



Gender Differences in Sales Staff Performance in the Insurance Industry

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Abstract

This research article analyses gender differences in sales performance by comparing difference in the sales performance of male and female salespersons in the insurance industry in the city of Bangalore. The study used Independent T test for testing the difference among sales performance of men and women. The statistical difference obtained as a result of this study was significant. Male sales staff did comparatively better than women in sales performance.

The study found that there are many reasons for men performing better than women in sales performance. Men and women were given training and were full time employees in the sales industry in these insurance companies.

Keywords: Gender, sales performance, target achieved, Independent sample T test

Introduction

Concerns about sales performance among males and females have generated a considerable interest among the sales industry professionals across various industries. There are very divergent views regarding the performance of men and women. The gender

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difference among women and men are leading to differences in pay scale, hiring and target achievement among women and men. The research paper tries to find out if the sales difference in men and women should deserve to lead this kind of pay difference. The paper has used statistical test like Independent T test. This test was used as a method in this study as the research considers both the male and female genders and as both have the same sales component target of 12 policies to be achieved.

Literature review

Biyani and Baishya (2012) noticed in their research that in retail outlets sales for women's products were better when women salesmen were employed. On the other hand, sales for clothes and electronics primarily went up when men were used as salespersons.

Dwyer, Orlando, and Shepherd (1998) in their study observed that sales is a very dynamic department in any business and hence achievement of sales is also based on the salesperson's gender. The sales staff preferred to meet customers who hail from a similar kind of social status, gender and age in United States. However, surprisingly, gender mismatch may not be completely possible in then Asian context. Judy et al. (1995) observed that gender difference plays a role in sales performance and young men perform better as they are highly ambitious and career oriented.

Studies conducted by Busch and Bush (1998) have found that women achieved higher sales target as long as they have better job clarity and job satisfaction. Sales are the highest for women in kitchen products and cosmetic products as they provide the customers best satisfaction for these products.

Abelson, Kacmar and Jackofsky (1990) had created a model to study about various variables in a sales person's job. The purpose of this model was to identify the factors that lead to difference in sales performance across genders. The model consisted of 27 variables such as gender, time spent in the job and academic qualification. Suggestions were given to improve the performance based on the effect of these variables.

Leslie M Dawson (1995) concluded that women perform better than men in workplaces as they have a very different set of ethics and values as compared to men.

Sharma, Michael et al. (2000) have found that in retail business saleswomen and salesmen perform differently. This performance is based on the customer insight obtained by the sales staff.

Green Berg and Green Berg(1980) while analyzing jobs that match for better sales performance in his study identified 4 groups of variable for sales performance namely Men vs Women, Blacks vs Whites, Educated vs High school dropouts, Experienced vs Inexperienced sales performers, Sales performance vs Gender. The study found out that all of the parameters tested had little influence on sales as sales is a function of the personality of the individual regardless of the gender, age, education and race of the employees. A thorough understanding of the job requirement and a need to match the right employee with the employee skills required is necessary for good sales.

Swan et al. (2008) have made an interesting conclusion in their research on sales performance difference between men and women. This study demanded that companies have separate sales hiring, appraisal and work timings for women. The women knew their role in the organization and wanted to perform well in their job as they knew what their jobs expected them to do after a proper hiring pattern and self-development programs of their respective companies. Mosel (2002) in his study concluded that in department stores performance is based on the individual employees' family and marriage patterns. Employees from broken families do not perform well.

Another interesting study by Tuba and David (2005) had a different result on better sales network and sales. Sales are higher for employees with good marketing networks in their private life as well like coffee shop friends circle, church group, etc. These groups could be used to get higher sales as observed by empirical studies with the best sales performers.

Reddy (2005) has opined that sales could be made better based on the good education given to men in comparison to the women in

the city of Bangalore. In general, women are hired as part time sales staff in metro cities.

Barbara and Barbara (1988) concluded that women have better sales performances in real estate industry as they have better freedom in terms of office timings and have a better work life balance.

Hypothesis

H0= Gender has no influence on the sales target achieved.

H1= Gender has influenced the sales target achieved.

Research method

The respondents for this research were sales managers and agents from 10 insurance companies in the city of Bangalore, Karnataka. A simple random sampling technique was used for the sample selection. The reason for selecting insurance managers instead of freelance sales staff is because insurance managers also work as insurance agents and are more dedicated towards their work. The statistical technique used is independent T test. This is used as the data of males are different from the sales done by females and hence the two groups of respondents are independent of each other.

The target set by IRDA in the insurance industry is 12 policies for each agent to get his license renewed. Hence the research takes into consideration only the number of employees meeting targets and not meeting target by gender.

Limitations

This study does not entirely look at gender performance of women in freelance basis or commission basis. Women may not perform in full-time insurance jobs as they are family oriented. The study was limited to only ten insurance companies in the city of Bangalore. However, the participation of only women working on a full-time basis does not undermine the strength of the study. Future research could attempt a large scale study.

Discussion

Table 1 Male sales staff and target achieved

Age group`	Male	Target achieved	Target not achieved
21-30	45	1	44
31-40	78	3	75
41-50	53	3	50
51-60	28	3	25
Above 60	2	0	2
	206	10	196

Interpretation

An analysis of the results of the sales target achieved by the various age groups of men showed that in the age group of 21-30,44 males did not achieve the target in sales and 1 male achieved the target, in the age group of 31-40, 75 males did not achieve the target and 3 males achieved the target, in the age group of 41-50, 50 males did not achieve the target and 3 males achieved the target, in the age group of 51-60, 25 males did not meet the target and 3 males met the target and above the age of 60, 2 males did not meet the target.

Table 2 Female sales staff and target achieved

Age	Female	Target achieved	Target not achieved
21-30	21	3	18
31-40	12	3	9
41-50	8	4	4
51-60	2	1	1
Above 60	1	0	1
	44	11	33

Interpretation

An analysis of the results of the sales target achieved by various age groups among female employees showed that in the age group of 21-30, 18 females did not achieve the target in sales and 3 females achieved the target, in the age of 31-40, 9 females did not achieve the target and 3 females achieved the target, in the age group of 41-50, 4 did not achieve the target and 4 females achieve the target, in the age group of 51-60, 1 female did not meet the target and 1 female met the target and above the age of 60,1 female did not meet the target.

Table 3 Independent Samples T Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	
Target achieved and not achieved	Equal variances assumed Equal variances not assumed	F	Sig.
		75.771	.000

Table 4 T test for equality of means

		t-test for Equality of Means						
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper	
Target achieved and not achieved	Equal variances assumed	4.634	248	.000	.20750	.04478	.11931	.29569
	Equal variances not assumed	3.009	46.215	.004	.20750	.06896	.06871	.34630

Table 5 Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Target achieved and not achieved	Male	206	1.9517	.21494	.01494
	female	44	1.7442	.44148	.06733

The mean difference in Table 5 is .21. This difference is achieved by deducting the values from the mean of the male gender (1.95) and female gender (1.74).

A test for differences using the independent sample t-test was used to determine if there is any statistical significance the difference in performance between males and females regarding sales performance. The descriptive statistics obtained, as shown in Table 1, indicate that male sales professional on the average performed better than female sales staff (M=1.95) and the mean for female is 1.74. The Levene’s Test for Equality of variances was used to determine whether the difference in the performance between

males and females regarding the target achieved is significant. The test indicated that the variances for the two groups - male and female sales staff were equal ($F = 75$, sig. > 0.05), hence a test for equal variances was used.

From Table 5, the mean of male staff ($M = 1.95$, $SD = .214$) is statistically significantly higher ($t = 4.63$, $df = 248$, two - tailed probability < 0.05) than the mean of female sales staff. This implies that there is a significant difference in the sales performance between males and females. As captured in Table 1, the difference was in favour of males, meaning that they performed better than females in the essay test. This is evident from the fact that the mean scores recorded were 1.95 and 1.74 for males and females respectively. The conclusion is that males do well in sales than females. Since $p < .0001$ is less than our chosen significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, we can reject the null hypothesis, and conclude that the mean gender sales variance is significant.

Results

Based on the results, we can state the following:

- a. There was a significant difference in mean performance between men and women. The mean performance of men was 1.95 and mean performance of women was 1.74. The difference in the mean is .21. This means that men have a higher score in the mean performance of the total number of 206 sales staff.
- b. The average sales achieved by men was .21 greater than the sales achieved by females. This proves that, on an average, men are better sales performers than women.

Conclusion

The results of the test show that there is a significant difference in the performance of men and women in sales performance. By implication men do better than women in sales performance.

The findings show that gender differences among women and men could have huge significance for companies and sales hiring based on achievement. This study initiates us to ask a very fundamental question on why men perform better than women in sales

performance. There is a need to find better remedies to improve the performance of women in sales.

It would be a fault to use a single study to generalize as men being better than women in sales. Further studies need to be conducted in this field to better understand the influence of gender difference on sales performance.

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