measures Adjust8ed customer interaction and service

Source: Bowen et al. (2022)

Following the postulation of Rangarajan et al. (2020) organisations, which pursue SEPs, need to ascertain that "the right content is provided to the right salespeople, for the right member of the buyer's decision-making unit, at the right time in the customer's decision-making process" (2020, p. 5). This underlines the fundamental part of human capital in an effective SEP since it covers these challenges with the target of developing and improving the salespeople's' outcomes. As shown in the table above the human side of SE includes management style, sales coaching, training, and senior executive sponsorship, including support (Bowen et al., 2022; CSO Insights, 2017, 2018, 2019a; B. Matthews & Schenk, 2018).

There is a broad research base about the role of management styles and salesperson's performance (Anglin et al., 1990; Baldauf et al., 2001; Inyang et al., 2018;

Panagopoulos & Avlonitis, 2010; Sujan et al., 1988; Verbeke et al., 2010). It is obvious that the style of management has an impact on the salesperson's emotional commitment and it's performance. An inspiring, engaging and motivating management style should be beneficial (CSO Insights, 2019a). To uncover areas to improve, sales coaching is necessary (CSO Insights, 2019a; R. M. Peterson & Dover, 2020). It is defined as a "process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective" (D. B. Peterson & Dee Hicks, 1996, p. 14). The beneficial effect of sales coaching is confirmed by academic literature, while the impacts depend on adaptability, involvement and raptor (Nguyen et al., 2019). Based upon the research of Weitz et al. (1986) adaptive selling is defined as "the altering of sales behaviours during a customer inter- action or across customer interactions based on perceived information about the nature of the selling situation" (1986, p. 175). Within the dimension of sales coaching the sales adaptability is merged to a coaching adaptability and described as by Nguyen et al. (2019): "the altering of sales coaching behaviours during a coaching interaction or across coaching interactions based on perceived information about the nature of the coaching situation" (2019, p. 306).

Furthermore sales training is perceived as a crucial part of initial and ongoing development (Rangajaran et al., 2019). The managerial insights from CSO Insights (2017, 2018, 2019a) indicate that it should not be reduced to only product-related training. Instead, it should include training that is sales job-related, e.g., value messaging, market-related, e.g., competitive, and buyer perspective-related, e.g., communication skills (Bowen et al., 2022). The last part of human capital in this sense is executive sponsorship and support. SE would only be an operational initiative, if executive sponsorship were missing (CSO Insights, 2017). The importance of leadership support as an important element for successful implementations and sales performance itself is confirmed by academic research (Panagopoulos & Avlonitis, 2010).

Besides human capital, there is networking capital. It relates to the set-up of SE cross-functionally within an organisation (Bowen et al., 2022). In line with aca-

demic literature about SE, intrafirm coordination is the foundation of SE and consequently key for a successful SEP (Lauzi et al., 2023; B. Matthews & Schenk, 2018; R. M. Peterson et al., 2021; Rangarajan et al., 2020). A formal collaboration across functions is required to orchestrate SE services, e.g., human and systems capital. While there is not much academic research about cross-functional collaboration, the relevance is common sense in practice (Lauzi et al., 2023). Within an academic context, Kahn (2005) investigated how product development performance is affected by cross-functional collaboration between the research & development departments, manufacturing, and marketing. Calantone & Rubera (2012) explored the effect of the collaboration of research and development with marketing on the performance of the organisation.

By combining the analysis from practitioners and existing academic literature it is obvious that cross-functional collaboration within one organisation is key for SE and its strategy. To ensure this, a formal way of collaboration needs to be implemented to define who needs to be consulted and informed (Bowen et al., 2022). E.g. sales and marketing should use the same technology stack, while working on integrated campaigns. CSO Insights (2018) highlighted that organisations that focus on network capital have a noticeable impact on sales performance.

Besides humans and networking, there is system capital. It describes the structural prerequisites for an adaptable SEP while changing business needs. Therefore, it includes a governance model, an operating engine, analytical measures, customer interaction, and service (Bowen et al., 2022). To avoid conflicts and ensure that everybody is moving in the same direction, a governance model needs to be in place. The governance model should include a formal approach, strategy, and goals to be used as an overarching framework, including defined central coordinators and meeting cadences with management to ensure their support and to have a common understanding of SE across functions as well as hierarchies (Lauzi et al., 2023). Besides the governmental mode, concrete actions, and tactics to achieve predefined goals are structured within the operating system. Following content creation, use of technology, etc. are captured. The use of technology plays an important role since the correct implementation of CRM, content management

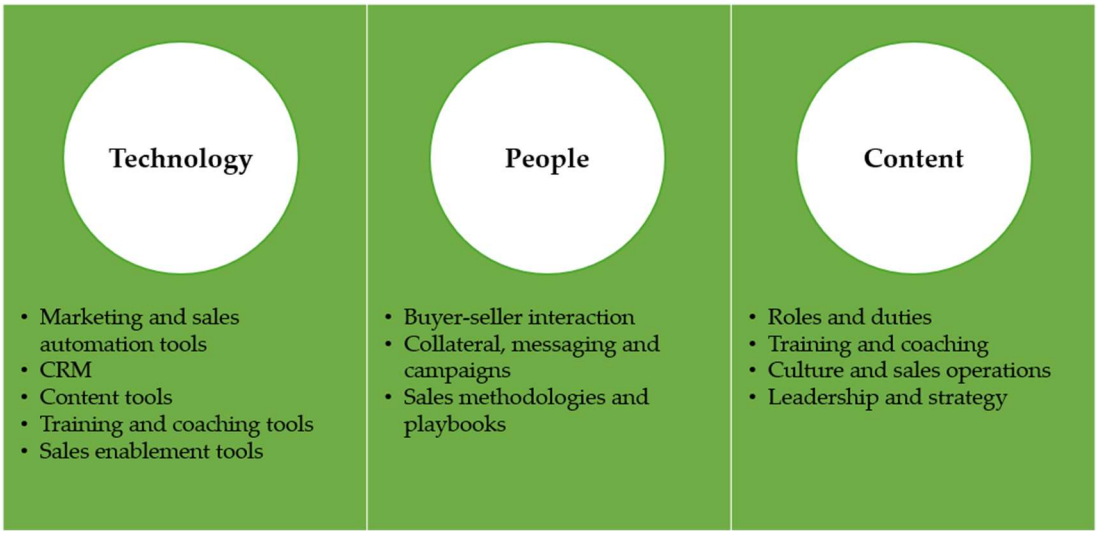
systems, SE platforms, etc. has an impact on the ability to make analytical measures (Dilg Beachum, 2021; R. M. Peterson et al., 2021).

In general, it is possible to track content usage, productivity, performance indicators, etc.; however, recent research showed that the impact of SE is very hard to measure for organisations (Lauzi et al., 2023). To structure the customer journey and tailor content and messaging to it, the customer interactions and services need to be defined, which is a crucial process to understand buyer behaviour (Bowen et al., 2022; Kuehnl et al., 2019; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

2.2.4.2 Categories and components of sales enablement programs

As described in the previous chapter, organisations are facing various challenges around resources and capabilities, related to the implementation of SE initiatives. To implement SE and to come close to a strategy, the different categories of SE have to be known (Bourgeois & Brodwin, 1984). Currently, there are only a limited number of frameworks with an academic background for SE. Summarizing the main components of the three frameworks of Matthews and Schenk (2018), Peterson et al. (2020) and Rangarajan et al. (2020) result in the three key categories shown in the following figure. Peterson et al. (2020) based their SE concept across the customer's journey and the traditional selling process (Sheth, 1973).

Figure 4: Key categories of SE frameworks



Source: Own elaboration, following Peterson and Dover (2020)

Peterson & Dover (2020) based their SE concept on three key elements across the customer's journey (unaware to buyer aware to problem defined to explore options to evaluate and select to purchase and process to implement incl. ROI) and the traditional selling process (prospecting and qualifying to pre-approach to approach to presentation to objection handling to closing the sales to follow up):

1. Technology (Sales and marketing automation, CRM, and sales tools)
2. People (Roles and duties)
3. Content (Buyer-seller interaction)

As part of the first element, the technology, sales, and marketing automation component serves to generate awareness, generate leads, nurture them, and foster engagement. The CRM includes the following components: recording, administration, forecasting, analysis, and reporting. Sales tools additionally support measurement and forecasting with AI and/or other analytic capabilities. The roles and duties as part of the second element, people, include coaching and training, marketing, sales operations, customer service and the corporate and sales culture. The third element, content, consists of the buyer-seller interaction, which is focused on the messaging, content, campaigns, and sales methodologies.

The capability to align different departments internally is based on three pillars called insight triangulation, enablement infrastructure and sales support envelopment (R. M. Peterson et al., 2021). The first pillar, insight triangulation, describes the ability to combine divergent data points from one company. The second one, enablement infrastructure, focuses on the technical structure to integrate technology platforms and organizational structures and processes. The third pillar, the sales support envelopment, includes the orchestration of input from multiple intrafirm entities as well as the output appraisal. This includes the integration of divergent data points that are related to the evolution of the customer journey (e.g., data from CRM), the alignment between sales approaches and customer needs, and the internal support to shape sales processes. In practice, SE can be used to gain revolving insights into the concrete everyday lives of salespeople (Thoma, 2020).

In comparison Matthews & Schenk (2018) framed their four key elements by the components of customers, customer-facing professionals as well as their managers, and sponsorship, strategy, and charter. According to Peterson's customer-journey and selling process, their four key elements are:

1. Formalized collaboration (cross-functional)
2. Integrated enablement technology (tools like SE, content management, CRM, adaptive learning technology, etc.)
3. Efficient enablement services (content, training, and coaching)
4. Efficient enablement operations (governance, production, and analytics)

Both models complement each other or are, respectively, similar. Matthews & Schenk (2018) discussed objective and subjective metrics to measure the impact. In addition to objectively measurable metrics such as lead conversion rates or the length of sales cycles (based on CRM-data), subjective metrics primarily include anecdotal feedback and case studies. However, both models raise the question of what the decisions within each model are based on. Thus, one could ask granularly which training had an impact on the results and in which way, which sales methodology is implemented cleanly by the salesperson in everyday life, and what was purposeful at which moment with the customer and what was not. By combining

both models, it raises the question to adding the perspective of revolving decision foundations for each element to truly measure the initiative and its related impact.

In contrast to them Rangarajan et al. (2020) base their framework on technology, digital transformation and artificial intelligence, which shows a strong technical aspect of SE. Furthermore, it is framed by the sales organization itself and the three pillars, "3 P's", are connected by the SEP. The three pillars are:

1. People
2. Process
3. Performance

Compared to the other two frameworks, Rangarajan et al. (2020) start earlier in the value-chain of SE by including recruitment and onboarding besides training and coaching, in the first pillar, called people. The second pillar, process, focuses on the intrafirm coordination and ownership of SE. The third pillar, performance, includes key performance indicators and the leveraging of technology for performance. In addition, this framework is the only one that highlights the role of the SEP itself, which is shown in the following table. If one of the components is included in the SE frameworks per authors, it is marked with a "X" per column.

Table 6: Comparison of SE frameworks incl. categories and components

Author		**Matthews & Schenk (2018)**	**Peterson & Dover (2020)**	**Rangarajan et al. (2020)**
Framing		• Customers • Customer-facing professionals & managers • Sponsorship, strategy & charter	• Customer-journey • Selling-journey	• Technology, digital transformation, artificial intelligence • Sales organization • Sales enablement strategy
Categories		• Formalized collaboration • Integrated enablement technology • Efficient enablement services • Efficient enablement operations	• Technology • People • Content	• People • Process • Performance
Components	I Recruitment			X
	II Onboarding			X
	III Training	X	X	X

	IV Coaching	X	X	X
	V Content	X	X	X
	VI Technology / Tools (CRM, CMS, SE, etc.)	X	X	X
	VII SE strategy			X
	VIII Sales methodology			X
	IX Intrafirm coordination	X	X	X
	X Operations & analytics	X	X	X
	XI Governance & culture		X	

Source: Own elaboration

2.2.4.3 Desired impact on salesperson's sales performance

Within academic research, little attention has been paid to the expectations of SE. However, to shed light on SE expectations, commercial providers are already advertising incentives. Therefore, we looked at what these providers communicate in terms of added value through SE, as this should in turn reflect the expectations of users. As there are numerous providers, the three largest providers according to Gartner Peer Insights, were selected. According to Gartner Peer Insights the three biggest vendors within the category of revenue enablement platforms are Seismic, Highspot, and Showpad (Gartner Peer Insights, 2023). This category is described as: "Revenue enablement platforms unite SE functions and customer-facing revenue processes. They encompass revenue-generating roles including customer success, marketing, and presales. The platforms have capabilities for digital content, training and coaching or, via open APIs, integrate with complementary vendor offerings. They integrate with sales force automation (SFA) or marketing automation platforms, feature buyer engagement analysis, and measure and build role skills improving commercial execution." (Gartner Peer Insights, 2023, p. 1). The category description matches the overall academic understanding of SE.

The following table lists the global top 3 providers with their offerings and the expectations they set (Gartner Peer Insights, 2023). As the intention of the providers is to sell their solution, statements should be treated with caution. Especially since all providers have supposedly backed up strong results with figures, there is no reference to sources. However, one can discover the following pattern. All three providers have focused on these offerings or SE expectations:

1. Faster onboarding
2. Better content
3. Higher productivity
4. Better sales performance

Table 7: SE vendor triggered expectations and offerings

SE expectations and offerings	Seismic (2023a)	Highspot (2023)	Showpad (2023b)
1. Faster onboarding	• Absent	• 19% shorter start-up times and faster onboarding	• 25% reduction in training time
2. Better content	• 350% increase in content use	• Absent	• Absent
3. Higher productivity	• 360 hours saved per rep per year	• 5x as many contacts with potential customers	• 5x more customer visits per salesperson per week • Time saved on administrative tasks 30%
4. Better sales performance	• 65% more revenue brought in by new reps	• 19% higher quota fulfilment	• 40% more cross and up-sells • 50% of deals closed in half the time

Source: Own elaboration

2.2.4.4 Workload caused by sales enablement programs for salespeople

Basically, the workload for sales staff depends on a wide variety of factors. The sales territory, targets, products, management culture, reporting structures, etc. can have a massive influence on the workload, well-being, and quota attainment (Baldauf et al., 2001; Demerouti & Peeters, 2018; Guenzi & Nijssen, 2021; Hockey, 1997; Natasya & Abadiyah, 2023; Schmutz et al., 2010). One example is related technostress for salespeople which is frequently mentioned in regards to CRM initiatives or other sales related technology (Pullins et al., 2020). Since SEP in general steers several cross-functional departments within one organization, which are all crucial for salespeople, it is logical that a SEP will have an impact on the workload for salespeople, e.g. even by only looking at one aspect of SE's technology.

With regard to workload in relation to SE, Rangarajan et al. (2021) slightly touched on its relevance. In fact, they described it in negative terms: The new workload for salespeople resulting from the use of SE tools should be minimised or prevented through appropriate efforts, as negative consequences such as anxiety and technostress are expected. In fact, within SE literature, there is no focus on the resulting workload for salespeople. For sure there is research about the digital transformation caused by SE (Graesch et al., 2022) or the requirements for the integration of SE in a company. However most of these concepts are more focused on the overall requirements resulting from different company types, market segments, etc. (Görne & Bäurle, 2022; B. Matthews & Schenk, 2018). If the sales performance of the salesperson should be improved, then it is crucial to understand the workload that is caused by the SEP for the individual salesperson.

In general, workload has already been widely analysed within the literature of the JD-R model, since it is a crucial pillar of the construct of job demands (Bakker et al., 2004; Bakker & de Vries, 2020; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2016; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014; Tummers & Bakker, 2021; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Within the following chapter, the JD-R model will be explained intensively.

By looking for applied JD-R models in sales research, most of the studies only cover workload at a high-level, e.g., by mentioning the term within their publication only one time ((Bindl & Parker, 2011; Fleming et al., 2022; Kuester & Rauch, 2016; Mäkikangas et al., 2013; Netemeyer et al., 2004; Piercy et al., 1998; Schaufeli, 2017) or two times (Lesener et al., 2019; Zablah et al., 2012), while others have a real focus on it (Guenzi & Nijssen, 2021; Miao & Evans, 2013).

Guenzi & Nijssen (2021) captured workload as "an individual salesperson's subjective assessment of the specific extra job requirements imposed by the introduction of DT in the organization" (p. 135). The term DT stands for digital transformation, while SE can clearly be described as digital transformation too (Dasser, 2019; Graesch et al., 2022). Furthermore they clearly highlighted that such stressful demands can hinder the quota achievement (Crawford et al., 2010). This finding is in line with the rising volume of research on technostress and DT which agrees with the fact that such programs are characterised by even excessive workloads for the affected stakeholders (Ayyagari et al., 2011; Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008; Salanova et al., 2012; Schwarzmüller et al., 2018). It is obvious that salespeople have to explore new tasks, deal with new programs, invest time in learning new procedures and technologies, and spend extra energy integrating them with old activities (Guenzi & Habel, 2020; Guenzi & Nijssen, 2021; Rangajaran et al., 2019). when they deal with such DT projects.

2.2.5 Sales enablement understanding across hierarchies and functions

In order to investigate how SE is actually understood within an organisation across hierarchies and functions, a qualitative study was conducted by Lauzi et al. (2023). The method was as follows:

Based upon an inductive case study, SE is studied as a new phenomenon in real-life situations and its natural context since there is very limited research on SE, in particular about intra-organizational perspectives across hierarchies and functions (Bonoma, 1985; Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2018). Accordingly to Mills et al. (2010),

this approach is reasonable since "inductive case studies can be used to answer 'how' and 'why' questions in unexplored research areas" (p. 459). Furthermore this method "allows studying phenomena in a flexible perspective, leaving room for the identification of missing factors" (Ivens et al., 2016, p. 107). Within a dynamic environment like organizational perspectives on SE, it is necessary to capture all perspectives from the relevant stakeholders (Beverland & Lindgreen, 2010). There are case studies within sales research that have already investigated relationships between marketing and sales (Mero & Taiminen, 2016), customer-centricity in sales organisations (Guenzi & Storbacka, 2015) and the influence of critical events on sales organization's development (L. Beeler et al., 2017; Lauzi et al., 2023).

For this research, a single case study can investigate the different perspectives within one organizational context instead of investigating of SEP across companies. Current literature supports this idea since SE must be based upon intra-organizational collaboration across hierarchies and functions (Rangarajan et al., 2020). In comparison, a multi-study company across 69 sales organizations and 225 salespeople showed, that it is not possible to examine variations across hierarchies and functions within a single organization (Lauzi et al., 2023; Mullins & Agnihotri, 2022).

Furthermore, a single case study is appropriate for this research topic since the investigation includes the multidimensional set-up of customer-facing teams like salespeople, sales operations, marketing, and the SE team. It is considered that there are interdependencies across hierarchies and functions. To obtain in-depth knowledge from one unit of analysis, multiple units of analysis like sales operations, salespeople, marketing, etc., are incorporated into the single unit, the company (Lauzi et al., 2023; Yin, 2018).

Based upon in-depth interviews across multiple stakeholders from one organisation, it is at obtaining comprehensive knowledge from one case company. To gain a sophisticated understanding of the differing perspectives, this method eschews making presumptions about interviewees. Secondary data like SE job postings, content from the company's website, etc. got leveraged to complement the

interviews. The data analysis was done according to an iterative process, similar to extant research by Raja et al. (2022) and Vuori & Huy (2016). To consolidate at a generalized level how SE is implemented and how stakeholders across hierarchies and functions understand it within one organization, inductive abstraction was used for the compiled material (Lauzi et al., 2023).

To study real people in their environment, the case study was done with one global SaaS company with 5,500 employees, which has had strong growth rates from 50% to 85% persistently over the past quarters and has a dedicated SE department. It is understandable that this permanent, strong growth requires continuous hiring of new people across all SE-relevant functions as well as constantly evolving onboarding and empowerment processes across the globe. The company in this case study has a dedicated SE team with the intention of ensuring a smooth onboarding for new salespeople as well as reskilling experienced ones. The SEP requires that all newly hired staff must fulfil mandatory onboarding courses, depending upon their functions and hierarchies. Marketers are the main resource for content (Lauzi et al., 2023).

Typically, for such a strong-growing SaaS company, the salespeople are facing the challenge of selling complex software that evolves rapidly, while the organization is forced to consistently grow and enable its salespeople globally to stay competitive. The complexity for salespeople is even greater due to the fact that the use-cases and value proposition differ based upon the customers' industries as well as buyer-personas. To empower the salespeople, the company implemented sales technologies like a central CRM platform, e-learning portals and a central content-management portal (Lauzi et al., 2023).

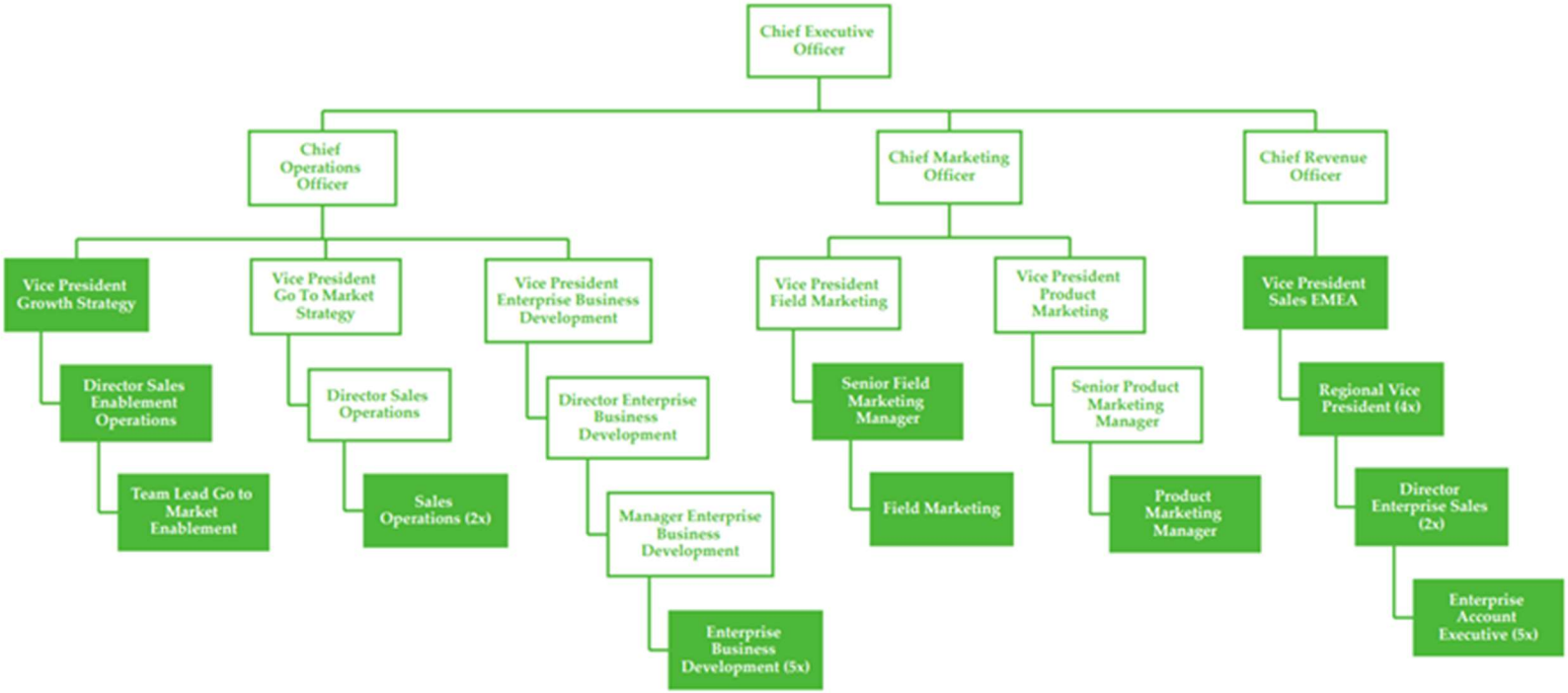
For qualitative research methods, the suggestions from Corbin & Strauss (2015) were followed. Building upon R. M. Peterson et al. (2021) a structured guide was formulated for the interviews across hierarchies and functions which included salespeople, inside sales, sales managers, sales operations, marketers and SE managers. Overall, the questions were about to understanding across hierarchies and functions how:

- … each stakeholder defines SE in general and a SEP?
- … SE is deployed within their organization, and how effective is it measured?

The findings start with the socio-demographic data of the interview participants, with a primary focus on their functions and hierarchies within the one organisation. To stay in line with the cross-functional SE definition of R. M. Peterson & Dover (2020) as well as the multi-functional and multi-level approach, the findings are split up into similarities and differences across functions and levels and are abbreviated in the following two chapters. The detailed findings including quotes from the interviewees can be found in the appendix as well as in the published article by Lauzi et al. (2023).

The following figure shows the organizational set up for the sales related departments as well as the interviewed stakeholders (interviews have been done with people in green filled out boxes) (Lauzi et al., 2023).

Figure 5: Organizational set up of the case study



Source: Own elaboration, following Lauzi et al. (2023)

In total, 25 interviews in the USA and Europe have been done. Twelve interviewees are from the USA, while thirteen are from Europe. Their profiles are shown in the following table. The segmentation of levels is based on a modified adoption from Schneeweiß (1995). It can be stated that all SE-relevant functions relating to the SE department, marketing department, sales analytics department, and sales department were involved in the interview process. Various hierarchical levels within the departments were also covered (Lauzi et al., 2023).

Table 8: Profiles of interview participants

No.	Function	Level	Title	Experience in years	Country
1	Sales enablement	Top management	Vice President Growth Strategy	7	USA
2	Sales enablement	Top management	Director Sales Enablement Operations	14	USA
3	Sales enablement	Operational staff	Team Lead Go to Market Enablement	9	USA
4	Marketing	Middle Management	Senior Field Marketing Manager	16	Ireland
5	Marketing	Operational staff	Field Marketing Manager	11	France
6	Marketing	Operational staff	Product Marketing Manager	12	USA
7	Sales Operations	Operational staff	Sales Revenue Analyst	3	USA
8	Sales Operations	Operational staff	Sales Operations Analyst	6	USA
9	Sales	Top management	Vice President Sales	33	Sweden
10	Sales	Top management	Director Enterprise Customer Success	9	Ireland

11	Sales	Middle Management	Regional Vice President	22	UK
12	Sales	Middle Management	Director Enterprise Sales	13	Germany
13	Sales	Middle Management	Regional Vice President	13	Germany
14	Sales	Middle Management	Regional Director	17	USA
15	Sales	Middle Management	Regional Vice President	29	USA
16	Sales	Operational staff	Enterprise Account Executive	24	Switzerland
17	Sales	Operational staff	Strategic Enterprise Account Executive	11	Germany
18	Sales	Operational staff	Enterprise Account Executive	8	UK
19	Sales	Operational staff	Enterprise Account Executive	9	USA
20	Sales	Operational staff	Enterprise Account Executive	15	USA
21	Sales	Operational staff	Enterprise Business Development	6	Ireland
22	Sales	Operational staff	Enterprise Business Development	5	Netherlands
23	Sales	Operational staff	Enterprise Business Development	2	Switzerland
24	Sales	Operational staff	Enterprise Business Development	6	USA

25	Sales	Operational staff	Enterprise Business Development	2	USA

Source: Own elaboration, following Lauzi et al. (2023)

The findings by function were split up into the functions of the SE team, marketers, sales operations, and sales. To investigate the general understanding of SE from the multiple functions within one organization is one key target of the interviews. Across all functions the understanding of SE is that it is served proactively by the SE team, and accordingly, it is consumed by the other functions, primarily sales. Differences arise about the details. For the SE functions, SE is the realization of their go-to-market strategy and in contrast to academic literature, content is not a central pillar of SE. For the marketers, SE is primarily about cross-functional collaboration and they perceive it more as a mix of different resources to serve sales, which is in line with the overall proactive service idea of SE. For sales operations cross functional collaboration is key too, while they confirm that CRM data and content are key parts of SE. Finally, sales see SE as everything that empowers them to be more successful (Lauzi et al., 2023).

All functions agree that the SEP is crucial for the success of sales. For the SE team, it is the north star for all growth systems, while marketers perceive it as the concrete work on content and sales operations as the concrete work based upon CRM data. For sales again, it is concrete empowerment. In summary, SEP is crucial for overall success, while every function understands it from their own perspective (Lauzi et al., 2023).

This is in line with the research area of the SE deployment too, since SE is set up differently for every function. While the SE team primarily sees a focus on onboarding and training, the understanding of marketers and sales operations, who mainly see CRM, LMS, and content management, varies. A completely different perspective has the sales function which mainly sees individual efforts and the need for content (Lauzi et al., 2023).

All agree that it is almost impossible to measure SE effectiveness since there are too many variables as well as missing data. However, all functions are highly interested if this is possible. Furthermore, all agree that every function has its own SE targets. While the SE team tries to be metric-driven, the marketers highlighted that they do not have any insights into the content usage from salespeople. Sales operations only use quantitative data from the CRM, and sales has a very clear wish for personalized results to improve performance, which is their key driver across all questions. The structured findings by function are in the following table (Lauzi et al., 2023).

Table 9: SE understanding by functions

	Functions			
	SE	**Marketing**	**Sales operations**	**Sales**
SE understanding	All participants consistently view the SE team as having a serving, proactive role that provides support for sales teams, which are "consuming" the sales enablement outputs.			
	• Realization of go-to-market-strategy • Content is not one of the main pillars	• Cross-functional collaboration • A mix of several types of resources to serve sales	• Cross-functional collaboration • CRM data and content are key	• Everything that empowers sales to be more successful across complete sales cycle
SEP	Sales enablement is consistently regarded as crucial for success.			
	• "The North Star" for all growth systems • SE team must ask how to realize the strategy across departments	• Concrete work based upon content sharing	• Concrete work based upon CRM data	• Concrete empowerment of everyone in sales
SE deployment	All functions focus on other areas / topics. From CRM to content, trainings, pipeline generation and personal development. Personal syncs across functions and levels.			
	• Multiple roles like field enablement, SE operations, etc.	• Mainly onboarding and trainings	• Mainly onboarding and trainings	• Mainly on onboarding, LMS and personal coaching

	• Focus on onboarding and trainings	• Focus on CRM, LMS and content management	• Focus on CRM, LMS and content management	• Focus on individual efforts and content
SE effectiveness	Measurement of SE effectiveness is almost impossible because of too many variables and missing data but would be highly appreciated from all levels. Not possible to obtain reliable figures for SE performance, yet. Every function has their own targets / KPIs.			
	• Overall, try to be intensively metric driven • Direct measurement of SE on turnover not possible due to too many variables • Working with assumptions	• Quantitative data from lead generation • No insights in content usage from sales	• Quantitative data from CRM	• Wish for very personalized results to improve performances person by person, but data source is open • Soft factors such as being "audible-ready"

Source: Own elaboration, following Lauzi et al. (2023)

The findings across levels were split up into top and middle management as well as operational staff. The main similarity across levels is, that there is no collective understanding of what a SEP is. For the top and middle management, content belongs not to SE, which is not in line with the academic understanding of SE. It is reasonable that operational staff have a hands-on understanding of SE with specific requests to improve their performance (Lauzi et al., 2023).

Another similarity across levels is that they all focus on other areas and topics when it comes to SE deployment. While top and middle management primarily reduce SE to a combination of onboarding courses and ongoing sessions to learn best practices, does operational staff like inside sales even request more support for personal development, which is reasonable since they are mostly young professionals in their first role. The structured findings by level are in the following table (Lauzi et al., 2023).

Table 10: SE understanding by levels

	Levels		
	Top management	**Middle management**	**Operational staff**
SE understanding	• Content ≠ SE → In contradiction to current academic understanding / content is not viewed as one of the main pillars	• Sales managers have a more strategic understanding • Content is not viewed as one of the main pillars	• Salespeople and inside sales have a more hands-on understanding concrete expectation • Concrete initiatives to become successful and more productive • Support to do better pipeline generation and develop personally
SEP	No collective understanding of what a SEP is.		
SE deployment	All levels focus on other areas / topics.		
	• SE is reduced to a combination of onboarding courses and ongoing sessions, where selling best practices are shared	• SE is reduced to a combination of onboarding courses and ongoing sessions, where selling best practices are shared	• Inside sales requests even more support on personal development

Source: Own elaboration, following Lauzi et al. (2023)

2.3 JOB DEMANDS-RESOURCE MODEL RESEARCH

2.3.1 Job Demands-Resource model definition

The JD-R Model can be considered an occupational stress model. Employee stress results from an imbalance between the demands placed on them and the resources available to them to cope with the demands. As described before, the job demands are physical, social, or organizational job aspects that require physical and psychological efforts. Consequently they generate physiological and psychological costs (Demerouti et al., 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). In contrast, job resources support physical, social and organizational aspects to achieve work goals, reduce job demands and associated costs, and stimulate personal growth and development (Demerouti et al., 2001). The model integrates various motivational and job stress perspectives.

Consequently the JD-R model can be defined as "how job demands and resources influence job performance through employee well-being (including burnout and work engagement), and how employees use proactive as well as reactive work behaviours to influence job demands and resources" (Bakker et al., 2023, p. 14).

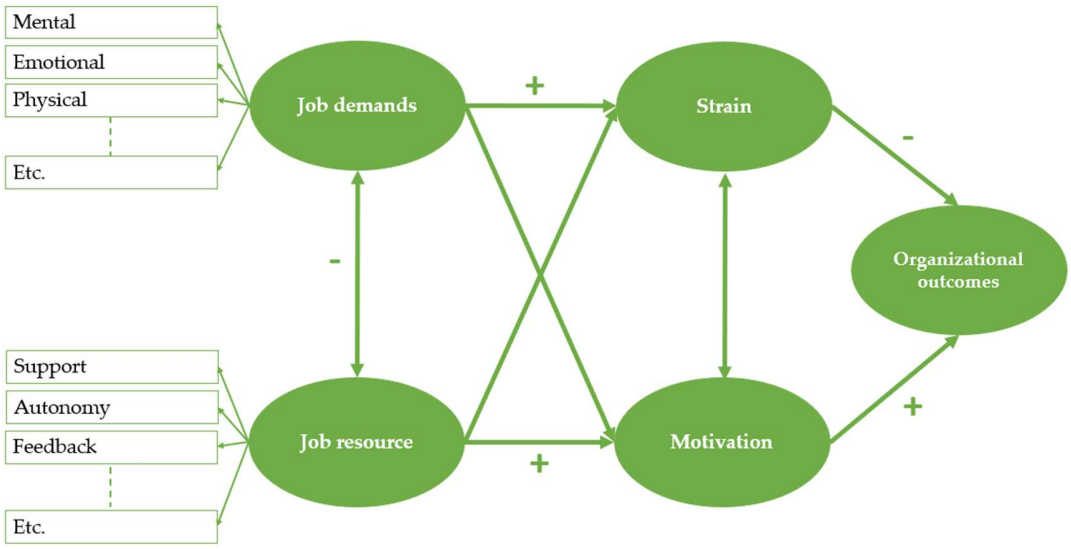
2.3.2 Job Demands-Resource model approaches

The first academic publication of the JD-R model was done by Demerouti et al. (2001). The research's target is to investigate the antecedents of burnout based on a meta-analysis by Lee & Ashforth (1996). The model showed eight "job demands" and thirteen "job resources" which could possibly cause burnout. The term job demands is defined by Demerouti et al. (2001) as "those physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical or mental effort

and are therefore associated with certain physiological and psychological costs" (p. 501). Three years later the term "mental effort" got replaced with "psychological (i.e., mental and emotional) effort" by Schaufeli & Bakker (2004) to expand the scope by emotional labour. Job demands can be job insecurities, work overload, interpersonal conflict, etc. Consequently, the JD-R model is based on the assumption that additional efforts are needed to achieve work goals and to avoid a decrease in performance when job demands are high. This is in line with the model of compensatory control developed by Hockey (1997).

However, high job demands come with physical and psychological costs, e.g., fatigue and irritability (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). As a countermeasure, extra energy needs to be mobilized, work needs to be interrupted to take a break, or a switch to less demanding tasks is necessary. If this countermeasure is not sufficient, a state of continuous activation that gradually exhausts the employee mentally and/or physically can be reached (S & Ursin, 1985). In comparison to job demands Demerouti et al. (2001) define the term job resources as "those physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that may do any of the following: (a) be functional in achieving work goals; (b) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; (c) stimulate personal growth and development" (p. 501). Examples of job resources are leadership, goal clarity, and strategic planning (Bakker et al., 2023; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The model is shown in the following figure.

Figure 6: The JD-R model



Source: Bakker & Demerouti (2007)

There were two processes for the development of burnout proposed in the early JD-R model (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Firstly, if employees cannot recover enough from excessive lasting job demands, it may lead to sustained activation as described before. The energetic component of burnout is exhaustion. Secondly, the fulfilment of work demands as well as the achievement of work goals, cannot be achieved through a lack of resources. This leads to withdrawal behaviour. It is through this resulting demotivation that the motivational component of burnout is achieved. This self-protection strategy is intended to protect against further exhaustion (Bakker & de Vries, 2020; Demerouti et al., 2001).

The negative effect of job demands on exhaustion will be reduced by job resources. Studies showed that between individual job demands and job resources 60% of the possible interactions are significant (Bakker et al., 2003, 2005; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007) and "in the hypothesized direction, whereas no significant interaction effects ran counter to the expectations" (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004,

p. 45). Consequently, as an outcome of burnout, performance measures extended the early JD-R model. For example, peer-rated in-role and out-of-role performance were found to be related to cynicism and exhaustion (Bakker et al., 2004), while cynicism generally predicted team sales performance (Bakker et al., 2008).

The revised JD-R model gained work engagement in addition to burnout three years after the first version was published (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Both elements, burnout and work engagement, are considered to be mediators between job demands and health problems, as well as job resources and turnover intention. Besides the burnout, as the negative psychological state, the work engagement becomes the positive psychological counterpart. It is defined "as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 295). Furthermore, burnout is now handled as a one-dimensional construct rather than a two-dimensional one. The revised JD-R model includes the energetic or health impairment process: through the gradual draining of mental resources it expects burnout to mediate the relationship between job demands, employee health and well-being (at least partly) (Bakker et al., 2004).

The motivational process works in the same way: the assumption is that abundant job resources are inherently motivational qualities. Accordingly to Meijman and Mulder's effort-recovery theory (1998), the willingness to exert effort and one's own abilities is fostered by work environments that offer many resources. Since job resources initiate the willingness to spend compensatory effort while reducing job demands and fostering goal attainment, they are defined as having an extrinsic motivational role. Consequently, job resources are vital for achieving work goals. Furthermore, they are seen as having an intrinsically motivating role because they fulfil basic human needs such as autonomy, relatedness, and competence (source). For example, decision-making space and social

support can satisfy the needs for autonomy and relatedness, while feedback promotes learning. Consequently, by satisfying basic needs or achieving work goals, a positive work-related state of mind, or work engagement, is achieved. Positive organizational outcomes, such as organizational commitment and performance, are facilitated by this state. Accordingly, there is an influence through engagement on the relationship between work resources and organizational outcomes and performance (Bakker et al., 2004, 2023; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Recent research summarized four innovations of the past decade (Bakker et al., 2023):

1. The person × situation approach of JD-R
2. Multilevel JD-R theory
3. New proactive approaches in JD-R theory
4. Work-Home Resources mode

Including personality has been attempted in recent years. It was assumed that job demands and resources are perceived and evaluated differently by personality factors, resulting in direct and indirect effects on employee well-being (Borst & Knies, 2023; Mäkikangas et al., 2013).

Work events and job characteristics (e.g., workload, social support) may fluctuate while personality is assumed to remain unchanged. It is inferred that a person-to-situation approach is required (Bakker et al., 2023). In an overall model, the stability of the person as well as the variability of the situation are considered. The job demands, the job resources and the personal resources differ within a person while personality remains a superordinate construct (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007).

In contrast to the original JD-R theory, work demands can now lead to more exhaustion and self-suppression from day to day - depending on the personality / situation. At the same time, day-to-day engagement and proactive work behaviour

can be elicited by professional and personal resources. Consequently, the difference from the original JD-R theory is the daily impact of work demands and resources on well-being and outcomes, which is moderated by personality. Highlighting the idea that relatively stable or chronic levels of well-being or unwellness can influence how employees deal with work demands and resources (Bakker et al., 2023).

As described earlier, the person-x-situation approach assumes that workdays are nested within employees. In contrast, the multi-level approach assumes that employees are nested in teams. These, in turn are embedded in organizations. The organizational climate and the strategic role of human resources are determined by top management (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). Thus, an indirect influence on employee wellbeing and performance can occur through the organization's selection and development of leaders, who in turn control the work demands and resources of the teams (Albrecht et al., 2015; Tummers & Bakker, 2021).

Another innovation is the new proactive approach. To cope with the demands of their work, it is assumed that employees are proactively motivated to acquire appropriate resources. This approach is evolutionarily derived (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Proactive work behaviour is defined as follows: "Self-initiated, anticipatory action aimed at changing either the situation or oneself (Bindl & Parker, 2011, p. 567). Within the JD-R theory, the following three proactive work behaviours have been listed: Job crafting is the proactive effort to simplify workflows, to work more efficiently and to avoid unproductive workflows (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018; Demerouti & Peeters, 2018). The second term focuses on proactive vitality management. In contrast to job crafting, which refers to changing the situation, this term focuses on changing the self to improve one's physical and mental resources. The goal is to promote optimal functioning at work (Op den Kamp et al., 2018). The third term is playful work design, which is the process of proactively creating

workplace conditions that encourage play and fun. The design of the work remains unaffected (Scharp et al., 2023).

The fourth innovation is the Work-Home Resources Model. Here, a reciprocal influence of requirements and resources at the workplace with the at work as well as volatile personal resources at home (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012).

2.3.3 Job Demands-Resource models applied in sales research

2.3.3.1 Overview of applied models in sales research

There are numerous studies about sales based upon the JD-R model in sales (Allison et al., 2016; Bakker et al., 2008; L. L. Beeler et al., 2020; Christ-Brendemühl & Schaarschmidt, 2020; Fleming et al., 2022; Guenzi & Nijssen, 2021; Kuester & Rauch, 2016; L. Matthews et al., 2016, 2018; Miao & Evans, 2013; Zablah et al., 2012). Adapted from Guenzi & Nijssen (2021) the following tables include the specific job demands, job resources, strains, engagements and organizational outcomes for sales research based upon applied JD-R models. The table shows one of the strengths of the JD-R model, which is its flexibility to be adaptable to various research questions.

Table 11: Sales research with JD-R models

Author	Topic	JD-R model components					Sample
		Job demands	Job resources	Strain	Engagement	Organizational outcome	
Bakker et al. (2008)	Exhaustion and cynicism on objective team performance	Work pressure, emotional demands, work-home conflict	Colleague resources (colleague support, team cohesion, harmony) and supervisor resources (autonomy, coaching, supervisor support)	Exhaustion	Cynicism	Performance	Survey with 176 salespersons
Zablah et al. (2012)	New product selling	New product selling demands	New product selling resources	New product burnout	New product engagement	Salesperson new product outcomes	Review of 10 published empirical studies

Miao & Evans (2013)	Effect of sales control systems on salesperson performance	Outcome control and activity control	Capability control	Role ambiguity and role conflict	Adaptive selling behaviour and selling effort	Salesperson perfor-mance	Survey with 223 salespersons
Kuester & Rauch (2016)	Salespersons' engagement and perception on market intelligence	Assigned and self-set market intelligence activity goals	Absent	Role ambiguity and role conflict	Market intelligence generation and dissemination	Market intelligence use and innovation perfor-mance	Dyadic data from 359 salesperson and 239 R&D managers
Allison et al. (2016)	Salesperson brand attachment as a unique psychological resource	Job codification and hierarch of authority	Brand attachment	Job-stress	Brand-selling effort	Job satisfaction	Survey with 154 salespersons
L. Matthews et al. (2016)	Investigation to explain the effect of labour resources on the	Absent	Customer orientation, sales training, and supervisor support	Emotional exhaustion	Emotional engagement	Sales performance and turnover intentions	Survey with 235 salespeople

	work results of salesper-sons						
L. Matthews et al. (2018)	The counter-vailing effects of salesperson autonomy on burnout	Autonomy to appropriate value	Autonomy to create value, experience, selling time and customer orientation	Emotional ex-haustion, de-personaliza-tion, personal accomplish-ment	Absent	Absent	Survey with 235 salesper-sons
Christ-Brende-mühl & Schaarsch midt (2020)	Impact of ser-vice employ-ees' tech-nostress on customer sat-isfaction and delight	Technology included role overload and role ambigu-ity	Optimism to-wards tech-nology	Technostress	Absent	Customer sat-isfaction, cus-tomer delight and word of mouth inten-tion	Dyadic data from 147 frontline ser-vice employ-ees and 373 customers
West-brook & Peterson (2020)	SE and hin-drance stress-ors' effects on burnout, turn-over inten-tions, and	Hindrance Stressors	Sales force en-ablement	Burnout and salesperson turnover in-tentions	Absent	Salesperson perfor-mance	Survey with 302 sales-per-sons

	sales performance						
Beeler et al. (2020)	Effects of organizational identification on salesperson and customer outcomes in a friend-selling context	Friend-selling frequency	Organizational identification, friend-selling, and network size	Friend-selling role, conflict, and role ambiguity	Absent	Sales performance, turnover intentions, customer acquisition, trustworthiness	Survey with 153 sales-persons
Guenzi & Nijssen (2021)	Digital transformation	Digital transformation related excessive workload	Digital transformation related uncertainty reduction initiatives	Digital transformation related stress	Digital transformation usefulness	Digital transformation integration	Survey with 144 salespeople
Fleming et al., (2022)	Salesperson Turnover Intentions via Organizational Market Orientation	Role stress by role conflict and role ambiguity	Market orientation	Absent	Job Satisfaction	Turnover intention	Survey with 260 salespeople

	and Selective Hiring						

Source: Own elaboration

In particular, the research from Westbrook & Peterson (2020) adapted the JD-R model with regards to SE. Besides other findings, they conclude that SE has a direct and significant negative effect on hindrance-related stress (ß = -.19, -2.69) which relates to a direct negative effect of SE on to burnout of salespeople (ß = - .18, t = -2.91). Furthermore, SE has a direct negative impact on salesperson turnover intentions and a direct, positive impact on salesperson performance (ß = .24, t = 3.58). Accordingly, the authors Westbrook and Peterson found significant indirect effects of SE on hindrance-related stress and salesperson burnout (estimate = -.08, CIs [-.18, -.01], p = .02). A second indirect significant effect is the path of SE from salesperson burnout to salesperson turnover intentions (estimate = -.09, CIs [-.23, -.02], p = .01). The third indirect significant finding is about the path of SE from salesperson burnout to salesperson performance (estimate = -.01, CIs [-.05, .02], p = .43).

Schaufeli (2017) created a guide to applying the JD-R with a focus on the measuring and tackling of work engagement. It consists of the following seven steps:

1. Aim and project team
2. Customizing the Energy Compass
3. Internal communication campaign
4. Survey and individual feedback
5. Analyses and reporting
6. Survey feedback
7. Interventions
8. Evaluation: Follow-up

2.3.3.2 Job resource: Sales enablement program

As of today, there is only one research study about SEP within an adapted JD-R model. Westbrook & Peterson (2020) described their construct for the job resource as “Sales Enablement” / “Sales Force Enablement”. It covers all aspects of known SE literature, including:

- Technology (SE, CRM, etc.)
- Onboarding
- Training and coaching
- Content
- Intrafirm coordination
- Sales analytics

2.3.3.3 Job demands: Sales enablement program related workload

Within existing academic literature as well as managerial papers about SE, SE is primarily described as a value-adding program, which for sure has its complexity and can be seen as a change process for organizations. However, from the perspective of salespeople, a new program that is added to their primary work, will always add new to-do's, increase complexity, and reduce time for tasks to hit sales quotas. An example of such a new layer of complexity and workload is the introduction and rollout of CRMs (Dannenberg & Zupancic, 2008; Pullins et al., 2020; Salesforce, 2022; Williams et al., 2017). In relation to SE, which is raising very clear expectations about the desired positive outcomes of SEPs as described in the chapter before (Highspot, 2023b; Seismic, 2023a; Showpad, 2023b), it is logic that the program itself will increase the related workload for salespeople anyway. For sure another question is the balance between increased workload and potential positive outcomes like time savings for salespeople due to SEPs, but this will be covered in the next chapters. An imbalance arises from a positive outcome due to the SEP, while the workload resulting from the SEP increases not only moderately, but excessively. This could create an imbalance with negative consequences for the basic concept of the SEP, i.e., to improve sales performance.

Recently Guenzi & Nijssen (2021) modified the JD-R model to do an empirical investigation about the impact of digital transformation on salespeople. Within this research the focus is on the related workload for salespeople due to digital transformation. With their key components around technology, people and content,

SEPs are very close to digital transformations as described by the authors (B. Matthews & Schenk, 2018; R. M. Peterson & Dover, 2020; Rangarajan et al., 2020).

To filter the relevant categories, the following table shows adopted JD-R models with workloads for salespeople related to new programs. The measures by the 4 authors were sorted by the overall work during off-hours, increased complexity, increased requests, and less time & energy for things to achieve sales targets (Bakker et al., 2008; Christ-Brendemühl & Schaarschmidt, 2020; Guenzi & Nijssen, 2021; Westbrook & Peterson, 2020).

Table 12: SEP related workload

Categories	Measures by authors			
	Bakker et al. (2008)	**Christ-Brendemühl & Schaarschmidt (2020)**	**Westbrook & Peterson (2020)**	**Guenzi & Nijssen (2021)**
Increased complexity and requests while losing focus on priorities	• Work pressure • Emotional demands	• Technology included role overload • Role ambiguity	• Inability to clearly understand what is expected from salesperson • Politics affect organizational decisions more than performance	• Role overload • Role ambiguity
Less time & energy for things to achieve sales targets	• Absent	• Absent	• More administrative tasks to solve to do business with customers	• Absent

Source: Own elaboration

2.3.3.4 Motivation: Sales enablement program related motivation

Motivation in sales and its determinants for performance in industrial selling was already discussed in academic sales literature a long time ago (Churchill Jr. et al., 1985; Walker JR. et al., 1977). Overall motivation can be defined as "the degree to which employees are willing to expend effort on the job" (Dubinsky & Hartley, 1986, p. 36). While intrinsic motivation describes the pleasure and satisfaction deriving from the job activity, extrinsic motivation is more about getting recognition or compensation (Jaramillo et al., 2007).

Previously, it was described that SE raises expectations to be able to onboard faster, generate better content, create higher productivity, increase overall sales performance, etc. Consequently, it should be possible to establish a direct link to the motivation of the salespeople since the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of these expectations should influence the motivation of the salespeople.

Several academic studies have focussed on the measurement of salespeople's motivation (Allison et al., 2016; Jaramillo et al., 2007; Mallin & Ragland, 2017; Miao & Evans, 2013; Ohiomah et al., 2020). The following table shows an overview of motivational measures in academic research. The studies were selected if they were based on the job demands-resources model. The measures by the four authors were sorted by the overall categories of selling efforts, job satisfaction and monetary incentives.

Table 13: Motivation measures

Categories	Measures by authors			
	Miao & Evans (2013)	**Jaramillo et al. (2007)**	**Allison et al. (2016)**	**Mallin & Ragland (2017)**
Selling efforts	• Working long hours to meet sales objectives • Not giving up easily when encountering difficult customers • Working untiringly at selling a customer until getting an order.	• Performing well, because of the own desire • No need for a reason to sell because of own desire • Self-driven to become successful in sales	• Absent	• Developing new work skills and expertise
Job satisfaction	• Absent	• Desire to work in sales even when retired • Selling to get the feeling of providing a useful service • Willingness to work in sales even if one	• Work is giving a sense of accomplishment • Exciting job • Satisfying work • Meaningful job	• Possibility to independently think and act at the job • Interesting work Promotion chances at work • Pleasant conditions at work

		were independent and wealthy		• Opportunity for personal growth and progression at work
Monetary incentives	• Absent	• Working in sales only because of the salary • At the end of a tough day, one realizes that if it were not for the sake of money, one would not be working in this job	• Absent	• Absent

Source: Own elaboration

2.3.3.5 Strain: Sales enablement program related stress

If a SEP increases the workload for salespeople, the assumption is clear that this generates SEP-related stress for salespeople as well. This basic idea is in line with the JD-R model, which is shows job-demands that lead to strains. Though in existing theoretical and practical literature, the positive aspects of SE are omnipresent, there is no appreciation of SEP-related stress for salespeople. As described earlier, Guenzi & Nijssen (2021) described a derivation of salespeople's struggle to meet contradictory demands that are resulting from a digital transformation. That is in line with Christ-Brendemühl & Schaarschmidt (2020) who investigated technostress on service employees its impact on customer satisfaction.

In total, several academic studies focused on stress for salespeople in adapted JD-R models (Allison et al., 2016; Bakker et al., 2008; Christ-Brendemühl & Schaarschmidt, 2020; Guenzi & Nijssen, 2021; L. Matthews et al., 2018; Miao & Evans, 2013; Westbrook & Peterson, 2020; Zablah et al., 2012). The following table structures their stress into the overarching categories of struggle to meet contradictory demands, technostress, and emotional exhaustion.

Table 14: SEP related stress

Measures by authors	Categories		
	Struggle to meet contradictory demands	**Technostress**	**Emotional exhaustion**
Bakker et al. (2008)	• Absent	• Absent	• Exhaustion and cynicism
Zablah et al. (2012)	• Absent	• Absent	• New product burnout
Miao & Evans (2013)	• Role ambiguity • Role conflict	• Absent	• Absent
Allison et al. (2016)	• Role ambiguity • Role conflict	• Absent	• Job stress
L. Matthews et al. (2016)	• Absent	• Absent	• Emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment
L. Matthews et al. (2018)	• Absent	• Absent	• Feeling burned out from working with technology
Christ-Brendemühl & Schaar-schmidt (2020)	• Absent	• Feeling drained and exhausted from activities with electronic devices	• Absent

Westbrook & Peterson (2020)	• Absent	• Absent	• Burnout
Guenzi & Nijssen (2021)	• Lack the knowledge to deal with changes driven by digital technologies • Struggle to meet contradictory demands from different people in your company	• Fear that many work will be replaced by technology	• Absent

Source: Own elaboration

2.3.3.6 Organizational outcome: Sales performance

A meta-analysis that includes 139 independent published studies from 1980 to 2019 by Ohiomah et al. (2020) shows the complexity of determinants and B2B sales success. Their findings show that success is influenced by 31 different determinants. In general, sales success was conceived in various ways and with multiple terms (R. Singh & Koshy, 2010). The various understandings include customer satisfaction, sales effectiveness, sales efficiency as well as sales performance itself. Consequently, a shortage of consistency and a misconception of sales success have arisen. As a proxy for sales success, sales performance is one of the most widely studied concepts in academic sales research (Limbu et al., 2016; Plank & Greene, 1996). However, although sales success records the performance of salespeople, salespeople's performance does not necessarily reflect sales success, but it can be a part of sales success (Ohiomah et al., 2020). Sales success can include management policies, sales territories, competitive strategies, etc. Sales success is measurable by organizational outcomes like market shares and sales volumes (R. Singh & Koshy, 2010). Where sales success reflects the organizational performance and environmental factors that resonate with the achievements of the sales organization, sales performance is focused on the individual's behaviour and characteristics (Walker JR. et al., 1977). Accordingly the individual's positive or negative behaviour as well as characteristics towards achieving the organization's targets are measured within the sales performance and affect the sales success of the organisation (Ohiomah et al., 2020).

Churchill Jr. et al. (1985, p. 116) defined sales effectiveness as "a summary index of organizational outcomes for which an individual is at least partly responsible". Accordingly sales success includes all the single sales tasks across the customer journey from prospecting to after-sales services (Jaramillo et al., 2007; R. Singh & Koshy, 2010; Wind & Thomas, 2010).

Within their meta-analysis Ohiomah et al. (2020, p. 438) defined "sales success as the level of achievement of sales goals and objectives within a specified period of time or according to a specified parameter, which can be based on results

achieved by the sales organization, a sales project or sales task, or qualitative and quantitative results of salespeople". Overall the sales performance of a salesperson consists of a combination of behaviour components, like developing in sales presentations, and outcomes, like sales results (Anderson & Oliver, 1987; Behrman & Perreault, 1982; Piercy et al., 2001).

The following table shows an overview of sales performance measures in academic research (L. L. Beeler et al., 2020; Mallin & Ragland, 2017; Miao & Evans, 2013; Westbrook & Peterson, 2020). The studies were selected if they were based on the job demands-resources model. The measures by the four authors were sorted by the overall categories of performance, selling expensive and company success.

Table 15: Sales performance measures

Categories	Measures by authors			
	Miao & Evans (2013)	**Mallin & Ragland (2017)**	**Beeler et al. (2020)**	**Westbrook & Peterson (2020)**
Performance	• Exceeding sales targets • Generating high level of USD sales • Generating sales of new products	• Exceeding sales targets and objectives • Generating elevated level of dollar sales • Generating high number of sales proposals and presentations to customers • Providing prominent level of post sales service and support to customers • Delivering high levels of customer satisfaction • Identifying and selling to major accounts	• Quota achievement of total sales in in products or services for the last 12 months	• Being a top performer • Representing top 10% of salespeople • Consistently being rated as a star performer • Consistently selling more products and services than others

Selling expensive	• Sell of high profit margin products	• Sell of products with highest profit margins	• Absent	• Absent
Company success	• Contributing to company's market share	• Absent	• Absent	• Absent

Source: Author's elaboration

III – THEORETICAL MODEL

III - THEORETICAL MODEL

To explore the positive and negative impacts of SEPs on SSP in the SaaS industry, this chapter develops a theoretical model. Based on the previous literature review chapter, the model is conceptualized. Out of this, the hypotheses are developed. The first research questions are summarized and concluded with a related hypothesis, before the derivation of each hypothesis is explained. The hypotheses are concluded via the JD-R model construct.

3.1 MODEL CONCEPTUALISATION

Based upon the reviewed literature about SE as well as the JD-R model and, in particular, the publication Lauzi et al. (2023), the following theoretical model is conceptualized to acknowledge the research gap:

The consequences of the investigation into the understanding of SE within the organisation have clearly led to the conclusion that everyone across hierarchies and functions considers SEP to be extremely relevant. At the same time, there is no uniform understanding of what SEP actually is. Furthermore, the impact of SEP within the organisation cannot even be made measurable.

This leads to the assumption that this inconsistent understanding of SEP results in inefficiencies. Because if there is no consensus between functions and hierarchies on what SEP actually is and consequently how it should be implemented, there is a great risk that this will have an impact on the workload of the sales staff. Ultimately, the motivation of sales staff could be reduced, and stress increased, which ultimately has an impact on sales performance. As SEP is not yet measurable on SSP, there is no control function to rule out this negative effect.

In order to generalise the findings from the quantitative study, the model is aligned for a quantitative study. The focus here is on analysing the salesperson within the SaaS industry.

Based on the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014), SEP is regarded as a job resource and therefore as the starting point. According to the literature analysed, SEP is made up of components such as the onboarding process, training, etc. (Westbrook & Peterson, 2020). The SEP in turn affects the SEW. SEW is characterised by increased complexity, less time, etc. (Bakker et al., 2008; Christ-Brendemühl & Schaarschmidt, 2020; Guenzi & Nijssen, 2021; Westbrook & Peterson, 2020). While SEP is assumed to have a positive relationship with SEM, SEW could increase SES, which could have a negative effect. According to the literature, SEM is made up of selling efforts and job satisfaction (Allison et al., 2016; Jaramillo et al., 2007; Mallin & Ragland, 2017; Miao & Evans, 2013). SES is made up of the struggle to meet contradictory demands and technostress. SSP includes performance and the selling experience (L. L. Beeler et al., 2020; Mallin & Ragland, 2017; Miao & Evans, 2013; Westbrook & Peterson, 2020).

The exact composition of the model, the constructs with the items and the derivation of the hypotheses are described in the following chapter.

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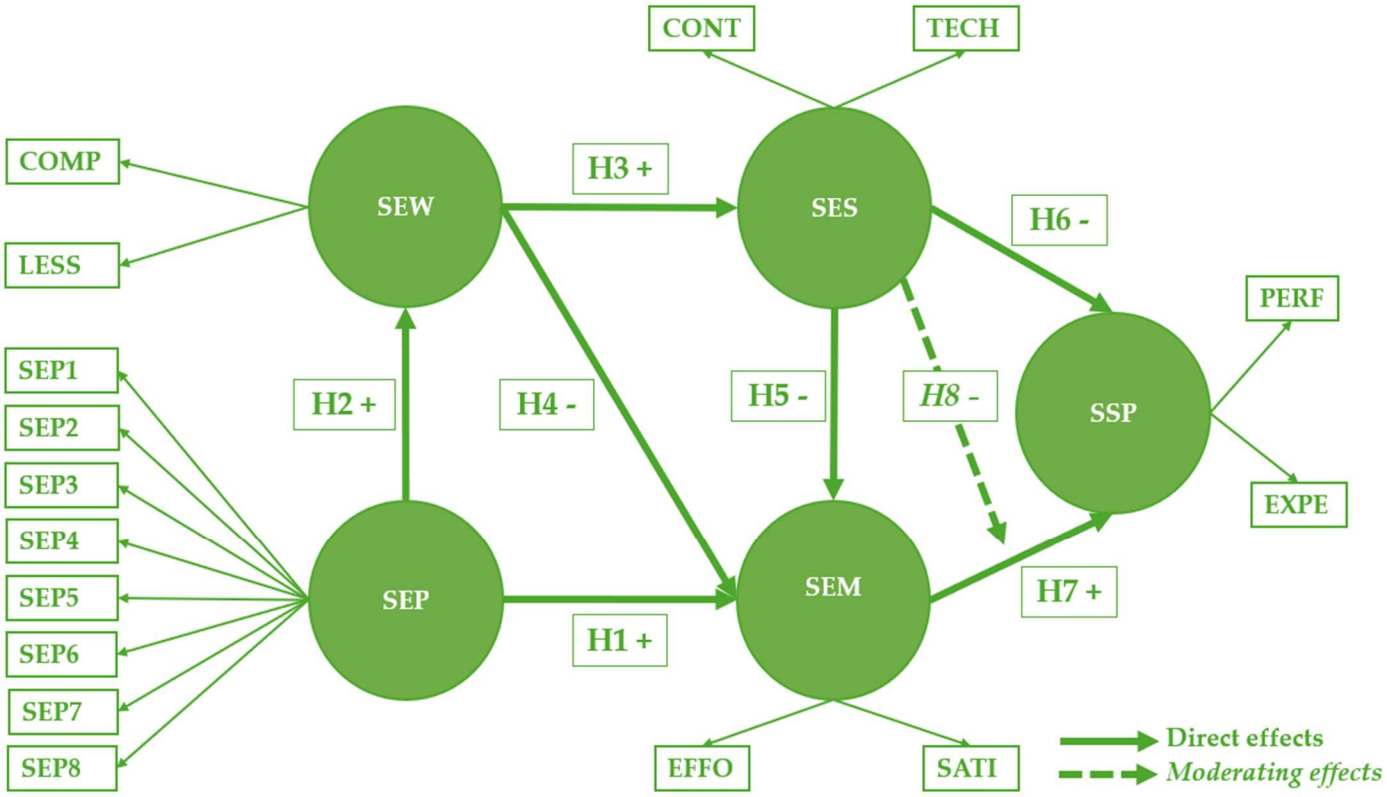
Figure 7: Adapted JD-R for a SEP's impact on SSP



Source: Own elaboration

3.2.1 Summary of research questions and related hypothesis

Based upon the reviewed literature in the previous chapters and the raised MRQ as well as RQs, the hypotheses are developed in line with the developed model. For the MRQ "What is the impact of a SEP for salespeople's performance by considering the positive and negative implications on it in the SaaS industry?", an applied JD-R model in regards of a SEP is conceptualized. As a result of the literature review, the RQs lead to the following hypothesis, shown in the following table.

Table 16: Research questions and resulting hypothesis

Research question (RQ)	Hypothesis (H)	Moderator
RQ1: What is the positive impact of SEP on salesperson in SaaS Industry?	H1: SEP increases salesperson's SE related motivation.	Direct effects
RQ2: What is the negative impact of SEP on salesperson in SaaS Industry?	H2: SEP increases the salesperson's SEP related workload.	Direct effects
	H3: SEP related workload increases salesperson's SEP related stress.	Direct effects
	H4: SEP related workload decreases salesperson's SEP related motivation.	Direct effects
	H5: Salesperson's SEP related stress decreases SE related motivation.	Direct effects
RQ3: How does SEP with its potentially positive and negative correlations impact the salesperson's sales performance in SaaS industry?	H6: Salesperson's SEP related stress decreases its SE related sales performance.	Direct effects
	H7: SEP related motivation of salespeople increases salesperson's sales performance.	Direct effects
	H8: The positive effects of SEP on sales performance are weaker (stronger) when SEP related stress for salespeople is high (low)	Moderating effects

Source: Own elaboration

The conceptualization of the applied JD-R model as well as the derivation of the hypotheses are discussed in the following chapters.

3.2.2 Derivation of the individual hypotheses

3.2.2.1 Job resource: Sales enablement program

The component job resource of the JD-R model is conceptualized with the construct SEP (SEP), which should improve the salesperson's job capability

(Westbrook & Peterson, 2020). Based upon Schaufeli & Bakker (2004) SEP as a job resource should embody "physical, psychological, social, and organizational aspects" that "reduce job demands," would be "functional in [sales] goals," and "stimulate personal growth, learning, and development" (p. 296). Logically, H1 is stated:

H1: SEP increases salesperson's SE related motivation.

By summarising the reviewed SE literature about its categories and components, the purpose of SE is "to reduce potential conflict occurring at both interpersonal (e.g., differing orientations, distrust, etc.) and organizational levels (e.g., misaligned objectives, lack of clear role definitions)" (Westbrook & Peterson, 2020, p. 67).

The workload that is caused by SEP is determined by the daily job of the salesperson. Logically, it seems obvious that a new, additional SEP basically increases the workload. Consequently, it can be raised:

H2: SEP increases the salesperson's SEP related workload.

3.2.2.2 Job demand: Sales enablement program related workload

Within the JD-R model, the counterpart for job resource is job demand (Demerouti et al., 2001). Accordingly, within the applied JD-R model, the SEP-related workload for salespeople is used as the job demand. However, the question is whether the workload increases moderately or excessively. A moderate increase might have negligible effects. Should the increase in workload for the salesperson be excessive, this could have a negative impact on the overall concept and objectives of SE. Consequently, H2 and H3 need to be verified:

H3: SEP related workload increases salesperson's SEP related stress.

H4: SEP related workload decreases salesperson's SEP related motivation.

3.2.2.3 Strain: Sales enablement program related stress for salespeople

Within the JD-R model, job demand has a direct positive effect on strain (Demerouti et al., 2001). A SEP related excessive workload likely causes SEP related stress for salespeople. This is why, in this model, the job demand SEP related excessive workload for salespeople is directly related to the strain SEP related stress for salespeople. Within the JD-R model, strain and motivation are adversaries; that's why H4 is defined as:

H5: Salesperson's SEP related stress decreases is SE related motivation.

While H4 represents the effect of the SEP related excessive workload for salespeople on their SEP related motivation, the model does not include the equivalent hypothesis from the SEP and its potential effect on the SEP-related stress. The rationale is that the SEP per se does not reduce or increase the SEP related stress for salespeople directly since this is coming from the excessive workload as a component. The SEP's configuration could be modified in an overarching initiative of the SEP, e.g., due to program leaders, to reduce the related workload, but itself has no direct effect on the strain.

In addition, the strain has a direct effect on the performance in the JD-R model, which sounds logical by developing H5:

H6: Salesperson's SEP related stress decreases its SE related sales performance.

3.2.2.4 Motivation: Sales enablement program related motivation

The JD-R model part of motivation is in a positive relationship with the job resource (Demerouti et al., 2001). Accordingly, in this model, the job resource SEP should have a positive direct effect upon the motivation, which is represented by the SEP related motivation of salespeople (Churchill Jr. et al., 1985; Jaramillo et al., 2007; Mallin & Ragland, 2017; Ohiomah et al., 2020; Rapp & Beeler, 2021; Walker JR. et al., 1977). Accordingly, stimulated motivation pays into sales performance,

which is in line with the basic idea of the JD-R model due to its direct link from motivation to organizational outcome. Therefore, H6 is defined as:

H7: SEP related motivation of salespeople increases salesperson's sales performance.

3.2.2.5 Organizational outcome: Sales performance

The JD-R component organizational outcome is defined as the salesperson's sales performance according to the previous chapter (Demerouti et al., 2001). Finally, there could be a moderating effect since it sounds logical that a high level of SEP related stress weakens the positive effect of SEP on sales performance and vice versa, which creates H7:

H8: The positive effects of SEP on sales performance are weaker (stronger) when SEP related stress for salespeople is high (low).

3.3 CONCLUSION OF MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS

In summary of the previous chapters, the following table closes the gap between the RQs, hypotheses, moderators and the constructs.

Table 17: Research questions, hypotheses moderators, and constructs

Research question (RQ)	Hypothesis (H)	Moderator	Construct
RQ1: What is the positive impact of SEP on salesperson in SaaS Industry?	H1: SEP increases salesperson's SE related motivation.	Direct effects	**Sales enablement program (SEP)**
RQ2: What is the negative impact of SEP on salesperson in SaaS Industry?	H2: SEP increases the salesperson's SEP related workload.	Direct effects	
	H3: SEP related workload increases salesperson's SEP related stress.	Direct effects	**Sales enablement program related workload for salespeople (SEW)**
	H4: SEP related workload decreases salesperson's SEP related motivation.	Direct effects	
	H5: Salesperson's SEP related stress decreases SE related motivation.	Direct effects	**Sales enablement program related stress for salespeople (SES)**
RQ3: How does SEP with its potentially positive and negative correlations impact the salesperson's	H6: Salesperson's SEP related stress decreases its SE related sales performance.	Direct effects	
	H7: SEP related motivation of salespeople increases salesperson's sales performance.	Direct effects	**Sales enablement program related**

sales performance in SaaS industry?			**motivation for salespeople (SEM)**
	H8: The positive effects of SEP on sales performance are weaker (stronger) when SEP related stress for salespeople is high (low)	Moderating effects	**Salespeople's Sales Performance (SSP)**

Source: Author's elaboration

IV – MATERIAL AND METHODS

IV -MATERIAL AND METHODS

In order to obtain valid data to investigate the positive and negative impacts of SEPs on SSP in the SaaS industry via an adapted JD-R model, this chapter includes the material and methods. As a progression of the qualitative approach in the publication by Lauzi et al. (2023) as part of this doctoral program, the quantitative investigation now follows.

Accordingly, this chapter describes the full study design, sample, data collection, methods, measurement items and preliminary test of the quantitative research. In particular, the measurement items include a holistic summary of the measurement and scale used in this study as well as a detailed description.

4.1 STUDY DESIGN

A prospective empirical study was done to validate the delineated model. To this end, an anonymous online survey was conducted with salespeople working in the SaaS industry to obtain data directly from the relevant target group. The online survey is done via the tool "Survey Monkey" since it has an attractive user-interface which could lead to a higher fulfilment rate (SurveyMonkey, n.d.). The questionnaire in the present study follows general academic standards (Döring & Bortz, 2016; Mardsen & Wright, 2010; Oksenberg et al., 1991; Presser et al., 2004). The survey consists of the following nine sections:

- Page 1: Welcoming the participants
- Page 2: Categorisation of the participant's employer
- Page 3: SEP
- Page 4: SEW
- Page 5: SES
- Page 6: SEM

- Page 7: SEP
- Page 8: Socio-demographic data
- Page 9: Thank you note

The first page includes the general framing of the survey and explanations of the researchers' background. It is usually a challenge to get enough participants from the target group to complete a survey. To counteract this, an optional participation in a prize draw was offered (Karlberg & Jungert, 2015). With the intention to increase the salesperson's motivation to finish the survey, a new tapping system from a German herbal liquor manufacturer is offered for the winner of the optional survey. If the participant wants to join the prize draw, it could add its email address at page nine, separately from the information previously provided. The prize is shipped globally to the winner. About the raffle procedure: The winner was drawn by recording all the email addresses provided in a separate Excel spreadsheet, one email address per row. A number was selected via a random generator to represent the line with the winner's e-mail address.

The second page starts directly with the control question as to whether the participant works for a SaaS company. If the answer was no, the survey was cancelled immediately to ensure that only people from the SaaS industry took part. Afterwards, participants were asked about the size and country of the employer's HQ. Pages three through seven capture the different aspects of SEP, SEW, SES, SEM, and SEP. All questions could be answered on a 7-point Likert scale, anchored with a minimum of “strongly disagree” and a maximum of “strongly agree”. On page eight, the participants were asked to add their socio-demographic data. In particular, the question of quota attainment is relevant to being able to set the SEP in context with the real performance of the salesperson. Another control question is the question for the job title, since it only includes the sales-title. To avoid missing values, all questions on pages one through eight were defined as mandatory. Only the optional feedback field on page eight was not mandatory. Page nine includes the acknowledgement as well as participation in the prize draw. The complete questionnaire can be found in the appendix.

4.2 SAMPLE AND DATA COLLECTION

The recommendation for sample size in PLS-SEM is basically derived from the properties of ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions (J. F. Hair et al., 2022). In doing so, investigators can refer to the rules of thumb proposed by Cohen (1992). His studies on the test power of multiple regression are based on the prerequisite that the measurement models have an acceptable quality in terms of the external loadings (i.e. the loadings should be above the usual limit of 0.70). The following values should be taken into account to ensure the minimum sample size requirements for achieving an appropriate test strength (Cohen, 1992; J. F. Hair et al., 2022):

- Expected minimum R2 values (0.10, 0.25, 0.50 and 0.75),
- Significance levels (1%, 5% and 10%)
- Complexity levels (i.e. maximum number of arrows pointing to a construct in the PLS path model)

In the present model, the following values are targeted to ensure appropriate test power:

- Expected minimum R2 values: 0.25
- Significance levels: 5%
- Complexity levels: 7

Based upon these targeted values, Cohen (1992) and J. F. Hair et al. (2022) recommend at least 51 participants.

To fulfil quality standards from Rapp & Habel (2024), the identified research gap is addressed with data from the real world. The sample consists of salespeople in the SaaS industry, with all their challenges mentioned before. To gather sufficient and relevant data from SaaS salespeople globally, the world's largest professional network LinkedIn, with around 850 million users in over 200 countries was leveraged (S. J. Dixon, 2023; LinkedIn, 2024). It is assumed that the majority of SaaS salespeople should be registered in this network in order to interact with customers as well as with each other. Within this professional network the 14 globally biggest

forums which include the terms “SaaS” or “Cloud” and “sales” in their forums names got selected (quantity of members as date of 4th January 2024,):

1. Cloud Sales Professionals, 18.761 members
2. CrossConnects North America: Technology Sales Professionals, 8,917 members
3. SaaS Sales Professionals, 4,510 members
4. EMEA SaaS Sales Jobs, 3,865 members
5. B2B Software & SaaS Sales Professionals, 2,836 members
6. SaaS Sales Daily, 2,119 members
7. The Closers – Community for SaaS founders, B2b sales reps & growth marketers, 714 members
8. Cloud Sales – VARS and Value Added Resellers Storage Big Data, 469 members
9. SaaS Sales Professionals Australia, 404 members
10. Software as a Service (SaaS) Sales Professionals, 327 members
11. B2B Sales Innovators: Tech, SaaS & Services Growth Network, 223 members
12. Women in SaaS Sales, 183 members
13. IT/SaaS Sales Jobs, 138 members
14. SaaS Sales AE Community – Nederland, 98 members

After the 14th forum, the number of participants became significantly smaller, which is why only the 14 forums were accessed. In total, the 14 forums cover 43,564 sales related people in the SaaS industry. Probably not all of them are the target group, since very likely managers, recruiters, etc. will be there too. Some people are probably represented in several forums, so the actual number of effective individuals from the target group could be reduced. Forums that include the above-mentioned terms but are primarily for managers or for technology outside of SaaS were not selected. The author directly posted a message to ask people to participate in the survey or contacted the administrators of the forums to share the survey invitation. Nevertheless, this mix of forums should be a sufficiently large

sample of people from the target group. The survey was open from 2nd February 2024 till 6th March 2024.

4.3 METHODS

A structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to analyse the data set. The method was chosen due to the subsequent advantages in comparison to alternative evaluation methods (Döring & Bortz, 2016; J. F. Hair et al., 2022; Urban & Mayerl, 2014; Weiber & Mühlhaus, 2014):

- It is possible to design models that contain latent factors and constructs.
- With the help of SEM, multivariate analyses of causal models can be carried out while the effects of the dependent and independent variables can be assessed simultaneously.
- In structural equation models, free determinants or parameters that cannot be inferred by assumptions can be analysed at the same time.
- Thanks to improved estimation algorithms, non-multivariate, normally distributed variables can be taken into account in the analyses.
- With SEM, it is possible to take measurement errors into account or correct them, which increases the reliability of the model analysis.

The covariance analysis approach was selected for structural equation modelling, because it is especially appropriate for the statistical testing of a theoretically based hypotheses system while variance analysis is preferable if it is not possible to derive theoretical or logical models (Döring & Bortz, 2016; Weiber & Mühlhaus, 2014). Thus, PLS-SEM and SmartPLS 4.0 software, version 4.0.9.9, were used within the study to determine the model (Ringle et al., 2023).

Wold (1982) developed the PLS path modelling method, and which was improved by Lohmöller (1989). The PLS algorithm is a sequence of regressions expressed as weight vectors (J. F. Hair et al., 2022; Henseler et al., 2009). These weight

vectors fulfil fixed point equations, if obtained at convergence (Ringle et al., 2022). The PLS-SEM estimation has various advantages over covariance-based methods, particularly for testing sophisticated structural models (Chin W, 1998; J. F. Hair et al., 2014, 2022). PLS-SEM also increases the accuracy of predictions by maximising the explained variances and therefore does not make strict distributional assumptions. In addition, it is used primarily for the development of theories in exploratory research (Döring & Bortz, 2016; J. F. Hair et al., 2022). Furthermore, the research aim is exploratory, meaning that there is no clear consensus on the relationships that exist between the variables (Döring & Bortz, 2016).

To maximise the explained variance of the dependent constructs in the path model, PLS-SEM can be used (J. F. Hair et al., 2022). Very complex models with many constructs and items can be estimated concurrently in a single coherent model. PLS-SEM can be used to conduct mediation, moderation, and multi-group analyses, which is necessary for the designed model. Due to these modelling options and the great flexibility in terms of data requirements, PLS-SEM has recently been used in numerous studies (J. Hair et al., 2017; Richter et al., 2015; Ringle et al., 2018; Sarstedt et al., 2019).

Within the reflective model framework, SEP, SEM, SEW, SES, and SSP are handled as a higher-order construct (HOC). HOCs enable higher-order modelling in a more abstract dimension and accordingly contribute to reducing the number of path relationships in the model and consequently attaining model parsimony (Sarstedt et al., 2019; Weiber & Mühlhaus, 2014). By using a HOC, first the specification of the measurement model for the lower-order components must be defined before it is done for the relationship between the HOC and its lower-order components. To determine the HOCs, a disjoint two-stage approach following Ringle et al. (2023) was used. Only the lower-order components of the HOC in the path model are considered within the disjoint two-stage approach. In order to perform this approach, the values estimated in the first stage for the lower-order constructs are stored. Afterwards, these values are then used to measure the HOC (J. F. Hair et al., 2014, 2022; Sarstedt et al., 2019).

4.4 MEASUREMENT ITEMS

4.4.1 General derivation of scales

Within this study, the latent SEP, SEW, SES, SEM and SEP are measured on multi-item scales. To align with the relevant SE context in regards to a JD-R model, all the scales are tailored and varied to prevent the usual method variance with the same scale endpoints and possible anchoring effects (Matthews et al. 2016; Podsakoff et al. 2003). All constructs are measured with a 7-point Likert measure, by "1" equals "strongly disagree" and "7" represents "strongly agree". A 7-point Likert measure was chosen instead of a 5-point Likert scale, since it's slightly more reliable (Dawes, 2008; Wakita et al., 2012).

In the context of SEPs, the measures for the applied JD-R model are selected by following three guiding principles (Guenzi & Nijssen, 2021):

1. Specific to the context of SEP and centred on the SE stakeholder salesperson of the job resources and job demands provided by their organisation, in line with the recommendations of Crawford et al. (2010)
2. Coherent across their broad definition in the JD-R literature
3. Grounded in the SE literature

Accordingly all measures are based upon existing literature within the context of applied JD-R models with a focus on sales research (Allison et al., 2016; Christ-Brendemühl & Schaarschmidt, 2020; Guenzi & Nijssen, 2021; Mallin & Ragland, 2017; Miao & Evans, 2013; Westbrook & Peterson, 2020). Since only the items from Westbrook & Peterson (2020) are in the context of SE, all others had to be adapted to fit with the SE context. The following table includes the constructs, type of construct, coding, items, references and alpha values of the original scales. Since the concept is based upon the JD-R model, primarily items which are proven that JD-R models are used. However, many of these items were from other authors who did not use them for JD-R models. Therefore, the table shows for each item the references from JD-R literature as well as the reference from the original research where the item is coming from.

Table 18: Summary of the measurement and scale used in this study

Construct	Type of construct	Coding	Items	References			
				From applied JD-R models	Alpha value	Originally coming from	Alpha value
Sales enablement program (SEP)	First-order reflective construct	SEP1	Our organization offers a structured onboarding process.	Adapted from Westbrook & Peterson (2020)	0.93 Original scale with 12 items The original items 1, 2, 5 and 6 are not used since they are items not used as they are already	Absent	Absent
		SEP2	Our organization offers valuable training as it relates to effective selling practices.				
		SEP3	Our organization offers valuable training as it relates to product knowledge and customer solutions.				
		SEP4	Our organization creates sales content that enhances my productivity (e.g., customer case studies, white papers, product demo decks, etc.).				

		SEP5	Our organization provides sales enablement technology which allows me to access customer information and provides dashboards as well as reports to track sales activities.		value-orientated or specifically tailored to social media, which is not a classic component of SE according to the literature		
		SEP6	Our organization has laid out a step-by-step sales process which I follow with customers.				
		SEP7	Our organization collaborates across all departments to align with what customers need.				
		SEP8	Our organization 's sales support team provides me with proper data or metrics to assist in monitoring my performance (e.g., win-loss reports, close ratios, length of sales cycle, etc.).				

Construct	Type of construct	Coding		Items	References			
					From applied JD-R models	Alpha value	Originally coming from	Alpha value
Sales enablement program related workload for salespeople (SEW)	Second-order reflective construct	Increased complexity and requests while losing focus on priorities (4 items: COMP)	COMP1	Our sales enablement program increases the complexity of the tasks I have to perform.	Adapted from Guenzi & Nijssen (2021)	0.83 Original scale with 4 items	Adapted from Moore (2000)	0.8 Original scale with 4 items
			COMP2	Our sales enablement program increases the number of requests I have to meet.				
			COMP3	Our sales enablement program makes me lose focus on priorities.				
			COMP4	Our sales enablement program forces me to do too many things.				
		Less time & energy for things to achieve	LESS1	Our Sales Enablement program and the related activities requires me to work during off-hours.	Adapted from Guenzi & Nijssen (2021)	0.78 Original scale with 3 items	Adapted from Ayyagari et al. (2011)	0.88 Original scale with 3 items

		sales targets (4 items: LESS)	LESS2	Our sales enablement program takes time and energy away from carrying out activities that are important for achieving my sales target.				
			LESS3	Due to our sales enablement program, it often seems like I have too much work for one person to do.	Adapted from Christ-Brendemühl & Schaarschmidt (2020)	0.77 Original scale with 4 items	Adapted from Beehr et al. (1976)	0.56 Original scale with 3 items
			LESS4	With sales enablement tasks in parallel, the performance standards on my job are too high.		The original item 1 is not used since it resonates with stress already which is out of scope for workload here.		

Construct	Type of construct	Coding		Items	References			
					From applied JD-R models	Alpha value	Originally coming from	Alpha value
Sales enablement program related stress for salespeople (SES)	Second-order reflective construct	Struggle to meet contradictory demands (4 items: CONT)	CONT1	As a result of sales enablement program, I struggle to meet contradictory demands from internal sales, marketing, HR, etc. stakeholders.	Adapted from Guenzi & Nijssen (2021)	0.78 Original scale with 3 items Original items 1 and 3 are not used since they belong to techno-stress which are covered within the next construct	Adapted from Guenzi & Habel (2020)	n/a
			CONT2	As part of my sales enablement program related work, I receive incompatible requests from two or more internal stakeholder.	Adapted from Miao & Evans (2013)	0.78	Adapted from Rizzo et al. (1970)	0.78 Original scale with 6 items

			CONT3	For my sales enablement program related tasks, I do not know exactly what my responsibilities are.		Original scale with 3 items Original item 3 is not used since it does not refer with SE directly		
			CONT4	Our sales enablement program makes me work on unnecessary tasks.	Adapted from Allison et al. (2016)	0.92 Original scale with 8 items Original items 1 – 7 are not used since they do not refer with SE	Maslach & Jackson (1981)	0.65 Original scale with 4 items
		Technostress	TECH1	Through our sales enablement program, I have to use digital	Adapted from Guenzi & Nijssen (2021)	0.78	Adapted from Guenzi	n/a

		(4 items: TECH)		technologies, which cause me difficulties.		Original scale with 3 items Original item 2 is used above (CONT1)	& Habel (2020)	
			TECH1	I fear my work will be replaced due to sales enablement technology.				
			TECH2	I feel tired from working with sales enablement technologies.	Adapted from Christ-Brendemühl & Schaarschmidt (2020)	0.74 Original scale with 5 items Original items 2 and 4-5 are already covered or do not refer with SE	Adapted from Moore (2000)	0.88 Original scale with 5 items
			TECH3	I feel tired from dealing with the tasks from our sales enablement program.				

Construct	Type of construct	Coding		Items	References			
					From applied JD-R models	Alpha value	Originally coming from	Alpha value
Sales enablement program related motivation for salespeople (SEM)	Second-order reflective construct	Selling efforts (4 items: EFFO)	EFFO1	Our sales enablement program is helping me to develop new work skills and expertise.	Adapted from Mallin & Ragland (2017)	0.92 Original scale with 6 items Original item 2 is not used since it does not refer with SE	Adapted from Sujan et al. (1994)	0.68 Original scale with 4 items
			EFFO2	Our sales enablement program motivates me to work long hours to meet my sales targets.				
			EFFO3	Supported by our sales enablement program I am not giving up easily when encountering difficult customers.				
			EFFO4	Supported by our sales enablement program I am working untiringly at selling a customer until getting an order.				

		Job satisfaction (4 items: SATI)	SATI1	The sales enablement program supports the opportunity for personal growth and / or progression at work.				
			SATI2	Supported by our sales enablement program my work is giving a sense of accomplishment.	New, based on Allison et al. (2016)	0.92 Original scale with 4 items Original item 4 is not used since it does not refer with SE	Adapted from Arnold et al. (2009)	0.93 Original scale with 6 items
			SATI3	Due our sales enablement program I have an exciting job.				
			SATI4	Due our sales enablement program I have a satisfying work.				

Construct	Type of construct	Coding		Items	References			
					From applied JD-R models	Alpha value	Originally coming from	Alpha value
Salespeople's Sales Performance (SSP)	Second-order reflective construct	Performance (5 items: PERF)	~~PERF0~~	~~What will be your quota achievement for this year?~~ *(Notice: this item was removed after preliminary test, please see its chapter)*	~~Absent~~	~~Absent~~	~~Adapted from (L. L. Beeler et al., 2020)~~	~~n/a~~
			PERF1	Thanks to our sales enablement program, my quota attainment (= annual achievement in %) has improved. *(Notice: this item was added after preliminary test, please see its chapter)*	New	Absent	New	Absent
			PERF2	Thanks to our Sales Enablement Program, my sales performance (= e.g. effective customer relationships, effective presentations, etc.) has improved". *(Notice: this item was added after preliminary test, please see its chapter)*				

			PERF3	Due to our sales enablement program, I am building effective relationships with customers.	Adapted from Mallin & Ragland (2017)	0.87 Original scale with 9 items Original items 1-3, 5, 7 and 9 are not used since they do not refer with SE	Adapted from Piercy et al. (2001)	0.79 Original scale with 8 items
			PERF4	Due to our sales enablement, I am making effective presentations to customers.				
			PERF5	Due to our sales enablement program, I am achieving sales targets and other objectives. (PERF4)				
		Selling expensive (3 items: EXPE)	EXPE1	I am selling expensive.	Adapted from Miao & Evans (2013)	0.87 Original scale with 5 items Original items 4-5 are not used since they do not refer with SE	Adapted from Behrman & Perreault (1982)	0.96 Original scale with 8 items
			EXPE2	I am able to negotiate high prices.				
			EXPE3	I am happy with my variable income.				

Source: Own elaboration

4.4.2 Detailed description of scales

4.4.2.1 Sales enablement program

The scales for the construct SEP are adapted from Westbrook & Peterson (2020) who used them in an applied JD-R model. The construct is described by eight items:

- Our organization offers a structured onboarding process (SEP1)
- Our organization offers valuable training as it relates to effective selling practices (SEP2)
- Our organization offers valuable training as it relates to product knowledge and customer solutions (SEP3)
- Our organization creates sales content that enhances my productivity (e.g., customer case studies, white papers, product demo decks, etc.) (SEP4)
- Our organization provides sales enablement technology which allows me to access customer information and provides dashboards as well as reports to track sales activities (SEP5)
- Our organization has laid out a step-by-step sales process which I follow with customers (SEP6)
- Our organization collaborates across all departments to align with what customers need (SEP7)
- Our organization 's sales support team provides me with proper data or metrics to assist in monitoring my performance (e.g., win-loss reports, close ratios, length of sales cycle, etc.) (SEP8)

The construct is set up as first-order reflective since the SEP should define, guide, and coordinate the items like onboarding schedule, content creation, etc. Accordingly, the values of the observed items are caused by the latent construct SEP. Consequently, a change in the latent construct would be reflected in a change in all items assigned to it.

Originally, a 12-item scale was used (α = .96) (Westbrook & Peterson, 2020). To fit the model's intent, the following original items are not used: Westbrook & Peterson's (2020) first item of the construct SE describes the significant productivity improvement of technology, which already describes the potential positive impact of SE. That's why this item is skipped because it already assumes a positive impact while describing the SEP itself. Their fifth item is skipped too, since it describes the provision of tailored speaking points for specific buyer roles, which is already included in the items of content and sales methodology. In the overall number of questions within the survey, the author tried to avoid too many questions to ensure a high fulfilment rate. The sixth original item is about the companies support for social media and messaging campaigns which is already very specific and outside of the general description of SEPs. The tenth original item is about the specific coaching from sales managers which is already covered by the two items about training and coaching. What is missing in the SE construct of Westbrook & Peterson (2020) is the SEP component onboarding. Since this is a crucial part of SEP too (Lauzi et al., 2023; Rangajaran et al., 2019; Rangarajan et al., 2020; Rapp & Beeler, 2021), it got added as a new item to describe this construct.

To stay in line with the previously mentioned principles from Guenzi & Nijssen (2021) about how to apply a JD-R model, all of the selected items are coherent with the main SE literature (B. Matthews & Schenk, 2018; R. M. Peterson & Dover, 2020; Rangarajan et al., 2020). All of them are vital for the salesperson. Not included are recruitment as well as governance and culture since both are more from of focus of the organisation itself and the management, than the salesperson.

4.4.2.2 Sales enablement related workload

SEP is a HOC first order (HOC1) and consists of the two HOCs second order (HOC2). It increases complexity and requests while losing focus on priorities (COMP) and taking less time and energy to achieve sales targets (LESS).

COMP is adapted from Guenzi & Nijssen (2021) and consists of four items:

- Our sales enablement program increases the complexity of the tasks I have to perform (COMP1)
- Our sales enablement program increases the number of requests I have to meet (COMP2)
- Our sales enablement program makes me lose focus on priorities (COMP3)
- Our sales enablement program forces me to do too many things (COMP4)

All four items of the original construct from Guenzi & Nijssen (2021) are used (α = .83). To make the SE related workload more detailed, the original item got split up into two items. Outside of JD-R models, the items were originally adapted from Moore (2000) (α = .8).

LESS is adapted from items used by Guenzi & Nijssen (2021) and Christ-Brendemühl & Schaarschmidt (2020). It consists out of four items:

- Our Sales Enablement program and the related activities require me to work during off-hours (LESS1)
- Our sales enablement program takes time and energy away from carrying out activities that are important for achieving my sales target (LESS2)
- Due to our sales enablement program, it often seems like I have too much work for one person to do (LESS3)
- With sales enablement tasks in parallel, the performance standards on my job are too high (LESS4)

LESS1 and LESS2 are adapted from the four item construct of Guenzi & Nijssen (2021) (α = .83). LESS 2 is adapted from one of their items which got re-

moved from the construct. However, it got added to LESS since it potentially captures a relevant aspect of SEW. Originally the items were adapted from Ayyagari et al. (2011) with three items (α = .88).

LESS3 and LESS4 are adapted from Christ-Brendemühl & Schaarschmidt (2020) (α = .82). Only two of the three items are used since the original first item is part of the following construct, SES, since it relates to the aspect of stress, which is out of scope for the workload here. Without regard to JD-R research, the 3-item scale is adapted from Beehr et al. (1976) (α = .56).

Guenzi & Nijssen (2021) and Christ-Brendemühl & Schaarschmidt (2020) adapted their items in the context of JD-R models, but none of them regarding SE. To reflect the leading SE literature all the items had to be aligned. In line with JD-R literature, such demands are physical, social, or organizational job aspects that require physical and psychological efforts and consequently generate physiological and psychological costs (Demerouti et al., 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The construct is defined as second-order reflective, because if the SEP related workload for salespeople changes, the observed values will change too.

4.4.2.3 Sales enablement related stress

SES is a HOC1 and consists of the HOC2 struggle to meet contradictory demands (CONT) and HOC2 technostress (TECH).

CONT consists of four items, which are adapted from Allison et al. (2016), Guenzi & Nijssen (2021) and Miao & Evans (2013):

- As a result of sales enablement program, I struggle to meet contradictory demands from internal sales, marketing, HR, etc. stakeholders (CONT1)
- As part of my sales enablement program related work, I receive incompatible requests from two or more internal stakeholders (CONT2)

- For my sales enablement program related tasks, I do not know exactly what my responsibilities are (CONT3)
- Our sales enablement program makes me work on unnecessary tasks (CONT4)

CONT1 is adapted from a three item construct from Guenzi & Nijssen (2021) (α = .78), while the original items one and three are not used since they already belong to technostress and are part of TECH. Without the context of JD-R models, the items are based on Guenzi & Habel (2020) (α = n/a) originally. CONT2 and CONT3 are adapted from Miao & Evans (2013) who used an item scale (α = .78). The original item three is not used since it does not refer to SE directly. Without JD-R context, the items are originally coming from (Rizzo et al., 1970) (α = .78). CONT4 is adapted from an eight-item construct from Allison et al. (2016) who had used it for a JD-R model too (α = .92). However, the original items one till seven are not used since they do not refer to SE. Originally, they were adapted from Maslach & Jackson (1981) (α = .65).

TECH consists out of 4 items which are adapted from Guenzi & Nijssen (2021) and Christ-Brendemühl & Schaarschmidt (2020):

- Through our sales enablement program, I have to use digital technologies, which cause me difficulties (TECH1)
- I fear my work will be replaced due to sales enablement technology (TECH1)
- I feel tired from working with sales enablement technologies (TECH2)
- I feel tired from dealing with the tasks from our sales enablement program (TECH3)

TECH1 and TECH1 are adapted from a three item construct from Guenzi & Nijssen (2021) (α = .92), while the original item two is already of CONT since content-wise it refers to contradictory demands. TECH2 and TECH3 are from Christ-Brendemühl & Schaarschmidt (2020) with a five-item construct (α = .74). Original

items two, four, and five are not used since they do not refer to SE or are already covered. Originally, the items were adapted from Moore (2000) and his original scale with 5 items (α = .88) outside of the JD-R model context.

All the authors used their items for applied JD-R models, while all the items had to be modified to fit in the context of SEP related stress. The construct is set up as second-order reflective since if the SEP related stress increases, the technostress, emotional exhaustion, etc. get worse too. Accordingly, the values of the observed items are caused by the latent construct of SEP related stress. Consequently, a change in the latent construct would be reflected in a change in all items assigned to it.

4.4.2.4 Sales enablement related motivation

Since there is a very broad research base about motivation in sales (Churchill Jr. et al., 1985; Jaramillo et al., 2007; Mallin & Ragland, 2017; Ohiomah et al., 2020; Rapp & Beeler, 2021; Walker JR. et al., 1977), the items of SEP related motivation are focused on triggers of salesperson's motivation by SEPs. SEM is a HOC1 and consists of the HOC2 selling efforts (EFFO) and HOC2 job satisfaction (SATI).

EFFO consists of four items, which are adapted from Mallin & Ragland (2017):

- Our sales enablement program is helping me to develop new work skills and expertise (EFFO1)
- Our sales enablement program motivates me to work long hours to meet my sales targets (EFFO2)
- Supported by our sales enablement program I am not giving up easily when encountering difficult customers (EFFO3)
- Supported by our sales enablement program I am working untiringly at selling a customer until getting an order (EFFO4)

EFFO is adapted from the 6-item construct from Mallin & Ragland (2017) (α = .92) and is originally adapted from Alderfer (1972) (α = n/a). While the original item two is not used since it does not refer to SE, the original item six is used for SAT1 since it refers to job satisfaction.

SATI consists of four items that are adapted from Mallin & Ragland (2017) as mentioned before, and Allison et al. (2016) (α = .92):

- The sales enablement program supports the opportunity for personal growth and / or progression at work (SATI1)
- Supported by our sales enablement program, my work is giving a sense of accomplishment (SATI2)
- Due to our sales enablement program, I have an exciting job (SATI3)
- Due to our sales enablement program, I have a satisfying work (SATI4)

SATI2, SATI3, and SATI4 are adapted from Allison et al. (2016) (α = .92), which is adapted on the six-item scale from Arnold et al. (2009) (α = .93) outside of JD-R model research. In the context of SEP related motivation, the fourth original item does not fit since SEP related motivation intends to improve performance and is not about finding the job more worthwhile at all.

Furthermore, the items are in line with SE literature, in particular with the expectations generated by SE vendors, like faster onboarding, better content, higher productivity, and better sales performance, which can be concluded under selling efforts (Highspot, 2023b; Seismic, 2023a; Showpad, 2023b). It seems logical that these expectations could contribute to selling efforts and job satisfaction. Therefore, the construct is defined as second-order reflective since increased motivation does lead to increased selling efforts and/or job satisfaction. Thus, it can again be confirmed that the latent construct of SEP related motivation causes the values of the observed items.

4.4.2.5 Sales enablement related performance

SSP is a HOC1 and consists of the HOC2 performance (PERF) and HOC2 selling expensive (EXPE). Since there are only limited items within JD-R literature that work for sales performance in relation to SEPs, PERF is based on adapted items from Mallin & Ragland (2017) as well as completely new items:

- Thanks to our sales enablement program, my quota attainment (= annual achievement in %) has improved (PERF1)
- Thanks to our Sales Enablement Program, my sales performance (= e.g. effective customer relationships, effective presentations, etc.) has improved" (PERF2)
- Due to our sales enablement program, I am building effective relationships with customers. (PERF3)
- Due to our sales enablement, I am making effective presentations to customers. (PERF4)
- Due to our sales enablement program, I am achieving sales targets and other objectives. (PERF5)

PERF1 and PERF2 are developed by the author to specifically ask for the impact of SEP on SSP. PERF3, PERF4, and PERF5 are adapted from a nine-item scale from Mallin & Ragland (2017) (α = .87). The original items one through three, five, seven, and nine are not used since they do not refer to SE. Without JD-R context, the items are originally adapted from Piercy et al. (2001) (α = .79).

EXPE is based upon adapted items from Miao & Evans (2013):

- I am selling expensive (EXPE1)
- I am able to negotiate high prices (EXPE2)
- I am happy with my variable income (EXPE3)

The original scale from Miao & Evans (2013) includes 5 items (α = .87). The three derived items are based on selling high-profit margin products and generating a high level of dollar sales. In the context of selling expensive items, they were rephrased to match SEP related sales performance. The component of selling expensive is based on the assumption that a high level of sales skills is necessary to be able to sell expensive. If a salesperson can avoid discounts due to proper negotiation skills and a clear value proposition for the customer, it is obvious that this condition requires relevant training, coaching, content, etc. The original items four and five are not used since they do not refer to SE. Originally, the scale was adapted from Behrman & Perreault (1982) (α = .96).

The construct is second-order reflective since the values of the observed items, like salesperson's performance, are caused by the latent construct of sales performance.

4.4.2.6 Socio demographics

Geography: The scales for socio demographic data are based upon scales from the leading SaaS benchmarks report, which analyses SaaS companies globally and combines more than 3.500 participants over the last seven years (Poyar et al., 2023). Their annual reports, which are tailored to the SaaS industry, are the foundation for this survey regarding the distribution by geography of the participant's employee company headquarters (Carrier et al., 2023; Poyar et al., 2023).

Job title: Within the SaaS industry, specific titles for salespeople are used, like commercial account executive, mid-market account executive, etc. (Penrod, 2022; Winning by Design, 2023). To capture the SaaS industry in the most detailed way, these titles are adapted too.

Work for current employees and sales experience: As previously mentioned, the SaaS industry and its products are fast-moving, and the length of service is often short, while some young people with limited experience work there (Dan, 2007; Statista, 2023b; Tyrväinen & Selin, 2011). Within the JD-R model of sales research, Allison et al. (2016) already used detailed scales for the sales experience and years of service of the current employee, which match with the characteristics of the SaaS industry.

Qualification: Within the JD-R model of sales research, Christ-Brendemühl & Schaarschmidt (2020) used a detailed scale for education, which is used for this survey too.

Age: Since the SaaS industry has dedicated inside sales roles that are designed for career entrants and accordingly meet the special needs of young professionals (Chaker et al., 2022; Lauzi et al., 2023), regular age scales with a wide first big group of 18 – 34 years would not be detailed enough (Döring & Bortz, 2016). Therefore, the scale for age that was used in the sales research-related JD-R model from Allison et al. (2016) is used.

4.5 PRELIMINARY TEST

While pre-testing of a survey is the only way to check in advance if the questionnaire could cause issues, many research reports do not include whether there has been a pretest and if so, how the results have looked (Buschle et al., 2021; Hunt et al., 1982; Oksenberg et al., 1991; Presser et al., 2004). In order to show the development of the conceptualized model as transparently as possible and to minimise the probability of errors, a pretest of the survey was conducted to ensure that the survey can be accessed properly online. In the period from 19th to 22nd December 2023, 11 participants from the previously mentioned company x completed the questionnaire in full. This results in high reliability and validity values (David L. Streiner, 2003; Nunnaly, 1978), which are shown in detail in the following table:

- Cronbach's alpha between .867 - .986 for four constructs while one construct is at .618 (Salesperson's sales performance), which is primarily resulting by the one item quota attainment
- Composite reliability is above .907 (rho_a) and .784 (rho_c)
- Average variance extracted is above .535

Table 19: Construct reliability and validity - Pretest

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
SEP	0.867	0.907	0.897	0.535
SEM	0.963	0.968	0.982	0.964
SES	0.914	0.916	0.946	0.854
SEW	0.986	0.990	0.993	0.986
SSP	0.618	0.918	0.784	0.592

Source: Own elaboration

Of course, the results of the pre-test are not meaningful due to the small number of participants and cannot be seen as representative measures for the scales. However, the reliability and validity values mentioned above suggest that the constructs are meaningful, and no major problem would be expected. In order to remove potential hurdles as proactively as possible, the following adjustments are nevertheless made in the survey:

1. In order to reinforce the focus on SE for the participants within the questions, the term "Sales Enablement" is added to the question headings and highlighted in bold.
2. The term "Sales Enablement" is always highlighted in bold in the relevant questions.
3. Two control questions were added to the 2nd order multi-item construct "Performance" which belongs to the construct SSP.

a. "Thanks to our sales enablement program, my quota attainment (=annual achievement in %) has improved".
b. "Thanks to our sales enablement program, my sales performance (= e.g. effective customer relationships, effective presentations, etc.) has improved".

If participants answer with a negative categorization, this would be a very exciting finding that might put many things into relative terms. It was differentiated between the quota attainment and the sales performance, since the quota attainment is normally measured in percentage. For example, a salesperson could have a quota attainment below 100% which means they missed their target, but their sales performance could still have been strong. It could be that salespeople confirm a positive impact of SEP on their sales performance, while they could still argue that there was no impact from SEP on their actual quota attainment. The rest of the survey is left untouched.

V – RESULTS

V - RESULTS

The actual results of investigating the positive and negative impacts of SEPs on SSP in the SaaS industry via an adapted JD-R model, are summarized in this chapter.

The chapter summarizes the quantitative findings, split up into socio-demographic data, descriptive statistics, and measurement model assessment. The descriptive statistics include a detailed description of normalized variables, Pearson correlation, and outer loadings. The model assessment in the following chapter includes reliability and validity statistics (incl. Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability and average variance extracted), the discriminant validity Fornell-Larcker criterion, loadings of the outer measurement model as well as cross factor loadings and construct reliability. The tested hypotheses are summarised in chapter 5.5. At the end a visualization of the tested hypotheses within the structural equation model is shown.

5.1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

In total, 732 people participated in the survey. 276 participants directly responded "no" to the first control question regarding employment with a SaaS company. Therefore, their participation was automatically cancelled after page one. However, the survey tool at least counted their participation. By removing all fulfilled surveys with missing values in sections one through eight, 385 completed surveys remain. Within the 385 surveys, there are nine with an incomplete page nine, which were nevertheless taken into account in order not to lose their feedback on the constructs and the weight of the socio-demographic data is very low at only 2%. Consequently, the analysis is based on the data from 385 questionnaires. Accordingly, the requirements for a sample size of at least 51 were clearly overfilled.

The socio-demographic data of the sample is described in the following, starting with the description of data about the salespeople before describing the companies. The complete data is available in the appendix.

Salespeople from 23 countries completed the survey. Almost half of them come from the USA. The second largest group is Germany, with around 12%, followed by the Netherlands with just under 8%. Ireland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain, and Northern Ireland each account for around 5%. The remaining 22% are spread across 18 countries.

Only a quarter of respondents are women, while around three quarters are men. Less than 1% stated that they were diverse. A quarter of respondents stated that they were single. In contrast, almost three quarters are in a relationship, around 30% have one or more children, and less than 1% are single parents.

While all participants were over 18 years old, around 6% are under 25. 56% of the largest age group is up to 34 years old. This is immediately followed by the second-largest group at 30%, which is up to 44 years old. Only 6% are up to 54 years old, and only 2 up to 64 years old.

At 95%, the overwhelming majority have an academic degree (65% Bachelor's degree, 30% Master's degree and 0.5% PhD / Doctoral degree). In contrast, around 2% have an A-level, and around 1% have no degree. Middle School and Apprenticeship are both below 1%

In terms of sales experience, only 11% have up to 2 years. The largest group (34%) has up to 5 years of experience. This is directly followed by the second largest group, with 28% with up to 10 years, and the third largest group with 15% with up to 15 years. In each case, 6% have up to 20 years or more.

At around 77%, the vast majority of respondents have only been with their current employer for one to two years. Around 20% have been there for up to 5 years. Only 3% have been there for up to 10 years. Less than 1% have been with the company for longer.

In terms of job title, around 38% of respondents gave the most legal title of Commercial Account Executive, while 12% work as Mid-Market Account Executive. Most respondents (42%) gave the job title Enterprise Account Executive, while the fewest (7%) held the position of Major Account Executive.

Around 72% of respondents did not achieve their annual target: 13% achieved up to 29%, while 23% achieved up to 59%. The largest group, 37%, achieved up to 99% of their target. The one-third that achieved the quota reported an annual target achievement of around 20%, with 5% achieving up to 159%. Above this, only 1% reached up to 199% and 2% achieved more.

At 91%, the overwhelming majority of respondents are employed by SaaS companies headquartered in the US. The remaining 9% are spread across 11 countries, with around 2% of employees reporting headquarters in Belgium and Germany, respectively.

11% of those surveyed stated that they work for a company with up to 999 employees, while 19% are employed by employers with up to 4,999 employees. Companies with 5,000 to 9,999 employees have the largest share, as around 66% of respondents work there. Only 3% work for companies with over 10,000 employees, and only 2% work for companies with over 50,000 employees.:

In total 15 survey participants shared feedback:

- Four comments on: Requirements not taken into account due to cultural differences when the SEP is defined centrally by a company with headquarters in the USA
- Three comments on: Company does not really operate an SEP

- Two comments on: SE increases the workload for salesperson
- Two comments on: Other factors for the success of a salesperson outside of SEP
- Two comments on: SEP is extremely relevant
- One comment on: SEP sets the wrong focus, lacks customer needs, industry trends, etc.
- One comment on: Questions were not precise enough

5.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The entire range of responses was observed for all latent variables. The constructs are symmetrical, which means that positive and negative responses are in balance. The skewness and kurtosis of the standardised constructs correspond to the assumptions of the normal distribution (Miles & Shevlin, 2001), shown in the following table.

Table 20: Descriptive statistics of normalized variables

	Mean	Median	Scale min	Scale max	Standard deviation	Custosis	Skewness
Complexity (COMP)	0	0.12	-2.60	1.62	1.00	-0.59	-0.38
Contradictory demands (CONT)	0	-0.08	-1.76	2.36	1.00	-0.80	0.13
Efforts (EFFO)	0	0.03	-3.57	1.50	1.00	0.37	-0.55
Expensive selling (EXPE)	0	0.13	-2.85	1.63	1.00	0.07	-0.53
Less time (LESS)	0	0.10	-2.03	1.71	1.00	-0.93	-0.10
Performance (PERF)	0	0.09	-3.30	1.40	1.00	0.75	-0.88
SE motivation (SEM)	0	0.03	-3.43	1.48	1.00	0.24	-0.52
SE performance (SSP)	0	0.04	-3.36	1.59	1.00	0.75	-0.81
SE stress (SES)	0	0.02	-1.73	2.63	1.00	-0.68	0.21
SE workload (SEW)	0	0.09	-2.46	1.79	1.00	-0.78	-0.17
SE program (SEP)	0	0.20	-4.88	1.35	1.00	2.96	-1.33
Satisfaction (SATI)	0	0.04	-2.92	1.31	1.00	-0.16	-0.56
Technostress (TECH)	0	-0.17	-1.49	2.70	1.00	-0.50	0.43

Source: Own elaboration

The constructs show a high correlation of 0.5 and at least 0.3 to two other constructs in the following table as part of the Pearson correlation (Pearson, 1895). This implies that there is a significant and relevant relationship between the constructs. Since a linear relationship can be proven by the Pearson correlation, this is a prerequisite for the application of linear OLS regression.

Table 21: Pearson correlation (r)

	COMP	CONT	EFFO	EXPE	LESS	PERF	SEM	SSP	SES	SEW	SEP	SATI	TECH
COMP	1.00												
CONT	0.62	1.00											
EFFO	-0.16	-0.21	1.00										
EXPE	-0.13	-0.20	0.49	1.00									
LESS	0.74	0.69	-0.12	-0.14	1.00								
PERF	-0.26	-0.34	0.59	0.72	-0.26	1.00							
SEM	-0.19	-0.27	0.92	0.54	-0.16	0.65	1.00						
SSP	-0.23	-0.31	0.59	0.88	-0.23	0.96	0.66	1.00					
SES	0.62	0.95	-0.20	-0.19	0.68	-0.33	-0.25	-0.30	1.00				
SEW	0.93	0.71	-0.15	-0.15	0.94	-0.28	-0.19	-0.25	0.70	1.00			
SEP	-0.10	-0.21	0.44	0.39	-0.10	0.45	0.48	0.46	-0.21	-0.11	1.00		
SATI	-0.19	-0.28	0.76	0.52	-0.17	0.63	0.95	0.63	-0.26	-0.19	0.45	1.00	
TECH	0.54	0.79	-0.16	-0.15	0.59	-0.27	-0.20	-0.24	0.94	0.61	-0.19	-0.20	1.00

Source: Own elaboration

The following table shows the items' outer loadings to their corresponding constructs (HOC1). No items were excluded due to outer loading. Although the items EFFO1 (0.68), SEP7 (0.68), SEP8 (0.69) and TECH2 (0.68) are below the desired value of 0.7, they were not excluded because they are established constructs and, in particular, to ensure comparability with results from the established questionnaires. Thresholds are only slightly exceeded. This can be justified because the loadings are not significantly below the limit value (J. F. Hair et al., 2022; Ringle et al., 2018, 2022).

Table 22: Outer loadings (HOC1)

	COMP	CONT	EFFO	EXPE	LESS	PERF	SATI	SEP	TECH
COMP1	0.83								
COMP2	0.79								
COMP3	0.86								
COMP4	0.86								
CONT1		0.87							
CONT2		0.88							
CONT3		0.83							
CONT4		0.78							
EFFO1			0.68						
EFFO2			0.75						
EFFO3			0.85						
EFFO4			0.81						
EXPE1				0.86					
EXPE2				0.88					
EXPE3				0.83					
LESS1					0.80				
LESS2					0.83				

LESS3					0.92				
LESS4					0.87				
PERF1						0.85			
PERF2						0.88			
PERF3						0.86			
PERF4						0.81			
PERF5						0.88			
SAT1							0.76		
SAT2							0.91		
SAT3							0.90		
SAT4							0.91		
SEP1								0.73	
SEP2								0.86	
SEP3								0.80	
SEP4								0.80	
SEP5								0.70	
SEP6								0.77	
SEP7								0.68	
SEP8								0.69	
TECH1									0.83
TECH1									0.88
TECH2									0.68
TECH3									0.81

Source: Own elaboration

5.3 MEASUREMENT MODEL ASSESSMENT

Cronbach's alpha serves as a measure of the reliability of the measurement of a construct or internal consistency (Cronbach, 1951; Cronbach et al., 1965; David L. Streiner, 2003; Döring & Bortz, 2016). It is therefore a measure of how closely the elements of the construct are related as a group. As a rule, the measure is a value between 0 and 1. A negative Cronbach's alpha could indicate an error in the design. This can be the case, for example, if the polarity of score items is accidentally reversed, which can result in the mean value of all correlations between the items becoming negative. Consequently, the polarity should always be identical. A general guideline for Cronbach's alpha regarding reliability in the sense of internal consistency is (Blanz, 2015; David L. Streiner, 2003; Döring & Bortz, 2016):

- Strong: >0.90
- Very good: 0.80 – 0.90
- Respectable: 0.70 – 0.79
- Minimally acceptable: 0.60 – 0.69
- Unacceptable: <0.60

In addition to Cronbach's alpha, there is the composite reliability measure (CR), which is also known as the McDonald's coefficient (Jöreskog, 1971; Werts et al., 1974). This combines all the variances and covariances of the true scores in the composite of the items in relation to the constructs. This sum is then divided by the total variance in the composite. Like Cronbach's alpha, CR is a reliability indicator. However, Cronbach's alpha assumes that the factor loadings are identical for all items. In contrast, CR takes into account different factor loadings for all items. For CR, values below 0.7 are considered acceptable (Chin W, 1998).

The extent to which a latent construct explains or does not explain the variance of its items is expressed by the average variance extracted (AVE) (Fornell & Lackner, 1981). The lower the value, the worse the construct is or the less variance of the items is explained by the construct (J. Hair et al., 2017). To prevent the error

variance from being greater than the explained variance, which is considered unacceptable, an AVE of at least 0.5 is required (Chin W, 1998).

Only the SEP construct is first-order reflective. The other constructs are all second-order reflective. Cronbach's alphas between .817 and .909 all show very good and even strong internal consistency. Only EFFO indicates a respectable value with .776, while PERF indicates strong internal consistency (>0.90) (Blanz, 2015). The others indicate a very good value for alpha, CR, and AVE. The composite reliability values of all constructs are above the recommended thresholds of 0.7 (Chin W, 1998) and indicate excellent reliability for PERF, SATI, SEP, and SES (>0.90). While only EFFO indicated respectable reliability, all the other remaining constructs indicate very good reliability (0.80 – 0.90). All AVE values are above the recommended thresholds of 0.5 (Chin W, 1998). The following table shows the values in detail.

Table 23: Reliability and validity statistics

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
COMP	0.857	0.864	0.699
CONT	0.859	0.861	0.704
EFFO	0.776	0.784	0.602
EXPE	0.817	0.817	0.732
LESS	0.877	0.881	0.733
PERF	0.909	0.911	0.733
SATI	0.895	0.902	0.763
TECH	0.812	0.828	0.643
SEM (HOC2)	0.862	0.864	0.878
SSP (HOC2)	0.840	0.868	0.861
SEP	0.892	0.904	0.507
SES (HOC2)	0.881	0.900	0.893
SEW (HOC2)	0.851	0.855	0.870

Source: Own elaboration

In addition, the Fornell-Larcker ratio confirms the discriminant validity of the measurement, which is shown in the following two tables for HOC1 and HOC2. The Fornell-Larcker criterion was used to determine discriminant validity (Fornell & Lackner, 1981). This indicates how strongly or how weakly the constructs of the model correlate with each other. The square root of the AVE of a selected construct is compared with the correlation between this construct and other constructs. It is recommended that the square root of the AVE be higher than the correlation of the construct with the others. If this is the case, the individual construct offers great discriminatory power and, therefore, a unique explanatory power. It can be stated that all constructs correlate correspondingly strongly with themselves. For HOC1, the ratios for SEM, SSP, SES, and SEW are each at least 0.93, while only SEP is at 0.76.

Table 24: Discriminant validity Fornell-Larcker Criterion - HOC1

Con-struct	SEM	SSP	SEP	SES	SEW
SEM	0.937				
SSP	0.646	0.928			
SEP	0.476	0.452	0.755		
SES	-0.244	-0.283	-0.210	0.945	
SEW	-0.182	-0.234	-0.108	0.698	0.933

Source: Own elaboration

The Fornell-Lacker Criterion for HOC2 shows strongly correlating constructs too. Only EFFO shows a square roof of AVE of 0.776, while all others are at least at 0.802.

Table 25: Discriminant validity Fornell-Larcker Criterion - HOC2

Con-struct	CO-MP	CO-NT	EFFO	EXPE	LESS	PERF	SATI	TECH
COMP	0.836							
CONT	0.624	0.839						
EFFO	-0.155	-0.214	0.776					
EXPE	-0.134	-0.204	0.492	0.856				
LESS	0.741	0.687	-0.121	-0.137	0.856			
PERF	-0.258	-0.336	0.586	0.724	-0.256	0.856		
SATI	-0.192	-0.275	0.757	0.516	-0.168	0.631	0.874	
TECH	0.543	0.787	-0.159	-0.148	0.592	-0.269	-0.204	0.802

Source: Own elaboration

The quality of the measurements was assessed by analysing convergent validity, discriminant validity and internal consistency. Convergent validity was assessed by examining the reliability of the items for each convergent item (Campbell & Fiske, 1959); validity requires that the loadings of the items are 0.6 or greater. The outer loadings in reflective models are the core items that signal the trajectory of the latent variables in the direction of the observed variables. Consequently, they illustrate the absolute contribution of each observable variable or item to the definition of the construct or latent variable.

Within the model, all items had loadings well above 0.6. Only the loadings of SEP5, SEP7 and SEP8 are below 0.7. All other items are above, while CONT shows the highest loading with 0.954. The following table shows item loadings, which all have acceptable convergent validity and are retained for further analysis.

Table 26: Loadings of the outer measurement model - HOC2

Construct	Item	Outer Loading
SEM	SATI	0.941
	EFFO	0.933
SEP	SEP1	0.728
	SEP2	0.859
	SEP3	0.803
	SEP4	0.795
	SEP5	0.698
	SEP6	0.771
	SEP7	0.682
	SEP8	0.687
SES	CONT	0.954
	TECH	0.935
SEW	COMP	0.928
	LESS	0.938
SSP	EXPE	0.911
	PERF	0.944

Source: Own elaboration

In terms of discriminant validity: all loaded items are compared with the same construct as other variables in the following table. It is clearly confirmed that within the model, all items share the highest loadings with their own construct. Accordingly, the comparison meets criteria of discriminant validity (Chin W, 1998; Ringle et al., 2018; Weiber & Mühlhaus, 2014).

Table 27: Cross factor loadings and construct reliability

	SEM	SEP	SES	SEW	SSP
SATI	**0.941**	0.450	-0.257	-0.192	0.624
EFFO	**0.933**	0.441	-0.200	-0.147	0.585
SEP1	0.273	**0.728**	-0.174	-0.104	0.262
SEP2	0.447	**0.859**	-0.183	-0.057	0.364
SEP3	0.417	**0.803**	-0.179	-0.122	0.419
SEP4	0.411	**0.795**	-0.128	-0.078	0.387
SEP5	0.306	**0.698**	-0.160	-0.082	0268
SEP6	0.355	**0.771**	-0.220	-0.064	0.354
SEP7	0.305	**0.682**	-0.133	-0.073	0.345
SEP8	0.305	**0.687**	-0.091	-0.080	0.297
CONT	-0.262	-0.208	**0.954**	0.704	-0.298
TECH	-0.194	-0.188	**0.935**	0.609	-0.232
COMP	-0.186	-0.098	0.620	**0.928**	-0.218
LESS	-0.155	-0.103	0.680	**0.938**	-0.218
EXPE	0.538	0.385	-0.189	-0.145	**0.911**
PERF	0.650	0.448	-0.323	-0.275	**0.944**

Source: Own elaboration

5.4 HYPOTHESES TEST

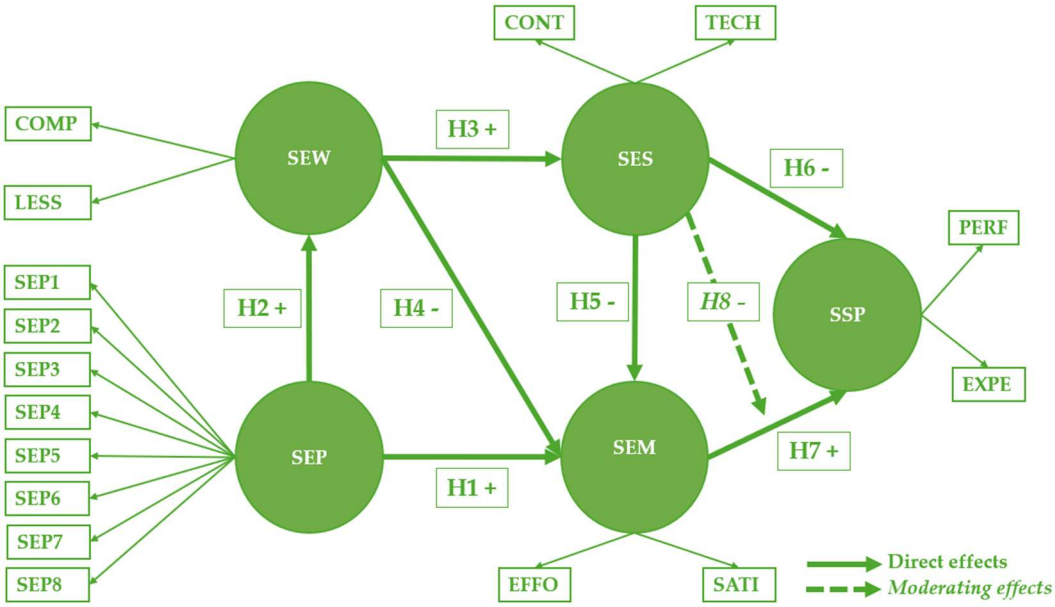
Before the hypotheses are tested one by one, they are summarised again here:

- H1: SEP increases salesperson's SE related motivation.
- H2: SEP increases the salesperson's SEP related workload.
- H3: SEP related workload increases salesperson's SEP related stress.
- H4: SEP related workload decreases salesperson's SEP related motivation.
- H5: Salesperson's SEP related stress decreases SE related motivation.
- H6: Salesperson's SEP related stress decreases its SE related sales performance.
- H7: SEP related motivation of salespeople increases salesperson's sales performance.

- H8: The positive effects of SEP on sales performance are weaker (stronger) when SEP related stress for salespeople is high (low)

The following figure shows a schematic illustration of the hypotheses within the structural equation model.

Figure 8: Hypotheses within structural equation model

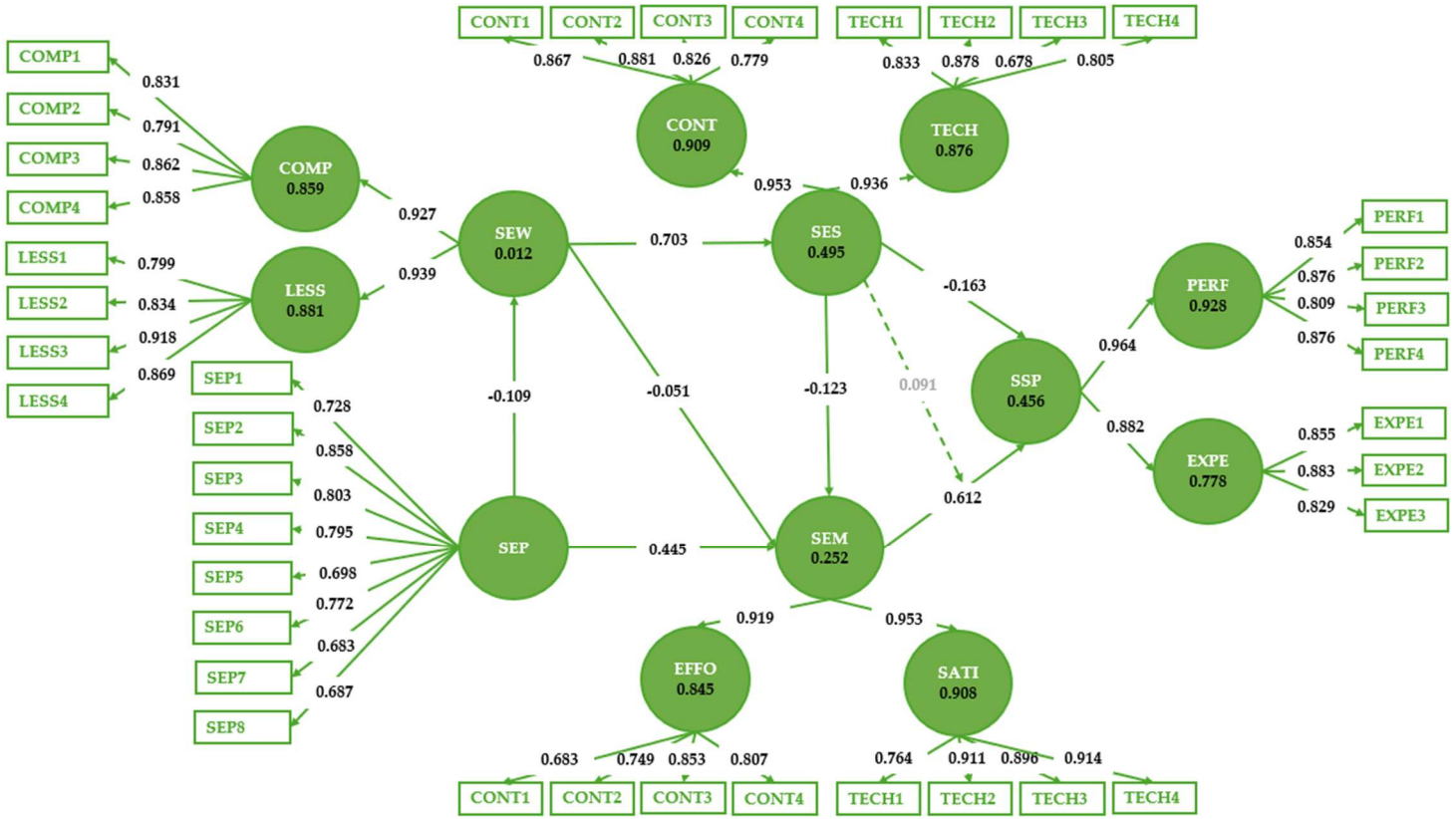


Source: Own elaboration

A structural equation model is made up of a measurement model as well as a structural equation linking latent variables. Factors drive the measurements that mirror the latent constructs. Relationship direction and causality are either a cause (formative) or an effect (reflective) model (J. F. Hair et al., 2022; Weiber & Mühlhaus, 2014). All constructs in the present model, SEP, SEW, SES, SEM, and SSP, are reflective in terms of their items. All items constitute an error-prone measure for the latent variable, while the direction of causality goes from the construct to the items. Accordingly, it is assumed that the observed measures mirror the variation in the latent construct. Consequently, a change in the construct will very likely result in a change in all items of the multi-item scale.

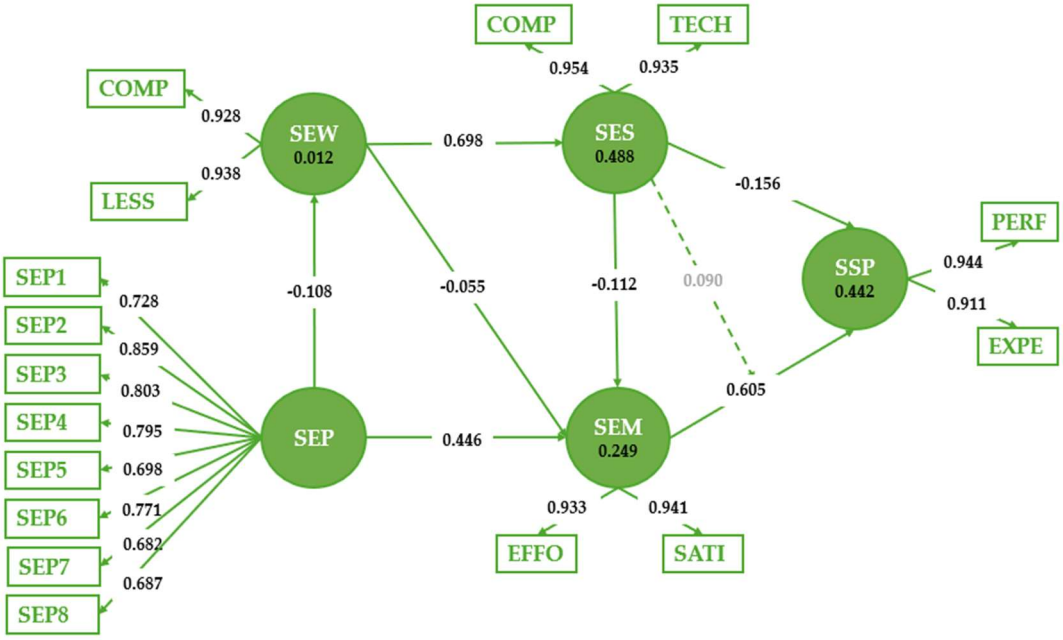
The following two figures and a table show the results of the PLS estimation with path models for HOC1 and HOC2.

Figure 9: Tested model (1st step, HOC1) with path coefficient



Source: Own elaboration

Figure 10: Tested model (2nd step, HOC2) with path coefficient



Source: Own elaboration

The HOC1 is based on a reflective-reflective model. From HOC1, the arrows point to the items that are reflective. Thus, the arrows represent the loads. Here, the numbers on the arrows represent the path coefficients between latent constructs or (outer) loadings between item and construct. Statements about the relative importance of the exogenous constructs for the prediction of the endogenous constructs can be made by comparing the relative sizes of significant path coefficients. The relationships among the reflective construct and the observed items are referred to as outer loadings.

In order to receive results with respect to hypothesis testing, a bootstrapping algorithm with 5,000 replications is applied. From eight paths, five showed significance while having positive and negative loadings, which is shown in the next table. It includes the following paths, which demonstrate a significant p-value of $p<.001$. To measure the relevance of the path coefficients, the effect size f^2 is given with a range between 0 and 1, while higher values indicate more relevant effects:

- "SEM -> SSP" with a loading of 0.61 and strong f^2 of 0.612.

- "SEP -> SEM" with a loading of 0.45 and f^2 of 0.253
- "SEP -> SEW" with a loading of -0.11 and a weak f^2 of 0.012
- "SES -> SSP" with a loading of -0.16 and a weak f^2 of 0.039
- "SES -> SES" with a loading of 0.70 and a strong f^2 of 0.951

Table 28: Path Coefficients, f^2 and total effects

	Path Coefficients / loadings / weight	t-statistics	p-values	Bias-corrected Bootstrap Interval		f^2
				2.5%	97.5%	
SEM -> SSP	0.61	12.45	<0.001*	0.504	0.697	0.612
SEP -> SEM	0.45	9.32	<0.001*	0.36	0.545	0.253
SEP -> SEW	-0.11	2.04	0.041*	-0.214	-0.008	0.012
SES -> SEM	-0.11	1.49	0.137	-0.255	0.041	0.008
SES -> SSP	-0.16	3.45	0.001*	-0.247	-0.070	0.039
SEW -> SEM	-0.06	0.80	0.424	-0.189	0.080	0.002
SEW -> SES	0.70	25.80	<0.001*	0.642	0.747	0.951
SES x SEM -> SSP	0.09	1.71	0.087	-0.018	0.185	0.014

* *indicates significant result*

Source: Own elaboration

The following table shows the conclusion of the hypothesis testing.

Table 29: Conclusion of hypotheses testing

Path	Path coefficient	t-value	p-value	f^2	Result
H1: SEP → SEM	0.45	9.32	<0.001*	0.253	confirmed
H2: SEP → SEW	-0.11	2.04	0.041*	0.012	not confirmed
H3: SEW → SES	0.70	25.80	<0.001*	0.951	confirmed
H4: SEW → SEM	-0.06	0.80	0.424	0.002	not confirmed
H5: SES → SEM	-0.11	1.49	0.137	0.008	not confirmed
H6: SES → SSP	-0.16	3.45	0.001*	0.039	confirmed
H7: SEM → SSP	0.61	12.45	<0.001*	0.612	confirmed
H8: SES x SEM → SSP	0.09	1.71	0.087	0.014	not confirmed

Confirm Note: Chi-square 756,955 & SRMS 0.074

Source: Own elaboration

For H1 the construct SEP shows a path coefficient of 0.45 to SEM ($p < 0.001$). Since the path is significant with a positive path coefficient, H1 can be confirmed. The effect strength f^2 with 0.253 is moderate: **SEP increases salesperson's SE related motivation.**

In contrast, H2 cannot be confirmed since the construct SEP has a small path coefficient of -0.11 to SEW. The path is still statistically significant with p = 0.041, but the negative loading does not match with the hypothesis. Accordingly, H2 cannot be confirmed: ~~**SEP increases the salesperson's SEP related workload.**~~

For H3, the construct SEW has a path coefficient of 0.70 to SES ($p < 0.001$). Due to the significant path and the strong positive loading, H3 can be confirmed. The effect strength f^2 with 0.951 is very strong: **SEP related workload increases salesperson's SEP related stress.**

Construct SEW has a path coefficient of -0.06 to SEM. Though the p-value of 0.424 is not significant. Therefore, H4 cannot be confirmed: ~~**SEP related workload decreases salesperson's SEP related motivation.**~~

For H5, the construct SES has a path coefficient of -0.11 to SEM, but a p-value of 0.137. Even if the path's negative loading would support H5, the path is not significant. Accordingly, H5 cannot be confirmed: ~~**Salesperson's SEP related stress decreases SE related motivation.**~~

Construct SES has a path coefficient of -0.16 to SSP ($p < 0.001$). Due to the significant path and the negative loading, H6 can be confirmed. The effect strength f^2 with 0.039 is low: **Salesperson's SEP related stress decreases its SE related sales performance.**

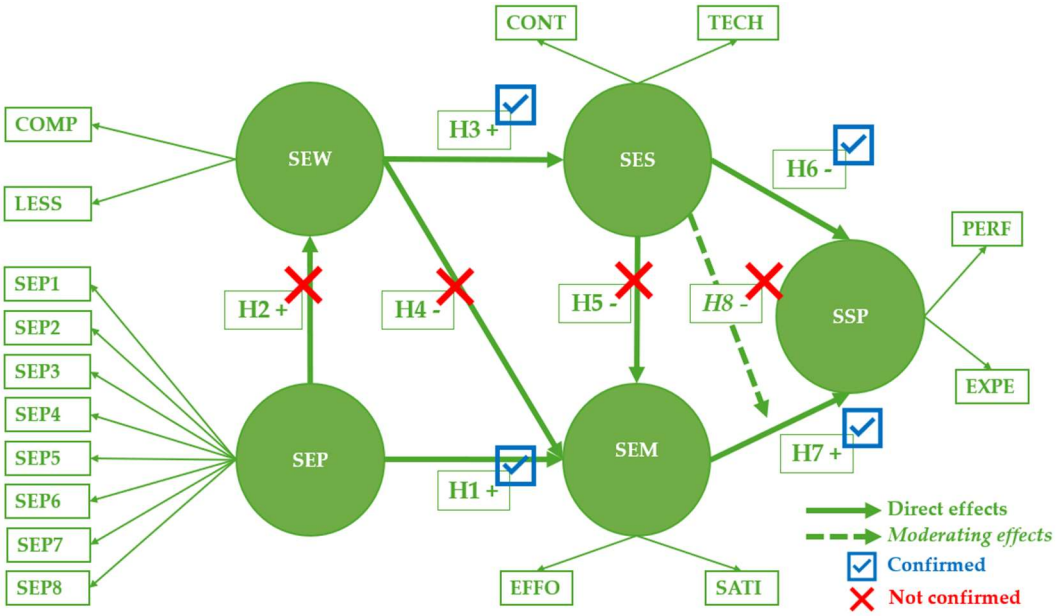
For H7, the construct SEM has a path coefficient of 0.61 to SSP. The significant path ($p < 0.001$) and the strong positive loading confirm H7. The effect strength f^2 with 0.612 is strong: **SEP related motivation of salespeople increases salesperson's sales performance.**

The moderating effect of SES on SEM has a path coefficient of 0.09 for SSP. However, the path is not significant (p = 0.087) which results in H8, which cannot

be confirmed: ~~**The positive effects of SEP on sales performance are weaker (stronger) when SEP related stress for salespeople is high (low).**~~

In summary, the following figure visualizes the schematic illustration of the tested hypotheses within the structural equation model:

Figure 11: Tested hypotheses within structural equation model



Source: Own elaboration

The coefficient of determination R^2 is indicated in the figure within circles. For the tested model in the first step (HOC1), the values are between 0 and 0.928. For the tested model in the second step (HOC), the values are between 0 and 0.488. The R^2 value specifies the proportion of the variance of the endogenous construct being explained through all the antecedent constructs linked to the endogenous construct. According to Chin W (1998) $R^2 \geq 0{,}33$ signals a moderate fit, and $R^2 \geq 0{,}67$ indicates a good fit.

The model fit in the sense of similarity between estimated (model) and observed (data) values was assessed using the Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value. It is described as the square root of the difference between the residuals of the sample covariance matrix compared to the hypothesised model. According to Henseler & Sarstedt (2013) a SRMR of <0.08 signals a good model fit. The SRMR of this study is SRMS 0.074, which indicates a good model fit.

VI – DISCUSSION

VI -DISCUSSION

The results of the positive and negative impacts of SEPs on SSP in the SaaS industry via an adapted JD-R model are discussed within this chapter. The summary of the results is in chapter 6.1. The research journey elaborates on the path of the last four years before the results from the literature and empirical research are summarised. Accordingly, theoretical and managerial implications are summarized in chapter 6.2. Limitations and future lines of research are listed in chapter 6.3.

6.1. RESEARCH RESULTS

6.1.1. Research journey

Fundamentally, this doctoral thesis is based on the research work of the last 4 years. Various approaches for models were developed. These included, for example, approaches that combined contingency theory and SE (Ginsberg & Venkatraman, 1985; Guenzi et al., 2016; Hofer, 1975; Porter et al., 2003; Williams et al., 2017) or focused on industrial buyer behaviour (Román & Martín, 2014; Sheth, 1973; Wind & Thomas, 2010). Ultimately, no model prevailed because there was already a lack of basic understanding of SE: It was not clear what the understanding of SE is within one organisation across hierarchies and functions. The attempt to close this research gap led to the publication of Lauzi et al. (2023). This significantly influenced the further procedures in this research work and in particular the model development, because the key findings were:

- SE understanding: Everyone perceives SE as a resource that serves sales, and SE is a key foundation for being successful in sales.
- SE set up: At the same time, all hierarchies and functions focus on their own/other focus areas. SE stretches from trainings to content, pipeline generation, CRM, and personal development.

- SE deployment: It is siloed and based upon personal interactions between functions and hierarchies.
- SE measurement: With the current setup, it is impossible to achieve reliable data for SE performance yet, and there are different targets for every function.

The clearly identified gap of varying understandings and expectations results in a gap between SE, as the resource offered by the employer, and expectations, as the demands of the employees (Lauzi et al., 2023). There is a gap in the sales function between the hierarchy's sales manager and salesperson. This is highly relevant: while organisations have major issues with the sales performance of the salesperson and at the same time invest more and more in SE, there still seems to be a disconnect regarding the salesperson, which could lead to challenges in the SE implementation, the SE measurement, and most of all the desired SSP (Baldauf et al., 2001). While Lauzi et al. (2023) had actually no primary focus on the question of the measurability of SE, this was nevertheless an important finding, as the possible implications of this can be very far-reaching. It raised the question: how can one ever check whether SEP works at all if an organisation fails to make it measurable at all? Accordingly, a model was developed that aimed to make the impact of SEP on SSP measurable based on a SE understanding from salespeople.

6.1.2. Results from literature research

It is understandable and in line with their role that the view on SE from managers is more strategically than from salespeople (Lauzi et al., 2023). However, the findings show that there is no mutual understanding of a SEP or the SE strategy itself. From an operational perspective SEP is often reduced as a knowledge building program which leads to the assumption that a general SE guideline or concept is missing. Of course, this could just be a one-off phenomenon within this one organisation. However, if one considers the SaaS-specific challenges (Buxmann et al., 2008; Capchase, 2023; Carrier et al., 2023; Cusumano, 2008; Dempsey & Kelliher, 2018; InnoVyne Technologies, 2020; Jain & Jaiswal, 2015; Ojala, 2013; Partners, 2023; Poyar & Kalevar, 2021; Tsai et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2013) as well as cross-industry

sales challenges or the fact that the annual targets are missed on a large scale (Borg & Young, 2014; Charoensukmongkol & Pandey, 2023; CSO Insights, 2017, 2018, 2019a; Ferry, 2021; Gartner, 2023; Guenzi & Nijssen, 2021; Hartmann et al., 2018; Hartmann & Lussier, 2020; Marrs, 2023; Paesbrugghe et al., 2018; Prater, 2021; Sharma et al., 2020; Xactly, 2021), the suspicion hardens: it could be that SEP is not only used too rarely, but that it is also not properly implemented strategically and operationally across functions and hierarchies (Lauzi et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the academic understanding of SE differs (B. Matthews & Schenk, 2018; R. M. Peterson et al., 2021; Rangarajan et al., 2020; Rapp & Beeler, 2021), since content is not considered a key pillar for SE managers as well as sales managers. In contrast, the other functions and hierarchies around marketers, salespeople, and inside sales perceived content as key. This is particularly interesting because even the managers responsible for the SEP apparently do not consider the content to be relevant. This is further evidence of the identified gap. Even more, it raises the suspicion that the lack of functional and cross-hierarchical understanding of SE could lead to inefficiencies. Consequently, this could have negative effects on the SSP (Lauzi et al., 2023).

Similar to a global study by R. M. Peterson & Dover (2021), there were also differences between the continents: While the EMEA managers tended to take a macro perspective, the US managers were strongly focused on enabling each in a hands-on way. The results are similar to those of the aforementioned study.

In addition to the primary SE stakeholder groups known in the literature, however, the very clear needs of a previously unknown fringe group have been discovered: The business development team, also known as inside sales, has different needs within the sales organisation, as the employee profile is different. As it is mainly young professionals who start here, they have much more basic SEP needs than a comparatively experienced salesperson who already has several sales jobs behind them. There is a growing body of literature on the needs of this inside sales function (Chaker et al., 2022; Conde et al., 2021; Knight et al., 2021; Ohiomah et al.,

2020), but there is still a lack of specific SE literature for this professional group (Lauzi et al., 2023).

By comparing the SE understanding of the participants with the current academic one, the following differences occur: Rapp & Beeler (2021) describe clearly the SEP setup from a sales technology perspective. One key element is an overarching SE technology platform. In contrast, the case study company only uses a CRM, a LMS and a central hub for content management. It is astonishing, because one might have predicted that such a SaaS industry innovator would be working with a mix of the latest tools for customer engagement, customer experience and sales enablement (Lauzi et al., 2023).

Another key finding is that all interviewees confirmed that it is impossible with the current technical setup to measure any impact of SEP. This is, of course, logical if the technology setup is as described above. However, it is still surprising that, even for such a global technology leader, it is virtually impossible to measure the effect of SEP on SSP in reality. It almost seems as if academic research appears to be further along in theory, even if it has not yet come up with a solution for measuring SEP on SSP (Lauzi et al., 2023).

6.1.3. Results from empirical research

While the statistics of the sample have already been described above, the comparative analysis of the sample reveals further research results. This is because some of the research results that can already be drawn from the sample confirm current literature.

With regard to the quality and scope of the sample, it can generally be stated that the sample adequately reflects the target group. The quantity of 385 completed surveys seems to be the world's biggest academic sample on salespeople in SaaS industry as well as within applied JD-R models for sales research - by the best of the author's knowledge. In comparison to the previously mentioned applied JD-R

models for sales research, their author's had between 144x (Guenzi & Nijssen, 2021) and up to 359x (Kuester & Rauch, 2016) fulfilled questionnaires from salespeople. In addition, it exceeds the requirements regarding a minimum number for a valid sample in the structural equitation model of J. F. Hair et al. (2022) by far.

It is reasonable to assume that the company sizes have correspondingly complete SE departments. The company in this case study now also belongs to this size category, although the SaaS company already had a corresponding SE department with significantly fewer employees at the time of the case study. Looking at the sample, it is noticeable that most, around 2/3, of the participants work for companies with 5,000-9,999 employees.

Within this sample of the SaaS industry, therefore, many more salespeople actually failed to achieve their annual target than in the previously described literature (CSO Insights, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019b; Marrs, 2023; Xactly, 2021). It is an impressively negative fact that 72% of the SaaS salespeople who took part did not achieve their annual target. In contrast, around 1/3 of salespeople have achieved their annual target. Only 2% are absolute high performers, with an annual target achievement of over 200%. Based on the literature presented above, which also comes from commercial sources, one could have assumed that this would have deliberately portrayed a sales reality that was too negative in order to better sell the corresponding consulting services or products. This possible assumption cannot be confirmed, as the result in the sample is even more negative. One possible theory for the comparatively high proportion of salespeople who missed their annual target could be that the literature primarily cites cross-industry annual target achievements or includes the entire IT industry, for example. This theory would support the assumption that the SaaS industry has particularly high requirements and complexities for salespeople due to its special characteristics, as explained above (Capchase, 2023; Carrier et al., 2023; Dempsey & Kelliher, 2018; Poyar et al., 2023; Tsai et al., 2014). Consequently, this theory would increase the relevance of SE for the SaaS industry all the more: because if over 70% of salespeople miss their annual targets, countermeasures through an SEP are essential.

Furthermore, the sample reflects the literature regarding the fast-moving nature of the SaaS industry and short salesperson tenures. This is because the vast majority, 77%, have been with their current employer for less than 2 years, with only a fifth having been with the same employer for up to 5 years. At 4%, salespeople who have been with the company for more than 5 years are relatively rare. One possible explanation for this breakdown is that successful salespeople are usually promoted to managers in order to lead and manage sales teams. In fast-growing companies, as is very often the case in the SaaS industry, the corporate calculation is that successful salespeople build successful sales teams as managers (Oh, 2017). As the company from the case study has already shown, the constant, strong global growth of a SaaS company requires permanent recruitment, onboarding, training, and coaching of salespeople all components of SEP. The respective manager plays a major role in this. Consequently, this statistical distribution also reflects the relevance of a functioning and measurable SEP.

The short period of employment contrasts with a high level of sales experience. Almost half of the participants have up to 5 years and a further 43% up to 15 years. This shows once again how high the willingness to switch to sales in SaaS is when the length of service is so short and is in line with findings in the literature (Fleming et al., 2022; Mallin & Ragland, 2017; L. Matthews et al., 2016; Westbrook & Peterson, 2020). At the same time, it shows the relevance for companies, firstly, to retain salespeople as employees and secondly, to empower them accordingly so that they reach their annual target and are not frustrated. Further confirmation of the relevance of SEP for employers and employees.

Salespeople in the SaaS industry is clearly a group of academics, with 65% of people having a bachelor's degree and 30% a master's degree. It can therefore at least be assumed that an SEP should not fail due to a lack of understanding of university structures, learning paths, etc.

For the hypothesis test, it is important to confirm that the applied JD-R model for SEP seems to be robust:

- Within the Pearson correlation, a high correlation of 0.5 and at least 0.3 to two other constructs is confirmed (Pearson, 1895)
- No items were excluded due to outer loading
- All constructs have significant factor loadings with Cronbach's alphas between .776 and .909 (Blanz, 2015; Cronbach et al., 1965)
- All constructs correlate most strongly with themselves and thus fulfil the Fornell-Lackner criterion (Fornell & Lackner, 1981)
- The required 0.6 or greater for convergent validity can be affirmed (Campbell & Fiske, 1959)
- The criteria of discriminant validity are clearly confirmed since all items share the highest loadings with their own construct (Chin W, 1998; Ringle et al., 2018; Weiber & Mühlhaus, 2014)
- Constructs have R^2 values in the range of a moderate fit of $R^2 \geq 0{,}33$ and good fit of $R^2 \geq 0{,}67$ (Chin W, 1998)
- A good model fit is indicated by fulfilling the requirement of Henseler & Sarstedt (2013) with a SRMR below 0.08

With regard to the different constructs, it is noticeable that all constructs and their items could be confirmed after the pretest. On the one hand, this shows how valuable a pretest can be and is actually indispensable for such a study (Buschle et al., 2021; Collins, 2003; Hunt et al., 1982).

In addition, the derivation and merging of the items into corresponding constructs from the various adapted JD-R models worked well. This may be due to the modular and flexible concept of the JD-R model and its associated robustness (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Demerouti et al., 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Taris & Schaufeli, 2016; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). While the model is sometimes criticised for being too arbitrary (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014), this characteristic definitely paid off in the present study. However, the modification in the respective SE context also contributed to this.

In terms of the composition of the constructs, it is particularly interesting that all items could be confirmed within SEP. This includes item SPE4: Our organization creates sales content that enhances my productivity (e.g., customer case studies, white papers, product demo decks, etc.). As shown in the case study already, content plays an important role for salespeople. This is in line with theory (R. M. Peterson & Dover, 2020; Santucci, 2010). Furthermore, it stresses the question of why content is not relevant for other SE relevant functions and hierarchies, which is an outcome of the case study.

It seems logical and comprehensible that H1 can be proven within the model: SEP increases salesperson's SE related motivation. Given that all participants in the case study already talk about the importance of SEP across functions and hierarchies, it seems only logical that SEP can increase the salesperson's motivation. There are also many indications within the literature (Bowen et al., 2022; B. Matthews & Schenk, 2018; Westbrook & Peterson, 2020). After all, if sales enablement is seen as the foundation of sales success, it must be in the salesperson's own best interests (Westphal et al., 2022). In this respect, both academic research and commercial providers are heading in the same direction because SE vendors offer exactly this expectation (Frost, 2021; Seismic, 2023a; Showpad, 2023b).

H2 "SEP increases the salesperson's SEP related workload" cannot be proven within the current model. This is astonishing because de facto SEP means a corresponding workload for the salesperson by carrying out training and coaching, dealing with new content, learning new sales methodologies, etc., all of which should increase the workload. All processes that should increase the workload. As described earlier, there is a whole range of SE-related tasks for sales staff in the literature that increase their workload (Bowen et al., 2022; Görne & Bäurle, 2022; Graesch et al., 2022). Of course, SEP can also save time, but the workload should increase at the same time. However, this raises the following questions:

1. Is the SE-related workload perhaps only perceived when the salesperson is new and in the onboarding phase while it has to do training and coaching anyway? Does it therefore not feel like an "additional" workload?

2. Does the positive overall perception of SEP outweigh any workload for the salesperson?
3. Does the salesperson offset any time saved through SEP with a potential SE related workload? For example, when creating marketing content, the salesperson saves time.

Another indication of why H2 should have been proven: All items of the first-order construct SEP were confirmed by the data of the 385 participants. All the components of SEP provide a workload. This is a topic for future research to understand the exact context in order to be able to clearly categorise what the SE-related workload is and how the salesperson perceives it.

Even performing multi-group analyses with different compositions of experienced vs. inexperienced salesperson, successful vs. unsuccessful salesperson or new employees vs. old employees could not provide any insight.

H3 "SEP related workload increases salesperson's SEP related stress" can be confirmed within the current model. Before devoting more attention to H3, this realisation must first be related to H2, which cannot be confirmed. With a strong loading of 0.70 and a strong F2 of 0.951, the salesperson ultimately confirms that SEW has a strong effect on SES. This is particularly surprising as it could not be proven in the investigation of H2 that SEP has an effect on SEW. This could suggest that the question regarding SEP -> SEW was formulated incorrectly, but this requires future research.

In itself, it is already completely uncharted ground within academic research that H3 can be confirmed. This is because there have been no studies to date that have investigated both the workload and the stress that could be generated by SE. Within the present model, the SaaS salesperson confirmed the relationship to SES as significant, relevant, and strong. To date, there is one study by Westbrook & Peterson (2020) that relates SEP to turnover intentions, hindrance stressors and

burnout among salespeople. However, there is no research on the stress generated by SE per se.

In contrast to H3, H4 cannot be proven: "SEP related workload decreases salesperson's SEP related motivation." This could be consistent with the unproven H1. Because if no effect of SEP on SEW can be proven in the present model, it could make sense in terms of content that an effect of SEW on SEM cannot be proven either. Assuming that there is an SE-related workload, the construct SEW with its impact mechanisms may not be optimally represented in the existing model. On the other hand, this hypothesis could perhaps not be proven, as the positive attributes of SE are so strongly superimposed on SEW that salespeople do not allow anything negative to affect their SEM. However, this is just an assumption, as there are no findings on SEW in the existing literature.

Likewise, H5 cannot be proven: "Salesperson's SEP related stress decreases SE related motivation." Although a slightly negative loading of -0.11 can be measured, it is not significant. Since both H4 and H5 could not be proven, there is no negative relationship to SEM in the present model. Perhaps there is a positive relationship between SEM, SEW, and SEP instead. Unfortunately, there are few findings in the literature focussing on SE, but one could deduce from the JD-R model from Westbrook & Peterson (2020) that their SEP already has positive effects on negative aspects of the salesperson. According to their model, SEP reduces hindrance stressors, burnout, and turnover intentions. Consequently, SE could have a kind of healing effect. It is questionable whether this only emanates directly from SEP, as in the case of the authors, or also directly from SEM. However, this is also a question for future research.

The proof of H6 can have a major impact on theory and practice: Salesperson's SEP related stress decreases its SE related sales performance. With a slight negative loading of -0.16 and a low P value of 0.039, it is not the strongest relationship in the model. However, the hypotheses were clearly confirmed. For the first time, it has been proven that something initiated by SEP has a negative effect on

the ultimate goal of SEP: increasing sales performance. This realisation is fundamental for further research on SE, because up until now, SE has been viewed exclusively as a positive resource. This realisation is also extremely relevant in practice, as management must be aware that well-intentioned SE measures can turn negative as a result of SES and thus negatively impact the already poor sales performance, which is actually logical.

Like H6, H7 can also be proven SEP related motivation of salespeople increases salesperson's sales performance. With this proof, SE ultimately fulfils its raison d'être. Because of the model presented, SEP has a positive influence on SEM. SEM, in turn, has a positive relationship with SSP. With a charge of 0.61 and an f2 of 0.612, both values are among the second highest in the model (the highest values were at H3: SEW --> SES).

With this proof, SE ultimately fulfils its raison d'être. Because of the model presented, SEP has a positive influence on SEM. SEM, in turn, has a positive relationship with SSP. With a charge of 0.61 and an f2 of 0.612, both values are among the second highest in the model (the highest values were in H3: SEW --> SES). Naturally, the model must be interpreted precisely, and it must be emphasised that the relationship from SEM to SSP was proven here and not directly from SEP to SSP. However, it seems logical and comprehensible that SEM can only arise through SEP.

This evidence can also be used to justify the positive effect of SE frequently shown in the academic literature (Bowen et al., 2022; Gartner, 2021; Görne & Bäurle, 2022; B. Matthews & Schenk, 2018; R. M. Peterson & Dover, 2020, 2021; Rangarajan et al., 2020)and the expectations propagated by the SE vendors.

In contrast, the moderating effect in H8 could not be proven: the positive effects of SEP on sales performance are weaker (stronger) when SEP related stress for salespeople is high (low). This seems logical, as no relationship between SES and

SEM has been proven so far (H5). In addition, no relationship between SEW and SEM could be proven (H5).

Of course, there is research that analyses SE according to objectives, e.g. what are the desired performance goals by region (R. M. Peterson & Dover, 2021), but there was no model that measures positive and negative SEP effects on SSP. The model is based on the first SE research with the focus of just one company to understand all involved SE stakeholders. In total, the proven, robust model still has potential to be improved. However, it is a valid starting point for theorists to conduct further research as well as for practitioners to use the questionnaire including model evaluation directly in practice in order to actually measure the effect of SE in their own organisation. This would be an innovation that none of the participants in the expert interviews had previously thought possible. In total the proven, resilient model still has potential to be improved. However, it is a valid starting point for theorists to conduct further research as well as for practitioners to use the questionnaire including model evaluation directly in practice in order to actually measure the effect of SE in their own organisation. This would be an innovation that none of the participants in the expert interviews had previously thought possible. Even if the use of an online survey may seem trivial compared to a fully automated, data-pool-spanning analysis tool for sales activities.

6.2. THEORETICAL AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.2.1. Theoretical implications

In particular, the combination of expert interviews within one SaaS company (Lauzi et al., 2023) and quantitative research across the whole SaaS industry showed strong implications: Within the expert interviews, everybody within the SaaS company perceives SEP as crucial for sales success, and everybody has a varying understanding of SEP. No one is able to measure the impact of SEP on SSP. There is no correlation between SEP and SSP. In contrast, a model was developed within the quantitative study that actually made the impact of SEP on SSP measurable. With both its positive and negative implications.

The online survey as well as Lauzi et al. (2023) show clear implications in numerous areas: Existing SE research aimed to understand the concept of SE (R. M. Peterson et al., 2021), identify the state of SE practices across organisations globally (R. M. Peterson & Dover, 2021) and provide a conceptual framework for SE effectiveness (Rangarajan et al., 2020). However, there is still a gap in the understanding of how SEP is lived within one organisation specifically. Therefore, the expert interviews aimed to understand how SEP is implemented and used within a single organisation. In particular, within one organisation across all SE relevant stakeholder functions and hierarchies, since there is no research about it in place.

This gap must be addressed as each organisation is confronted with its own sales challenges, existing sales systems, and processes, as well as its own constraints that play a crucial role in understanding the factors that determine the success of SE. Hence, an in-depth case study is an opportunity to understand what factors really influence SEP in organisations. The findings from Lauzi et al. (2023), in combination with those from the cross-industry focus of R. M. Peterson et al. (2021), could provide further insights into possible boundary conditions that could promote or hinder the effectiveness of SEPs. This could drive future research to improve the SSP.

What definitely stands out are the findings about the disparity between the general consensus on the crucial importance of SE and the very different views on what exactly SE is and how it should best be used. In addition, results indicate there is a mismatch between management's perceptions of sales enablement and those of other business functions. Thus, SEP should be clearly communicated and defined by the top hierarchical level in consultation with middle management, as middle management must implement the concrete realisation of SEP. As a result, there is a risk that SEP will not be correctly understood and implemented, which could result in a weaker SSP. The study from Lauzi et al. (2023) clearly showed that there is no standardised understanding of SEP.

In general, the topic of sales and marketing alignment is not new in academic research (Corsaro, 2022; Dannenberg & Zupancic, 2008; Hartmann et al., 2018; Mero & Taiminen, 2016; R. M. Peterson et al., 2015). However, Lauzi et al. (2023) found out that marketing and sales are already an increasingly homogeneous function within the same organisation. New players, however, are functions such as sales operations and marketing operations, which are also intended to support sales from other perspectives (Gottlieb et al., 2020; Hochstein et al., 2021). Assuming that SE, as defined in the introduction, is "a set of cross-functional initiatives within an organization aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the sales force" (Lauzi et al., 2023, p. 48), then an expanded understanding that includes the new functions becomes increasingly critical. A silo mentality in organisations is not beneficial, in line with previous studies.

In addition to the expert interviews (Lauzi et al., 2023), the online survey provided new theoretical implications: both the positive and negative attributes of SE were analysed. The confirmed hypotheses regarding the mechanisms of action of SEP on SEM to SSP and SEW on SES to SSP provide important stimuli for research. The implications of the first-time appearance of negative effects through SE, which was previously considered exclusively as a positive solution, should be analysed in depth and across all sectors. Similarly, research should closely examine the specific measurement of SEP across different pathways on SSP. After all, this theoretical research has an immense impact on practice.

While SE has so far been analysed more conceptually, the figures from the online survey reveal acute areas of research for which there is an urgent need for solutions: If only 28% of salespeople achieve their annual target, how can you understand the knowledge, skills, and approach of these 28% in order to incorporate them directly into the SEP? This requires intensive research. At the end of the day, practice needs impulses from research in order to transfer the proportion of overperformers (annual target achievement >200%) from currently only 2% to more salespeople. The rapid changeover times of the sales staff are already known in science. However, there is currently no concept in the SEP context for retaining sales staff accordingly. Pioneering work was done by (Westbrook & Peterson, 2020) with their research, but there is still no solution for an integrated SEP concept.

6.2.2. Managerial implications

A relatively dramatic managerial implication results from the combination of the findings from Lauzi et al. (2023) and the empirical research of this doctoral thesis: All interviewees confirmed that it is not possible to measure the effectiveness of the SEP. At the same time, the empirical research showed that all attendees work at companies that have SEPs in place, while only one-third of salespeople meet their quotas. Accordingly, it seems that SEPs are failing in reality, with so many salespeople not hitting their quota. As companies spend more and more on SEP, alarm bells should be ringing for management since the impact of SEP is not measurable in reality – otherwise, the quota achievement would probably be higher. Accordingly, the managerial implication is that there is a very high chance to keep on failing with the SEP and even with the company's sales performance at all when the SEP not become measurable.

Another clear managerial implication is the high risk of churning salespeople, which can be confirmed both in the sample and in the literature (Guenzi & Nijssen, 2021; Pullins et al., 2020). The relevance of a functioning SEP is not only for sales performance, but also to ensure that salespeople do not leave the company. The statistics from the sample clearly show that many salespeople have many years of sales experience but have only been employed by the company for a short time, which suggests rapid turnover cycles. This is an important managerial implication in particular: if you look at the SaaS company as a whole, which is often experiencing strong growth (Dan, 2007; Howarth, 2024; Klein et al., 2024; Partners, 2023), reliable and loyal salespeople are essential for the company's success. Thinking one step further, a successful SEP could even attract good salespeople and be used as a company differentiator.

It is self-explanatory that the definition of clear objectives and the associated measurement of performance across functions and hierarchies are essential for SEP (Guenzi & Habel, 2020; Knight et al., 2021). At the same time, this still presents

companies and consequently management with a major challenge: in order to be able to really assess the effectiveness of an SEP within a company on the basis of data, a wide variety of data pools would have to be connected. For example, in order to be able to analyse the effectiveness of a customer presentation created by marketing, it would have to be automatically analysed: when did which salesperson communicate the presentation to which customer in which way, to what extent did the customer look at this file afterwards, how does it continue in the sales cycle, when is it closed, at what price was it sold, etc.? Today, companies already have the appropriate tools to analyse salesperson-customer interactions, for example, right through to the automatic transcription of video conferences with speaking parts, etc. (Dasser, 2019; Mero & Taiminen, 2016; Thaichon et al., 2018) However, this data would have to be linked with that from the CRM, CMS, LMS, etc. While SE vendors are already advertising more and more (Highspot, 2023a; Seismic, 2023c; Showpad, 2023a), the reality is quite different, even for very modern companies like the one in the case study.

Assuming that a completely data-supported concept that automatically correlates all insights is not yet achievable, the simplest solution would perhaps be to use this model in practice as a questionnaire. Perhaps the easiest way to actually measure the success of the SEP is a direct, revolving survey of the salesperson.

When 72% of salespeople fail to reach their target, alarm bells must ring both in practice (and in theory). This raises urgent questions for companies:

- How can companies empower the 72% of salespeople to achieve more?
- How can companies find out what the other 28% of salespeople are doing and ensure a transfer of expertise?
- How can companies prevent frustrated employees from leaving?
- How do companies keep the 28% of salespeople who perform accordingly?
- How can companies keep the absolute overperformers?

The direct relationships on SSP are extremely relevant for managers because ultimately everything revolves around SSP. The implications are clear: in practice,

SES must be minimized, and SEM maximised. There is a lot of literature in research on both stress reduction (Arnold et al., 2009; Bakker & de Vries, 2020; L. L. Beeler et al., 2020; Fleming et al., 2022; Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008; Robert A. Karasek, 1979) and motivation building (Churchill Jr. et al., 1985; Jaramillo et al., 2007; Mallin & Ragland, 2017; Walker JR. et al., 1977). However, there are still no solutions in practice to find the fine line between adequate SEW and optimum efficiency. Perhaps a simple survey based on the tried and tested model would also help here to achieve specific results as quickly and easily as possible.

6.3. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE LINES OF RESEARCH

6.3.1. Limitations

As in all research, the following limitations must be taken into account: A direct transfer to other sectors outside the SaaS industry is not easily possible, as this industry has corresponding special features that do not apply to the building materials industry, for example.

Based upon the key findings of Lauzi et al. (2023) the applied model JD-R was developed. However, it has to be taken into consideration that these key findings are limited by the fact that they come only from one organisation. Though it can be clearly shown that the findings are coherent with other research on SE (R. M. Peterson & Dover, 2021; Rapp & Beeler, 2021; Westphal et al., 2022). In addition, the empirical work of this doctoral thesis supports the findings too: all participants from the same function and hierarchy actually have a very similar understanding of SEP, as the SEP construct could be confirmed with all available items. Nevertheless, the case study should be seen as just one of many steps towards a better and more comprehensive understanding of SE.

Only salespeople were interviewed in the online survey. The model does not allow any conclusions to be drawn about the relevant role of inside sales within the SaaS industry. Both the literature and the case study have already highlighted the

special needs of this group belonging to the sales department (Chaker et al., 2022; Conde et al., 2021; Thaichon et al., 2018). The model would probably have to be adapted accordingly for this target group, e.g., SEP would have to be supplemented with appropriate personality development measures.

The other SE stakeholders such as marketing, sales operations, SE department and sales management were also left out. These could still be used to further develop the model.

Within the model, it was shown that SEM has a strong effect on SSP. However, it could also be that there is a trade-off here: because a very good sales performance can also have a positive effect on motivation. The model should therefore be analysed for further relationships and effects.

6.3.2. Future research

Since H2 cannot be confirmed, it raises the question for future research to evaluate how SE related workload can be investigated in the best way. It is a fact that SEP includes tasks which increase the workload for salespeople. However, it could be that salespeople do only have this increased workload within onboarding periods. Another option is that they just perceive SEW as part of their daily routine, that could be a reason why they do not perceive it as additional workload. Future research should take an open-ended approach to the research question in order to check whether the issue should be investigated using a different research methodology or whether there is actually no SE-related workload.

The proof of H3 is definitely a gain for research. Until now, this connection was not known or had not been investigated. Future research should urgently investigate the negative effects of SE. Stress generated by SE ultimately reduces SSP.

If SEW is analysed, the relationship between SEW and SEM should also be investigated directly. It is difficult to imagine that SEW has no effect whatsoever on SEM. It could also be that a high SE-related motivation actually reduces the perceived SEW, i.e. an opposite effect to that assumed in H4. Since H5 could not be proven, maybe it has to be asked if SEM has a positive relation with SES too.

The effects of SES and SEM on SSP were demonstrated in the present model. The participants showed that SEM has a positive influence on SSP, while SES has a negative influence. As more than 70% of the distributors did not reach their quota, the question now arises as to why this value is so high. There could be various reasons for this:

Maybe the period of employment is still too short, so that the SEP has not been able to have its full effect on the salesperson. In addition, the sales cycle can be correspondingly long, which can lead to a corresponding delay in the positive influence of the SEP until the successful conclusion. In the SaaS industry in particular, sales cycles have recently become longer (Capchase, 2023). Perhaps the SES was too high, triggered by SEW. Or, conversely, the question arises as to how low the quota attainment would actually have been without SEP. For future research, it could be very appealing to do more research on the effectiveness and efficiency of SEPs in order to better set up SEPs and ultimately measure their effects on SSPs and adjust them over time.

Future research could also address the question of why content is not relevant for all functions and hierarchies in practice, while content is a basic SE component in theory. It also appears that managers do not necessarily consider the recruitment process as part of the SE process, which should also be investigated as there is very little research on SE frameworks.

VII – CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

VII - CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

This chapter includes a comprehensive summary of the thesis (chapter 7.1). It supports the theoretical aspects as well as insights for practioners. The doctoral thesis ends with an outlook to zoom out of the research topic (chapter 7.2).

7.1. CONCLUSION

As a whole, this chapter is a comprehensive overview of the research findings that underpins the theoretical aspects discussed in the dissertation and delivers insights for practitioners and researchers interested in the field of SE.

The overall objective of the dissertation is to examine the MRQ:

What are the positive and negative effects of SEP on salesperson's SSP in the SaaS industry?

To investigate this central hypothesis in more detail, 4 RQs were derived from the prevailing literature. The literature review (chapter II) starts with a breakdown of SaaS industry (chapter 2.1) and continues with a broad review of SE (chapter 2.2). The intention is to cover the entire academic SE literature. It is clear that SE is still a young discipline because the academic literature is limited. The JD-R model literature is then examined in depth, while the focus of JD-R models is on sales research (chapter 2.3). Based on the literature review of SE as well as JD-R and in particular of the publication Lauzi et al. (2023) within this doctoral program, the theoretical model is conceptualized (chapter 3.1) and the hypothesis 1 – 8 are developed (chapter 3.2). In order to be able to analyse the RQ and hypotheses, the material, and methods of are explained (chapter 4). The comprehensive results are summarised (chapter 5) with. Based on this, all hypotheses are either confirmed or not (chapter 5.5). In the discussion, the research results are first listed (chapter 6.1) before the corresponding theoretical and managerial implications are derived

(chapter 6.2). Limitations are then summarised, and future research areas identified (chapter 6.3). The following figures summarizes the conclusion of RQs 1 - 3 and H 1 – 8.

Figure 12: Conclusion of research questions and hypotheses

Research question (RQ)	Hypotheses (H)	Conclusion
RQ1: What is the positive impact of SEP on salesperson in SaaS Industry?	H1: SEP increases salesperson's SE related motivation.	**Confirmed**
RQ2: What is the negative impact of SEP on salesperson in SaaS Industry?	H2: SEP increases the salesperson's SEP related workload.	**Not confirmed**
	H3: SEP related workload increases salesperson's SEP related stress.	**Confirmed**
	H4: SEP related workload decreases salesperson's SEP related motivation.	**Not confirmed**
	H5: Salesperson's SEP related stress decreases SE related motivation.	**Not confirmed**
RQ3: How does SEP with its potentially positive and negative correlations impact the salesperson's sales performance in SaaS industry?	H6: Salesperson's SEP related stress decreases its SE related sales performance.	**Confirmed**
	H7: SEP related motivation of salespeople increases salesperson's sales performance.	**Confirmed**
	H8: The positive effects of SEP on sales performance are weaker (stronger) when SEP related stress for salespeople is high (low)	**Not confirmed**

Source: Own elaboration

Within the present study, it became clear that the SE literature is limited. Since the end of the 20th century, the role and nature of B2B sales has been evolving, mainly due to technological, organisational, and social changes. However, the literature has not yet caught up with this development (Ohiomah et al., 2020). Especially in the SaaS industry, the requirements for salespeople are very high, which is further exacerbated by the pandemic and current macroeconomic crises. At the same time SE is being touted as a saviour. Unfortunately, academic research is lagging far behind which leads to decisions being made in practice primarily based on content from SE vendors.

RQ1 - 3 and H1 - 8 were checked as part of the online survey. The JD-R model is modified accordingly in order to design a model that is as robust as possible. With its numerous adaptations, the JD-R model demonstrates a high degree of robustness and variability (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2014; Demerouti et al., 2001; Taris & Schaufeli, 2016), which was also proven in the present study.

To ensure optimal results of the quantitative study, a preliminary test was done (Buschle et al., 2021; Collins, 2003; Hunt et al., 1982). Within three days, eleven salespeople from SaaS industry fulfilled the questionnaire. Accordingly small changes have been made to optimize the questionnaire. In order to obtain sufficient and valid data for the final survey, the anonymous survey was made directly accessible to 43,564 sales related people in the SaaS industry over the world's biggest largest professional network LinkedIn, with around 850 million users in over 200 countries was leveraged (S. J. Dixon, 2023; LinkedIn, 2024). From 732 survey participants, 385 fulfilled surveys were used for the analysis. This is way more than required as the minimum sample size for partial least squares structural equations models (PLS-SEM) (Cohen, 1992; J. F. Hair et al., 2022). The full measurement model assessment includes several quality gates to ensure a resilient model and precise feedback to all RQs as well as hypotheses.

In conclusion of the quantitative research:

- The sample appears to be representative due to its size and composition, which is why the very low quota attainment of only 28% once again emphasises the managerial and theoretical relevance to the maximum.
- With its numerous adaptations, the JD-R model demonstrates a high degree of robustness and variability (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2014; Demerouti et al., 2001; Taris & Schaufeli, 2016), which was also proven in the present study.
- All constructs and items were successfully confirmed after the preliminary test.

Regarding RQ1 and H1 it can be confirmed that SEP has a positive impact on SEM in SaaS industry. Simultaneously, RQ2 can be considered with H2 - 6. In this model, H2 cannot be detected because SEP did not increase SEW. In contrast, H3 can be proven because SEW increases SES. Both H4 and H5 cannot be proven, because both SEW and SES do not reduce SEM. Future research should focus strongly on this in order to clearly analyse when and how workload actually arises for salespeople from SEP. It would be very difficult to understand why SEP does not increase the SEW, which would not be logical in itself.

For RQ3 and its hypothesis H6 – 8 it can be confirmed that H6 and H7 are working. This is because SES reduces the SSP, while SEM increases it. H8 cannot be proven in the present model due to the lack of the moderating effects.

7.2. OUTLOOK

SE is a young discipline in the academic world with its first mentioning in 2010, while it was mainly shaped by commercial vendors (Santucci, 2010). There is little research and even less academic research with real data from companies (Lauzi et al., 2023; Rangarajan et al., 2020; Westbrook & Peterson, 2020). At the same time, SE is often criticised for overlapping with approaches such as adaptive selling(Alavi et al., 2019; Kwak et al., 2019; Miao & Evans, 2013). Understandably, this

criticism becomes all the louder the less one can actually measure the impact of SEP in theory and, above all, in practice. After all, if organisations only have an average of 1/3 of salespeople on target for the year, there should be no question that these organisations need a cross-functional and cross-hierarchical approach to empowering salespeople. This is exactly what SE is supposed to do. However, much more academic research is needed. The focus is indeed on academic research that impartially investigates what the actual effect is.

In conclusion the findings from the present studies of this doctoral thesis actually represent a major step forward in research: for the first time, SE has been considered holistically with positive and negative implications and even made measurable in a robust model. The model should be further optimised but offers a stable start.

The outlook from a theoretical perspective: The initial intention of this research work was to directly develop SE concepts with regards to an adaptive context by considering the situational selling situation (Franke & Park, 2006; Ginsberg & Venkatraman, 1985; Harris & Piercy, 1999; Hofer, 1975; Levy & Sharma, 1994; Porter et al., 2003; Weitz, 1981; Wind & Thomas, 2010). However, already the first publication within the doctoral program led to the knowledge gain that the understanding of SEP itself within one organisation is already a challenge. For this reason, the study will analyse how SEP actually affects SSP by focusing on salespeople since they are in duty to deliver the desired sales performance.

The outlook from a managerial perspective: There is no time to lose. There are definitely far too many salespeople who do not fulfil their quota and are very willing to look for a new employer. Of course, you could also argue that the salespeople's targets may be too high or have been deliberately set by the companies. This is contradicted by the fact that around a third of them nevertheless fulfil and exceed their targets. At present, the theory cannot provide a satisfactory solution. From a technological point of view, there does not yet seem to be a perfect solution either. The model designed here could be an interim solution, so that managers

within their organisation could actually make the impact of SEP on the SSP measurable.

In general, one of the biggest challenges within sales research is that there are so many variables in sales. Because where humans interact, there are always many unknown variables. AI-based approaches in the world of sales offer hope by means of which ever larger data lakes can be tapped (Habel et al., 2023; Kohner, 2023; Seismic, 2023b). In an ideal world for sales organisations, all touchpoints between customers and sales staff could be recorded completely transparently in order to capture and analyse the entire sales cycle. By enriching the data lake with automatically transcribed customer conversations, including the recording of emotions, it would be possible to understand step by step how successful salespeople actually use the tools obtained through the SEP. At the same time, this wealth of knowledge could be used to train other sales staff. Through permanent feedback loops, the entire SEP could ultimately be permanently fine-tuned and continuously optimised accordingly - adapted to challenging economic times, new competitors, etc.

However, this gigantic data lake naturally involves a number of hurdles that are probably still very difficult to overcome at present. In addition to technical feasibility, which is probably the simpler problem, data protection issues in particular would have to be solved. For example, according to the existing local General Data Protection Regulation, the legal framework conditions for handling customer data would of course have to be observed (Frey & Presidente, 2024). As with cookies on websites, the customer's consent would probably always have to be obtained. Experience shows that many customers will not give their consent. There is therefore a risk that the measurability of an SEP will once again be diluted, and criticism will be levelled at what SEP would actually achieve.

Regardless of what the future will bring in terms of technological innovations, legal solutions or problems and theoretical concepts, sales research remains one of the most underestimated areas of research due to the immense complexity of the underlying subject matter.

VIII – BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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X – APPENDIXES

IX - APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1: Survey questionnaire

The impact of sales enablement on salespeople in SaaS companies

Welcome to the survey!

I am working on my doctoral thesis which has the goal to gain a better understanding of sales enablement's impact on the daily life of salespeople in SaaS industry.

We all know that sales in SaaS is a huge challenge. Therefore your experience is very important. The success of the survey depends on your participation.

The questionnaire is addressed to all salespeople of all age groups and genders in SaaS companies. It is not about individual companies, but about the overall context within the SaaS industry.

Just as there are no right and wrong answers, all data will be anonymous and serve purely scientific purposes. The questionnaire will take about roughly 7 minutes to complete.

Please fill out the questionnaire carefully and completely. If none of the answers apply to a statement, please tick the answer that comes closest to your opinion.

Participants who complete the questionnaire in full and provide their private e-mail address will be entered into a prize draw to win a new original Jägermeister tapping system worth €349 (link to product).

Thank you very much for your participation,

Fabian Lauzi

The impact of sales enablement on salespeople in SaaS companies

* 1. **Are you working for a SaaS company directly?**

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

* 2. **How many people work in your company (group)?**

- ◯ 0 - 999
- ◯ 1,000 - 4,999
- ◯ 5,000 - 9,999
- ◯ 10,000 - 50,000
- ◯ >50,000

* 3. **Where is the HQ of your company?**

The impact of sales enablement on salespeople in SaaS companies

* 4. **Sales enablement program**

Our organisation ...

	Strongly disagree ---	Disagree --	Somewhat disagree -	Neutral	Somewhat agree +	Agree ++	Strongly agree +++
... offers a **structured onboarding** process.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
... offers **valuable training** as it relates to effective **selling practices**.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
... offers **valuable training** as it relates to **product knowledge** and **customer solutions**.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
... creates **sales content** that enhances my productivity (e.g., customer case studies, white papers, product demo decks, etc.).	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
... provides **sales enablement technology** which allows me to access customer information and provides dashboards as well as reports to track sales activities.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
... has laid out a **step-by-step sales process** which I follow with customers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
... **collaborates across all departments** to align with what customers need.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
...'s sales support team provides me with **proper data or metrics** to assist in **monitoring my performance** (e.g., win-loss reports, close ratios, length of sales cycle, etc.).	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

The impact of sales enablement on salespeople in SaaS companies

* 5. **WORKLOAD resulting from the sales enablement program**

	Strongly disagree ---	Disagree --	Disagree somewhat -	Neutral	Agree somewhat +	Agree ++	Strongly agree +++
Our **sales enablement** program **increases the complexity** of the tasks I have to perform.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Our **sales enablement** program **increases the number of requests** I have to meet.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Our **sales enablement** program makes me **lose focus on priorities**.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Our **sales enablement** program forces me **to do too many things**.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Our **sales enablement** program and the related activities requires me **to work during off-hours**.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Our **sales enablement** program takes time and energy away from carrying out activities that are **important for achieving my sales target**.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Due to our **sales enablement** program, it often seems like I have **too much work** for one person to do.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
With **sales enablement** tasks in parallel, the **performance standards on my job are too high**.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

The impact of sales enablement on salespeople in SaaS companies

* 6. **STRESS caused by the sales enablement program**

	Strongly disagree ---	Disagree --	Somewhat disagree -	Neutral	Somewhat agree +	Agree ++	Strongly agree +++
As a result of **sales enablement** program, **I struggle to meet contradictory demands** from internal sales, marketing, HR, etc. stakeholders.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
As part of my **sales enablement** program related work, **I receive incompatible requests** from two or more internal stakeholder.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
For my **sales enablement** program related tasks, **I do not know exactly** what my responsibilities are.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Our **sales enablement** program makes me **work on unnecessary tasks**.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Through our **sales enablement** program, I have to use **digital technologies, which cause me difficulties**.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel **tired from working** with **sales enablement** technologies.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I fear my **work will be replaced** due to **sales enablement** technology.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel **tired from dealing with the tasks** from our **sales enablement** program.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

The impact of sales enablement on salespeople in SaaS companies

* 7. **MOTIVATION generated by the sales enablement program**

	Strongly disagree ---	Disagree --	Somewhat disagree -	Neutral	Somewhat agree +	Agree ++	Strongly agree +++
Our **sales enablement** program is helping me **to develop new work skills and expertise**.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Our **sales enablement** program motivates me **to work long hours to meet my sales targets**.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Supported by our **sales enablement** program I am **not giving up easily** when encountering difficult customers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Supported by our **sales enablement** program I am **working untiringly at selling a customer** until getting an order.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The **sales enablement** program supports the opportunity **for personal growth and / or progression** at work.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Supported by our **sales enablement** program **my work is giving a sense of accomplishment**.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Due to our **sales enablement** program **I have an exciting job**.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Due to our **sales enablement** program **I have a satisfying work**.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

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* 8. PERFORMANCE influenced by the sales enablement program

	Strongly disagree ---	Disagree --	Somewhat disagree -	Neutral	Somewhat agree +	Agree ++	Strongly agree +++
Thanks to our **sales enablement** program, my quota attainment (=annual achievement in %) has improved.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Thanks to our **sales enablement** program, my performance (= e.g. effective customer relationships, effective presentations, etc.) has improved.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Due to our **sales enablement** program, I am building **effective relationships** with customers.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Due to our **sales enablement**, I am making **effective presentations** to customers.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Due to our **sales enablement** program, I am **achieving sales targets and other objectives**.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Due to our **sales enablement** program, I am **selling expensive**.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Due to our **sales enablement** program, I am able **to negotiate high prices**.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Due to our **sales enablement** program, I am happy with my **variable income**.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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* 9. **What is your job title?** (Please select the one that applies most.)

* 10. **Your quota achievement**

	0 - 29%	30 - 59%	60 - 99%	100 - 129%	130 - 159%	160 - 199%	>199%
What is **your quota achievement** for 2023?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

* 11. **Your history**

	1 - 2 years	3 - 5 years	6 - 10 years	11 - 15 years	16 - 20 years	>20 years
How long do you work **for your current employer**?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
How many years do you work **in sales**?	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

* 12. **What is your highest school-leaving qualification?**

* 13. **What is your age?**

* 14. **What is your gender?**

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Diverse

* 15. **Which of the following best describes your current relationship status?**

* 16. **In which country do you live in?**

17. **Do you have any comments on this questionnaire or the study?** (Voluntary information)

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Many thanks for your participation!

The results of this survey will only be used confidentially in the context of my dissertation.

18. **If you would like to take part in the prize draw, please enter your private email address here.** (Voluntary information)

Source: Own elaboration

APPENDIX 2: Socio demographic data

Table 30: Gender, age, and relationship status

Gender	**Quantity**	**In percentage**
Female	95	25%
Male	279	74%
Diverse	2	1%
Age	Quantity	In percentage
18-24 years	21	6%
25-34 years	212	56%
35-44 years	112	30%
45-54 years	23	6%
55-64 years	8	2%
65+ years	0	0%
Relationship status	Quantity	In percentage
Single	92	24%
Single +child(ren)	3	1%
Relationship	168	45%
Relationship +child(ren)	113	30%

Source: Own elaboration

Table 31: Country of origin:

	Quantity	In percentage
Australia	6	2%
Belgium	5	1%
Brazil	7	2%
Canada	5	1%
Denmark	5	1%
France	9	2%
Germany	44	12%
India	1	0%
Ireland	20	5%
Israel	1	0%
Italy	4	1%
Japan	8	2%
Mexico	3	1%
Netherlands	29	8%
Peru	1	0%
Poland	1	0%
Republic of Korea	9	2%
Singapore	9	2%
Spain	4	1%
Switzerland	3	1%
United Arab Emirates	2	1%
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	20	5%
United States of America	180	48%
Australia	6	2%

Source: Own elaboration

Table 32: Job title and qualification

Job title	Quantity	In percentage
Commercial Account Executive	144	38%
Mid-Market Account Executive	46	12%
Enterprise Account Executive	158	42%
Major Account Executive	28	7%
Qualification	Quantity	In percentage
No degree (yet)	5	1%
Middle school	1	<1%
Apprenticeship	3	1%
A-Level	9	2%
Bachelor degree	243	65%
Master degree	113	30%
PhD / Doctoral degree	2	1%

Source: Own elaboration

Table 33: Duration of the employment relationship and sales experience

Duration of the employment relationship	Quantity	In percentage
1-2 years	288	77%
3-5 years	74	20%
6-10 years	11	3%
11-15 years	1	<1%
16-20 years	2	1%
>20 years	0	<1%
Sales experience	Quantity	In percentage
1-2 years	41	11%
3-5 years	128	34%

6-10 years	105	28%
11-15 years	58	15%
16-20 years	22	6%
>20 years	22	6%

Source: Own elaboration

Table 34: Quota attainment

	Quantity	**In percentage**
0 - 29%	47	13%
30 – 59%	85	23%
60 – 99%	140	37%
100 – 129%	74	20%
130 – 159%	18	5%
160 – 199%	3	1%
>199%	9	2%

Source: Own elaboration

Table 35: Company size

	Quantity	**In percentage**
0 - 999	42	11%
1,000 -4,999	72	19%
5,000 – 9,999	253	66%
10,000 – 50,000	10	3%
>50,000	8	2%

Source: Own elaboration

Table 36: Country of the head quarter

	Quantity	In percentage
Belgium	7	2%
Canada	2	1%
Finland	1	<1%
France	1	<1%
Germany	7	2%
India	1	<1%
Japan	4	1%
Mexico	1	0%
Netherlands	4	1%
Switzerland	2	1%
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	3	1%
United States of America	352	91%

Source: Own elaboration