

# SALESPERSON RELATIONSHIP ORIENTATION AND EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF BUYER-SELLER RELATIONSHIPS

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## ABSTRACT

This research conceptualizes and explores the impact of *relationship orientation* in salespeople – a trait-like construct indicating a predisposition to value and build close relationships with others. Three studies have already been conducted. The results of these studies demonstrate the construct validity and criterion-related validity of the *relationship orientation* measure which is composed of four dimensions – self-representation, agency beliefs, reward, and normative values. Also, as hypothesized, the studies show that salesperson *relationship orientation* is positively related to customer-oriented selling, internal networking, and helping behaviors directed toward internal employees. These relationship building behaviors (i.e., customer-oriented selling, internal networking, and helping behaviors) are associated with enhanced customer relationship quality, internal support and heighten sales performance.

This research contributes to the sales research that advocates salesperson's emerging transition role from traditional transaction facilitator to contemporary relationship manager. Moreover, this research develops a measure of salesperson relationship orientation and uses this newly developed measure to test a theoretical framework demonstrating the impact of relationship orientation on customer relationship management and sales performance.

**Keywords:** Relationship Orientation, Selling Effectiveness, Customer Relationship Management