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**EFFECT OF SALESFORCE TRAINING ON THE RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN SALES TERRITORY DESIGN AND SALESFORCE  
PERFORMANCE IN THE DETERGENT MANUFACTURING  
COMPANIES IN KENYA**

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## **Abstract**

**Purpose of the Study:** This study sought to determine the effect of salesforce training on the relationship between sales territory design and salesforce performance. The study was anchored on Human Capital Theory.

**Methodology:** The study adopted positivism approach and a descriptive cross sectional design. The population of the study was the salesforce in the detergent producing companies in Kenya who are members of Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) obtained from KAM in December 2018. The sample size was 326 salespersons. The study utilized primary data which was collected by administering semi-structured questionnaires. The data was analyzed applying a mixture of both descriptive and inferential statistics.

**Results and Findings:** It was established that salesforce training has a statistically significant moderating influence on the relationship between sales territory design and salesforce performance. The null hypothesis was rejected.

**Conclusion and Recommendations:** The study recommends that sales managers, policy makers and other stakeholders in the detergent manufacturing sector should utilize the findings of this study by designing efficient sales territories which help to improve the route to the market and also by taking full advantage of unique firm resources and putting in place the necessary sales people training programs to deliver superior performance of their salesforce.

**Keywords:** *Salesforce Training, Sales Territory Design, Salesforce Performance & Detergent Manufacturing Companies*

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Salespeople play important roles in the generation of sales and profits, building of relationships between their sales organizations and the customers, contribute to the creation of employment as the firms grow and general economic development and it is therefore important to research on what are the drivers of salesforce performance (Arditto, 2020). Salesforce training (SFT) is defined as the process of imparting knowledge to sales people for the purpose of increasing their skills such as selling techniques, team work behavior and time management ability to match market opportunities (Johnson & Marshall, 2013). According to Evans *et al.* (2012) salesforce training entails a structured method of communicating, describing and imparting good selling skills to salespeople. Further, Miao and Evans (2013) refer to salesforce training as a planned and systematic accretion of information, ideas, and skills that are expected to enhance competence and improve performance of salespeople. Salesforce coaching is undertaken to accelerate productivity, improve morale, reduce turnover, reduce costs, enhance client services and foster superior time and territory management skills (Berthon, Pitt, Plangger & Shapiro, 2012).

There are diverse methods of training used by different organizations to train their salesforce. Johnson and Marshall (2013) argue that the most commonly used ways of instruction are on the job training, personal coaching, classroom training, role play, external seminars and online training. An effective training should incorporate information on the company, products, competition, selling procedures, time management, report writing and relationship management. Training can be conducted by company employees or hired consultants in different subject matter. Training venues can either be within company premises or external venues and training frequency can range from weekly, monthly, quarterly and annually (Johnson & Marshall, 2013). Training was used as a moderating variable in the study.

Detergents play an important role in the fight against diseases especially the new Coronavirus disease through the washing of hands and facilities. Detergents are key components in achieving cleanliness and hygiene in our homes, hospitals, offices, institutions and food factories. Many of the detergent manufacturing companies use in house salesforce to sell the detergents and superior service is important to ensure the firm is competitive and to uphold a lasting association with clientele (Wangari, 2012). Through local manufacturing of detergents, the sector helps the government to achieve one of the big four agenda namely manufacturing. The sector is a key driver in helping the government to achieve the universal health care for all agenda by improving both personal hygiene and the hygiene and quality of manufactured foods which in turn ensures less wastage in food processing which is line with the government's food security agenda. Moreover, the import duty taxes levied on the detergent raw materials and value added taxes on the detergents, is part of the money the government utilizes to implement the affordable houses agenda.

One of the key issues that sales and marketing managers in the detergent processing firms in Kenya face is how to improve the performance of their salesforce. This critical yet unsettled issue is particularly pertinent during the current economic decline with rising sales calls costs, decreasing customer interest in taking investment purchasing decisions and heightened competition. Training is important in salesforce performance as it explores inventiveness in the realm of individual merchandising, providing acumen in securing competitive advantage by devising enduring client relationships and offering superior after sales service (Verbeke *et al.*, 2011).

## 1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Salesforce training is a key element on enhancing salesforce performance especially in the manufacturing industries. Studies have also shown that training enhances salesforce performance (Zoltners *et al.*, 2011; Olivares, *et al.*, 2015; Adusei, Tenkorang & Tweneboah 2016). Attia *et al.* (2014) in their study on the impact of training on salesforce performance in Egyptian multinational corporations found that salesforce training had a significant relationship with salesforce performance. Samuel (2018) in a study on the impact of staff training and firm performance for drilling companies in Tanzania established that training has positive influence on performance. Based on previous research findings the importance of training in improving performance cannot be underestimated. This study thus adopted salesforce training as a moderating variable in the relationship between sales territory design and salesforce performance.

Previous studies have applied the variables used in this study for various investigations but no known study to the researcher has used sales territory design, sales training, firm characteristic and salesforce performance in one study. Furthermore majority of the previous were carried out in other industries such as pharmaceutical, home décor and retail sector but none of them has been done in the detergent industry and especially in a developing economy like Kenya (Zoltners *et al.*, 2011; Olivares, *et al.*, 2015); Adusei, Tenkorang & Tweneboah, 2016). Since each industry has its own dynamics based on the sales territory design, and firm characteristics, a similar study should be undertaken in Kenya to fill the contextual gap and for generalizability. To mitigate the inconsistencies this study aimed at investigating the relationship between sales territory design and salesforce performance by applying firm characteristics and salesforce training as moderating variables in that relationship. The study consequently sought to determine the effect of salesforce training on the relationship between sales territory design and salesforce performance.

## 1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To determine the effect of salesforce training on the relationship between sales territory design and salesforce performance in the detergent manufacturing companies in Kenya

## 1.4 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Salesforce training does not significantly moderate the relationship between sales territory design and salesforce performance in the detergent manufacturing companies in Kenya

## 2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.2 Theoretical review: Human Capital Theory

In the current competitive market place, firms are trying to outdo one another by utilization of resources available to them to remain relevant and deliver acceptable revenues and profits. One of the critical resources organizations use in this pursuit is human capital. Human capital is described as productive wealth integrated in skills, knowledge and labour (OECD, 2001:17) and it depicts any accumulation of knowledge or the intrinsic/ gained qualities an individual has that contributes to his or her economic capacity (Garibaldi, 2006). Human capital theory (HCT) proposes that education boosts the productivity and income of individuals and their value to an organization.

There is an increased view amidst scholars and practitioners alike that in the current business world the only unmatched competitive resource in organizations is their human capital (Dirani et al., 2015). This approach is based on the resource-based view of the firm that portrays companies as unique blends of human resources and productive resources (Wernerfelt, 1984). To enhance the salesforce performance there must be the imparting of skills to sales people through training to increase outcomes and eventually stimulate their behavioral and outcome performance.

Critiques of human capital theory challenge the view that peoples' learning abilities are of commensurate worth to other resources used in the firm's activities which fails to link learning capacities and the outcome anticipated in the realization of the intended objectives (Ghemawat & Rivkin, 2006). In the current study, HCT theory was utilized to probe the consequence of training on the performance of the sales people.

### **2.3 Empirical review**

Pelham (2019) conducted a study on the impact of industry and training influences on salesforce consulting time and consulting effectiveness. The purpose of this study was to study the relative impact of industry competitive conditions on salesforce consulting time and consulting effectiveness, relative to the impact of type of sales training. Surveys were sent to sales managers and hypotheses were tested in simultaneous equation models. The findings indicated that industry product differentiation has the greatest impact on consulting effectiveness. Industry customer segment number has a positive influence. The relationship between consulting time and consulting effectiveness is highest in commodity industries.

Rahman, *et al* (2015) conducted a study on the impact of salesperson's training on organizational outcomes. Data were gathered by surveying 238 salespeople in the Malaysian major retail shopping malls. Data were analyzed using the partial least square technique. Training has significant impact on salesperson's experience (salesperson's knowledge and salesperson's skills), while salesperson's experience has positive impact on the three categories of organizational outcomes (i.e., productivity, effectiveness and performance). Johnson and Marshall (2013) posit that an effective training should incorporate information on the company, products, competition, selling procedures, time management, report writing and relationship management. Training can be conducted by company employees or hired consultants in different subject matter and training venues can either be within company premises or external venues.

Sales territory design can affect salesforce performance either positively or negatively. According to Zoltners and Sinha (2005), a well-designed sales territory leads to good salesforce performance as the salesforce is able to reach the customers easily and optimize on selling time at minimal costs. A poorly designed sales territory is expensive to service both in terms of time and cost and may be demotivating to the salesforce especially where accounts are widely dispersed and have low sales potential. Training of the salesforce is anticipated to affect the link amid STD and salesforce performance by improving the skill level of the salesforce leading to improved performance. According to Basir et al. (2010) interpersonal skills derived from training programs positively influence salesperson performance while Haji (2014) posit that the most compelling attributes that contributes to sales people's poor performance can be tackled by training and that sales manager's judged sales training to be among the critical influences in enhancing salesforce performance. However, Sunardi et al, (2012) posit that salesforce training program does not necessarily enhance employees' behavior style while Groza, et al, (2016) argues that the mindset

of sales people are not necessarily from training but other factors like experience, talent and aggressiveness that leads to sales performance.

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework has been presented in Figure 1.

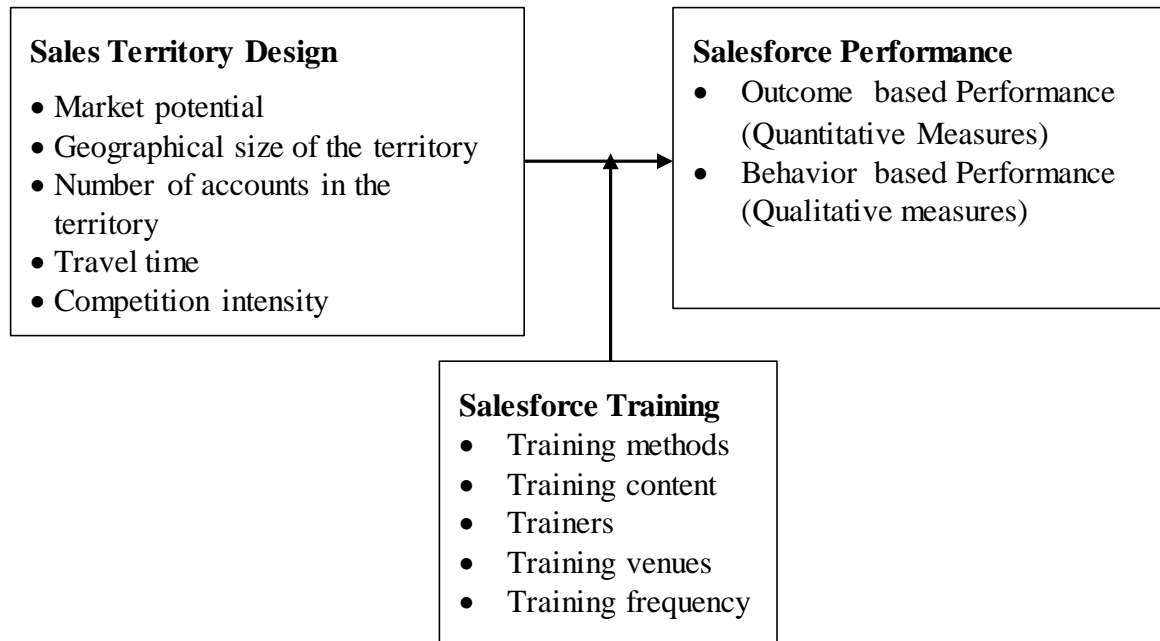


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

## 3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted positivism approach as hypotheses were formulated and analyzed to empirically test the relationships between the variables and the results was generalized. The research was part of theory testing and therefore positivism approach was most suitable. The study used a descriptive cross sectional design. Queiros, Faria and Almeida (2017), explain descriptive studies as investigations whose aim is to describe the phenomena under inquiry by establishing the characteristics associated with the subject population. The population of the study was the salesforce in the detergent producing companies in Kenya who are members of Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) obtained from KAM in December 2018. There are 557 salespeople spread across the 40 detergent manufacturing companies in Kenya. Sales people' sample size was calculated utilizing the formula for finite population as suggested by Yamane (1967) quoted in Israel (1992). The sample size was 326 respondents. The study utilized primary data which was collected by administering semi-structured questionnaires. The data was analyzed applying a mixture of both descriptive and inferential statistics to describe the manifestations of the variables in the data collected. Stepwise regression analysis model was ;

$$SFP = \alpha + \beta_1 STD + \varepsilon$$

$$SFP = \alpha + \beta_2 STD + \beta_3 TR + \varepsilon$$

$$SFP = \alpha + \beta_1 STD + \beta_2 TR + \beta_3 X*Z + \varepsilon$$

$\alpha$  = constant (intercept),  $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$  = regression coefficients

SFP, = Salesforce Performance ; STD= Sales Territory Design, TR= training

$\varepsilon$  = Error term; X\*Z= Sales Territory Design and training interaction term

#### 4.1 RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The study used sales people from detergent manufacturing companies in Kenya. The results indicate a response rate of 74.12%. Some of the respondents among the 25.88% did not respond despite several follow-ups and reminders. The study's response rate was considered as very good for a survey research as supported by Creswell and Creswell (2017) who recommends a score of 70% as good.

#### 4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Salesforce training was also a key variable and had five measurement items that is, training method, salesforce training content, salesforce trainers, salesforce training venues and training frequency. An aggregate of the composite scores of individual variables of salesforce training, that is, salesforce training content, salesforce trainers and salesforce training venues was calculated. The results from the measurements of this variable are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Salesforce Training**

<b>Salesforce training</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Cv (%)</b>
Salesforce training content	232	2.92	1.03	36.0%
Salesforce Trainers	232	2.91	0.88	30.0%
Training Venues	232	2.99	0.88	29.0%
Salesforce training methods	232	3.87	0.16	25.8%
Salesforce training frequency	232	2.03	0.05	40.0%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>2.94</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>32.0</b>

The results in Table 1 indicate that the overall mean score of the individual variables of the salesforce training was 2.94 with a standard deviation of 0.63 and a coefficient of variation (Cv) of 32%. This indicates that salesforce training is moderately manifested in the detergent manufacturing companies in Kenya as also indicated by a Cv of 32% implying that it is an important contributor to salesforce performance. The sub-variable with highest manifestation is salesforce training methods with mean score of 3.87 followed by training venues with mean score of 2.99, and training content with a mean of 2.92. Salesforce trainers had a mean score of 2.91 and salesforce training frequency at 2.03, meaning that all salesforce training constructs were viewed as being manifested highly among the detergent manufacturing companies in Kenya and thus contributing highly to salesforce performance.

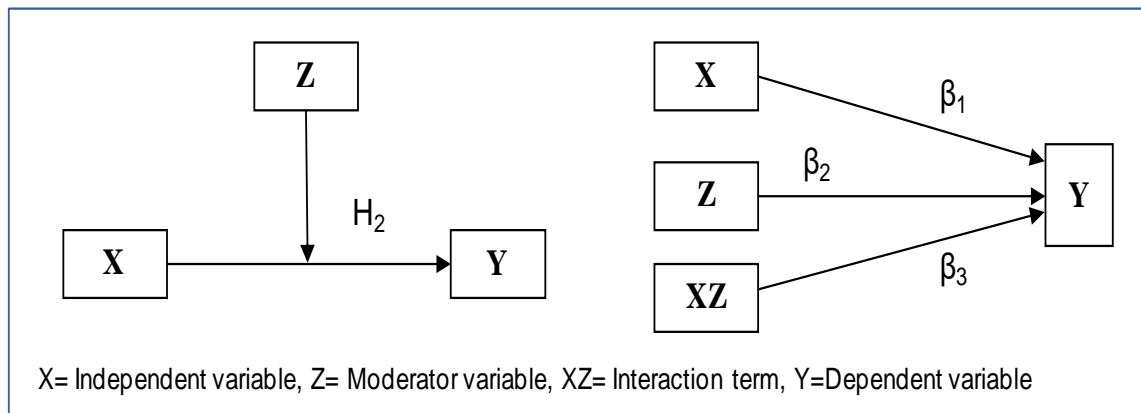


### 4.3 Hypothesis Testing

The objective sought to determine how training influences the relationship between sales territory design and salesforce performance. This was through the hypothesis.

*H<sub>0</sub>: Sales training does not significantly moderate the relationship between sales territory design and salesforce performance.*

To test this hypothesis, Baron and Kenny (1986) three step model of moderation was used. Figure 2 is a summary of a simple moderation model with Sales Territory Design (STD) as the independent variable (X), salesforce training (SFT) as the moderator (Z) and Salesforce Performance (SFP) as the dependent variable (Y).



**Figure 1: Moderation Model for sales territory design, salesforce training and Salesforce Performance**

In step one, sales territory design was regressed on salesforce performance. In step two, sales territory design and salesforce training were regressed on salesforce performance. In step three, the interaction term between sales territory design and salesforce training was introduced. Moderation is confirmed when the effect of the interaction term is statistically significant. The results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Model Fitness for Sales Territory Design and Salesforce Training**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.835a	0.698	0.696	0.61729
2	.847a	0.717	0.714	0.59881
3	.871a	0.759	0.756	0.55321

The regression results in Table 2 shows that in the first step sales territory design was regressed against salesforce performance. The results demonstrate that the influence of sales territory design on salesforce performance is significant ( $R^2=0.698$ ) implying that 69.8% of the change in salesforce performance was linked to changes in sales territory design.

**Table 3: ANOVA for Sales Territory Design and Salesforce Training**

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	202.27	1	202.265	530.807	.000b
	Residual	87.64	230	0.381		
	Total	289.91	231			
2	Regression	207.795	2	103.897	289.756	.000b
	Residual	82.112	229	0.359		
	Total	289.907	231			
3	Regression	220.129	3	73.376	239.757	.000b
	Residual	69.778	228	0.306		
	Total	289.907	231			

The ANOVA results demonstrate that the influence of sales territory design on salesforce performance is significant (F=530.807, P=0.000) indicating it was robust and fit for prediction. Table 4 shows the coefficient for salesforce training.

**Table 4: Regression Coefficients for Sales Territory Design and Salesforce Training**

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	0.619	0.11		5.63	0.000
	Sales Territory Design	0.808	0.035	0.835	23.039	0.000
2	(Constant)	0.478	0.113		4.248	0.000
	Sales Territory Design	0.660	0.051	0.683	13.024	0.000
	Salesforce Training	0.196	0.050	0.206	3.927	0.000
3	(Constant)	0.126	0.141		0.895	0.371
	Sales Territory Design	0.499	0.053	0.517	9.386	0.000
	Salesforce Training	0.098	0.049	0.103	2.013	0.045
	Sales Territory Design*Salesforce Training	0.084	0.013	0.326	6.348	0.000

Source: Primary Data



The fitted model was:

$$\text{SFP} = 0.619 + 0.808\text{STD}$$

$$\text{SFP} = 0.478 + 0.660\text{STD} + 0.196 \text{SFT}$$

$$\text{SFP} = 0.126 + 0.499\text{STD} + 0.098\text{TR} + 0.084\text{STD} * \text{SFT}$$

Where:

SFP= Salesforce performance, STD= Sales Territory Design, SFT = Salesforce Training

STD\* SFT = Interaction Term of Sales Territory Design and Salesforce Training

The regression results demonstrate that the influence of sales territory design on salesforce performance is significant ( $\beta = 0.808$ ,  $t = 23.039$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The results in the first step were all significant. Firm characteristics was added as a moderator in step two and the model is statistically significant ( $\beta_1 = 0.660$ ,  $t = 13.024$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $\beta_2 = 0.196$ ,  $t = 3.927$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). In step three, the interaction term was introduced in the regression model. All the variables, sales territory design, firm characteristics and the interaction term (sales territory design\* salesforce training) were entered in the regression model. The results reveal that the interaction is statistically significant ( $\beta_1 = 0.499$ ,  $t = 9.386$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $\beta_2 = 0.098$ ,  $t = 2.013$ ,  $p = 0.045$ ,  $\beta_3 = 0.084$ ,  $t = 6.348$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). The results therefore, provide evidence in support of the hypothesis that salesforce training moderates the relationship between sales territory design and salesforce performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis that sales training does not significantly moderate the relationship between sales territory design and salesforce performance was rejected.

The results imply that salesforce training moderates the relationship between sales territory design and salesforce performance in detergent manufacturing companies. This means that positive change in salesforce training strengthens the relationship between sales territory design and salesforce performance in detergent manufacturing companies.

#### 4.4 Discussion of Findings

The study had set out to establish the effect of salesforce training on the relationship between sales territory design and salesforce performance. The corresponding hypothesis was that salesforce training does not significantly moderate the relationship between sales territory design and salesforce performance. It was established that salesforce training has a statistically significant moderating influence on the relationship between sales territory design and salesforce performance. The null hypothesis was rejected. The findings are consistent with Fatima (2017) who argues that satisfaction of salesperson with sales territory design positively influences salesforce performance, which in turn has a positive impact on sales organization effectiveness. Grant *et al.* (2011) also found that satisfaction with sales territory design had favorable outcome on salesforce motivation, job satisfaction and sales performance. Shannahan *et al.* (2013) argue that coaching of sales people brings about competitiveness which enables them to handle their customers under their territories efficiently leading to effectiveness and enhanced performance.

#### 5.1 CONCLUSIONS

The objective sought to determine the effect of training on the relationship between sales territory design and salesforce performance through the hypothesis that salesforce training does not significantly moderate the relationship between sales territory design and salesforce performance in detergent manufacturing companies in Kenya. The results showed positive and significant

relationship when an interaction term is considered indicating that salesforce training significantly affects the relationship as a moderator. The moderation therefore was therefore confirmed in the model. The hypotheses that salesforce training does not significantly moderate the relationship between sales territory design and salesforce performance in detergent manufacturing companies in Kenya is therefore rejected.

## 6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

The significance of detergent manufacturing companies for economic development is well recognized. The sector should look for ways to take advantage of global dynamics to create new sales opportunities. The industry should take advantage of some of global developments to generate extra sales by developing new ways of selling the detergents to their customers such as online selling and also training their salesforce on how to maximize sales from this global pandemic. The study recommends that sales managers, policy makers and other stakeholders in the detergent manufacturing sector should utilize the findings of this study by designing efficient sales territories which help to improve the route to the market and also by taking full advantage of unique firm resources and putting in place the necessary sales people training programs to deliver superior performance of their salesforce.

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