SALES COMPETITION AS A STRATEGY TO MOTIVATE INTENT TO PURSUE SALES CAREER

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The continuous increase in demand of professionally trained sales force provoked marketing experts to find out the ways through which this demand can be met. This paper articulates and empirically validates through an experimental research design that sales competition at campus is one way to create interest among students for the pursuit of this demand driven profession. The controlled and experimental group are formed by using randomized trial method to remove researcher bias. The results highlight that sales competition has significant impact in changing students' negative perception about sales profession. The research is useful for researchers, sales managers, academics, trainers, policy makers, educationists for rational decision making.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sales function is considered as the lifeblood of marketing and professionally trained sales force. It seems to be a rare commodity in today's competitive business world. The world will see a severe shortfall of professional sales people in future (Gafford, 2019). Despite the increasing demand of professionally trained sales people, most of the business students are not interested to pursue their career in this field. Mani et al., (2016) figure out an important reason behind this lack of interest that is students' negative perception about sales profession. Marketing education literature found that this negative perception among students is due to several factors. For example, sales career is considered as low prestigious, unethical and unimpressive profession by society. Scholars in marketing education are trying to find out the ways through which students' negative perception about sales profession can be changed. Researchers have suggested that ameliorating sales education practices can be a useful tactic to lessen out this negative perception (Cummins et al., 2015). An analysis of the writing highlights that students' negative states of mind toward sales career have become a great challenge for instructors and experts in field of Marketing (Peltier et al., 2014). Bush et al., (2014) suggest that there is a great need of research to explain students' negative attitude toward sales career and they should also be informed whether this profession is suitable for them or not. It is worth investigating to identify the factors that can reduce student' negative perception about sales. If students' negative perceptions of a selling career prevent full exploration of the important role sales can play in the broader marketing mix, educators have done damage to students and the business community by not addressing this issue (Marcos-Cuevas, Critten, Squire, & Speakman, 2014).

The main focus remained on conventional education practices (e.g. lectures delivery). Use of non-conventional education practices e.g. sales competition in changing students' perception is an important research question yet to be explored on which this article focuses. The article further extends the literature on sales pedagogy on the basis of a gap of conducting research through experimental design to explore this issue. Contrary to current practices, the authors are investigating this problem in the context of a developing country, Pakistan.

1.1 Background of the Study

Role of sales function in marketing can't be overemphasized as the sales department possesses key position. In organizations, the salespersons act as a bridge between firm and its customers (Grewal and Sharma, 1991). The shortage of professionally trained sales staff is expected to grow dramatically through 2020 across a wide swath of business sectors (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). Furthermore, Careerbuilder.com alone lists over 40,000 entry-level sales positions (careerbuilder.com). To capture this problem, universities have increased their course lines to match the demand of sales professional. Companies have started sales competitions in their calendars besides their

traditional job fairs. Organizations such as HP, Ethicon, DHL, ADP, UPS, and Michelin travel to sales competitions around the country to observe top sales students compete. Companies follow this up with campus visits to hire top sales talent.

One way to address this issue is the use of educational practices. Cummins et al. (2015) investigated the impact of various educational practices on students' belief about sales and their intention to adopt sales career. Researchers in marketing education are of the view that educational practices can act as influential stimuli in removing reticence of students about selling career (Rocco and Whalen, 2014). Due to the lack of professionally trained salespeople, an increase in fashion is offering sales education courses by business schools (Fogel et al., 2012). Paden et al. (2016) found a direct link between online learning workshops and changing students' perception. Similarly, Mani et al. (2016) investigated the role of mock interviews in shaping positive views of students about sales career. Use of sales force socialization in formulating students' positive expectation can be an impressive method in gaining students favorable response for sales profession (Bush et al., 2014). In response to latest call for modernize educational practices that motivate students' intention to pursue sales career (Knight, Mich, & Manion, 2014), this study articulates sales competition interventions and empirically validates it in principle of marketing class in a private sector university of Pakistan with the proposition to convert students' negative perception into positive which ultimately enhance their intention to pursue sales career.

1.2   Sales as a Career

For undergraduate students, one of the critical decisions is to select their major field of study because it is likely to affect their future career. With plentiful options of major fields and programs and availability of overabundant information, choosing the best field of study is an overwhelming and challenging process (Schwatrz, 2004). External as well as internal factors can impact students' decision. External factors include job characteristics, job prospects and social influence and internal factors comprise of students' self-perception about the field, the match between profession and their abilities and most important is their interest (Roach et al., 2011). In order to know student perceptions of salespeople and a sales career in a cross-cultural study, (Barat and Spillan, 2009) investigated that students' negative perceptions regarding sales career is consistent in the Unites States and two Latin American nations. Fournier et al. (2014) argued that poor image of selling function in mind of general public stops talented sales students from choosing sales career. In the same line, Karakaya et al. (2011) also concluded that sales profession is not considered as a prestigious one and found negative perceptions among students of United States, Switzerland and Turkey.

Marketing educationists have found various reasons for this negative perception about sales career. Ink et al. (2011) suggested that low opinion about sales career is due to the fact that students are unaware of professional sales practices. The stereotyping of salespeople presented in mass media can be the reason for these hostile sentiments (Rocco, 2014). The emergence of this stereotyping comes from a phase generally referred as "sales era" in which belligerent efforts were made by the companies to sale out their offerings in a highly competitive environment (Kerin, Hartley, & Rudelius, 2009). College graduates hold unfavorable ethical image about personal selling (Burnett, Pettijohn, & Keith, 2008). Students with these unethical apprehensions enter into market with pessimistic attitude. Klein, Laczniak, & Murphy, (2006) argued that due to students' cynical attitude, they start perceiving that unethical attitude in sales career is preferred rather compulsory to get success. Misconceptions about the nature of a sales career and sales industry discourage students (Hopkins and Hopkins, 2017) and therefore they avoid adopting sales profession in the long run. Fogel et al. (2012) found that selling becomes more sophisticated and solutions-oriented, and good sales jobs remain unfilled for lack of qualified applicants, the value of university-based education rises. Both marketing practitioners and scholars agree on the continuous changing in markets and sales function role (Fogel et al., 2012). Owing to Globalization of markets and changing in technology, the role of sales profession is getting more and more sophisticated (Honeycutt, 2002). New ways of businesses are exceeding relational contexts and assuming innovative ways of creating value for customers in which sales people have to perform key role (Blocker, Cannon, Panagopoulos, & Sager, 2012).

In sales and marketing, the sales competition learning is consistent with the Behavior Modification Modeling approach. This technique was first used in marketing by Nord and Peter (1980). The use of sales competition provides students an opportunity to improve their cognitive knowledge about professional sale activities (Cummins et al., 2016) therefore reduce students' misconception and consequently impact their behavior like participating in sales specialization courses and enhancing intention to pursue a career in sales. The basic principle of Behavior Modification Modeling approach (Nord and Peter, 1980) states that learning new things and adopting new behavior are functions of observing others. The approach is in congruent with popular learning theories i.e. social learning theory which holds that learning is done by receiving instructions or observing a model without practically experiencing the task

(Bandura, 1977; 2015). Therefore. we find this approach relevant to our context in which the aim is to educate students by observing and following others. Moreover, Bush et al. (2014) illustrated the advantages of modeled learning as it provides low risk environment for business graduates in comparison of actual sale situation. Availability of this information develops a sense of sales efficacy among students. The universities have acknowledged the applied nature of sales and marketing field by intentionally balancing academic syllabus with experimental approach which includes best exercises into the classroom via innovative pedagogy. It makes selling a different discipline than other business fields in which conventional lectures technique remains dominated. Following these lines of inquiry, we posit that sales competition can garner fruitful results in improving students' perception regarding sales career. Keeping in view the context of sales education literature, the researcher believes that the stage is set for an empirical study to examine the impact of sales competition in shaping students' favorable perception about sales career.

1.3 Sales Competition and Students Perception

Sales competition is one of the effective and innovative techniques used in high rank business schools to educate students about selling practices. Sales competitions are great mean of applying students' understanding of sales (Mani et al., 2016). The sales competition is demonstrated as an effective technique to discuss Pareto efficiency in business and an introduction to bargaining and integrative agreements in negotiation (Ball, 1999). Sales competitions can offer students the similar learning experience provided by selling a real product in a real market (Inks, 2011). The sale competitions can be used as an effective tool in sales curriculum given the environment the business students may face in their practical selling (Widmier, Loe and Selden, 2007). Sales competitions foster the active learning among business graduates which in turn boost up their learning process. Involvement in sales competition help students to gain sales related knowledge and to enhance their cognitive aptitude (Mani et al., 2016). Improvement in these two abilities make students able to view selling activities positively and help us hypothesize that;

H1: Sale competition can positively improve students' perception regarding sale career

1.4 Student Perception and Intent to Pursue

The role of different selling processes, sales management structures, and the strategic use of personal selling within the broader promotion mix is critical in a robust and complete marketing plan (Loe and Inks, 2014). Students' negative perceptions of a selling career prevent full exploration of the complimentary role sales can play in the broader marketing mix. Therefore, reducing this negative sales career perception among students is necessary to enhance their intent to pursue sales career. Based on the aforementioned sales reticence dimensions (sales knowledge, perceptions and attitudes regarding the sales profession, salespeople, and selling ethics), Peltier et al. (2014) aggregated an array of items from the literature to develop a parsimonious scale for measuring student intent to pursue a sales career after graduation. The sales profession subscale addresses the personal fulfillment and value of a sales job to the individual while the salesperson subscale asks about the perception of and respect given to salespeople by others. Sales knowledge refers to the individual's familiarity with sales practices and ability to perform these processes. Finally, sales ethics addresses the ethical practices and responsibilities of salespeople. Marketing educators can play a significant role in shaping the fundamental conviction about sales career. Teaching approach is found to be an effective way of clarifying students' misconceptions about sales (Allen, Dugan, Popa and Tarasi, 2017) and in turn encourage them to apply for sale jobs. Ink et al. (2011) suggested that teaching campaigns focused on educating students about the virtues of sales career can enhance the likelihood of selecting sales career with the hypothesis that;

H2: Reducing the negative sales perception will enhance the likelihood of student's intent to pursue a sales career.

1.5 Research Questions and Objectives

The main research questions of this study are: Do sales competition practices reduce the student's negative perception about sales career? Will the students" positive perception about sales career help them to pursue their career in sales profession? These research questions led to the objective of the research: To assess the impact of sales competition in changing students' perception about sales career; and to examine the effect of students' perception about sales on their intention to pursue sales as a career.

Table 1.   Description of Sales Competition Interventions Utilized

Non-convectional intervention	Description	Reticence-related learning goals
Sales Competition	Students participated in on-campus sales competition. They are required to incorporate all possible sales functions i.e. advertisement, promotion etc. in selling their product	Improve sales ethics, sales knowledge, sales people and sales profession

The hypotheses developed on the basis of the literature review are all entrenched collectively in the form of a framework (Figure 1).
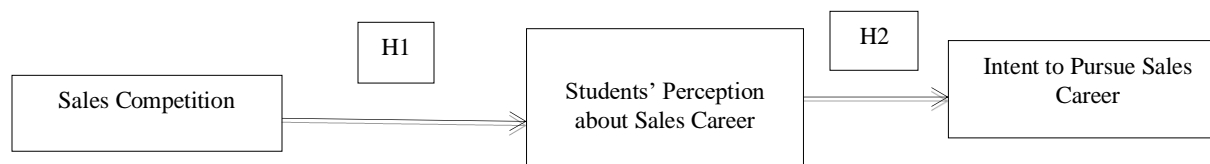
Fig. 1.   Sales Perception Framework

2.   RESEARCH STRATEGY – EXPERIMENT

Research design is an overall blueprint of how the research questions will be addressed (Saunders, Thornhill, & Lewis, 2016). Research design clearly depicts the broader purpose of the study and also shows particular objectives of study. Further, the researcher philosophy, the strategy of data collection, study approach and time horizons are also considered important elements of research design. Following the Saunders et al. (2016) research design onion, the research design adopted in present study is based on pragmatism philosophy - answering a research question depends upon the type of research question. As the researcher is interested in finding out the causal relationship between explanatory variable sales competition and response variable (intention to pursue sales career), the most appropriate strategy to address this question is experiment. The study hypotheses were drawn from behavioral learning theory by following deductive approach. In order to test our study hypothesis, experiment is conducted among Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) students to identify the causal link between explanatory variable sales competition and response variable (intention to pursue sales career). The data was collected two times at T1 and T2. The longitudinal data collection helps in examining the impact of intervention on response variable. The data analysis is done through t-test and regression analysis by using SPSS.

2.1   Population and Sampling

Population is the aggregate of objects, events or people that the researcher wants to investigate (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Following this direction, the population for current study is first year business students studying principles of marketing at a university. At this stage, the students can be guided towards a profession based on their learning and understanding. So students from business schools of all public and private sector universities are included in our target population. To draw sample from this target population we adopted convenience sampling technique. Convenience sampling can be used if little variation exists in given population (Saunders et al., 2016). In Pakistan all students enter degree business class after completing twelve years of education. Further several centralized policies imposed by Higher Education Commission (HEC) on business schools make them very much similar. Therefore, we assume that little variation exists in targeted population. The data was collected from Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) class of a private university.

2.2   Randomized Controlled Trials

In order to minimize the issue of researcher biasness, the students were distributed between controlled and experiment group by using randomized controlled trials. Two BBA classes were selected to run this experiment. For each intervention, fifteen students are randomly assigned to participate in a particular activity (sales competition). It becomes experimental group. While applying each intervention, fifteen students were considered as control group and not exposed with intervention. Students were randomly distributed among experiment and controlled group with the help of attendance sheet. We ensure that attendance sheet is also compiled up randomly. Both classes are taught by same teacher.

2.3 Applying Planned Interventions

The activity of sales competition is conducted among experiment group. Volunteer students are selected to take part in sales competition. These students have taken part in an on-campus mini sales competition, where they have to sell their product/service in a market like situation. All students are instructed to use formal marketing strategies (e.g. advertisement, branding etc.) to sell their products/services. While students in control group, are not involved in any competition activity. Data is collected from both groups before and after sales competition to examine the impact of sales competition.

2.4 Instrument

Data is collected by using Peltier et al. (2014) intent to pursue sales career scale. Based on the dimensions of sales reticence (sales knowledge, salespeople perceptions and attitudes regarding the sales profession, and selling ethics), Peltier et al. (2014) gathered the groups of items from sales literature and developed a comprehensive scale consisting of 46 items to measure students' intention to pursue sales career. The sales profession subscale refers to students' personal satisfaction and the value they attached with sales job. The salesperson subscale addresses students' perception on how salespeople are treated and respected by others in society. In sales knowledge subscale the students are asked to show their familiarity with selling practices and their capacity to implement these practices. Finally, sales ethics subscale focused on the ethical issues and responsibilities of salespeople. A complete detail of the scales items is given in appendix 1.

2.5 Pilot Testing

A pilot study was conducted before administrating questionnaire to actual sample. The questionnaires were distributed in BBA classes of two private universities. As suggested by Cummins et al. (2015) and Petlier et al. (2014) students for current study are chosen from early semesters of their course. Students are instructed to demonstrate their original responses without any manipulation. Further, they are assured that their responses are kept anonymous and will not impact on their class grades. All students show some confusion while understanding the questionnaire items, therefore we have added some explanation for each subscale explaining the context of study. In addition, oral instructions are also incorporated in collecting actual data.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

In order to test our study hypotheses, data is analyzed by using SPSS. First of all, data cleaning is performed by assessing normality of data, analyzing missing values, identifying aberrant values and detecting outliers. In next step some initial descriptive tests are conducted to check the reliabilities of scale, correlation matrix and so on. Descriptive statistics is run to examine the demographic characteristics of respondents. However, t-test is used to investigate the difference in pre-test post-test observation for both experiment as well as controlled group. Students' perception is analyzed for sales competition – an interventions. Finally, regression analysis is conducted to examine the impact of sales perception on students' intent to pursue sales career.

3.1 Respondents Profile in Experiment and Controlled Groups

The data is collected from 30 students in total (15 in controlled group and 15 in experiment group). The data is collected at T1 and T2 i.e. before and after the intervention (sales competition). The decision to include the number of males and females in a group are according to their strength in class (Table 2).

Table 2. Respondents Profile in Experiment and Controlled Groups

Intervention	Experiment Group				Controlled Group			
	T1		T2		T1		T2	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Sales Competition	11	4	11	4	11	4	11	4
Total Observations	15		15		15		15	

3.2 Data Screening - Analyzing missing values, recognizing aberrant values and finding outliers/ Assessing normality of the data

In social and behavioral sciences, the researchers often face the issue of missing values (Enders, 2010). Missing few values does not impact on statistical results, however, missing values in large quantity may generate serious concerns in final data analysis and leads to unreliable results. Some of the statistical tests can't be performed in

presence of missing values. The data collected from university students shows that out of 180 cases, 10 cases were found very critical because of values with more than 60% missing data, therefore, are excluded from final analysis. However, the missing values in some of the cases are nominal and were filled in by "replace with mean" method suggested by Pallant et al. (2013) (Table 3).

Table 3.   Case-wise missing value analysis

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	00	120	70.58	70.58
	5-10	29	17.05	87.63
	11-15	11	6.47	94.10
	16-20	10	5.88	100.00
	Total	170	100.0	

Aberrant values are those abnormal values that are out of the normal range. For example items in current study are measured in likert scale of 1 to 5, thus any value greater than 5 or lesser than 1 would be considered as aberrant value. Similarly, the categorical variables are measured in terms of 1 and 2, so any value out of this range would be treated as aberrant values. Aberrant values occur during data entry and may cause serious issues in data analysis because they influence the mean of that variable. Therefore, it is of extreme importance to carefully detect and treat these values. In order to identify the aberrant values in our data file, descriptive statistics is run with minimum and maximum values of the items. Very few aberrant values are found and corrected. Screening the normality of data is essential for conducting robust statistical analyses. Normality of the data can be calculated either through statistical or graphical way (Hair et al 2006). Although both techniques are used for normality test but for a large set of data graphical analysis becomes unwieldy and impractical. As the data file of current study has 60 cases, we chose statistical technique to test normality. In first step Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests of normality were tested (Table 4). Here we will see the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test as the data set is greater than 50. The results of this test showed significant values of all variables and indicated that data is not normally distributed.

Table 4.   Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
SP Mean	.146	170	.000	.887	170	.000
SK Mean	.119	170	.000	.926	170	.000
SP Mean	.092	170	.000	.964	170	.000
SE Mean	.093	170	.000	.976	170	.000
ITP Mean	.129	170	.000	.922	170	.000

SP= Sales Profession, SK = Sales Knowledge, SP = Sales People, SE = Sales Ethics, ITP= Intent to Pursue

In order to verify the normal distribution of data, another test of normality is applied and values of skewness and kurtosis are calculated. Values of both skewness and kurtosis for all items fall between +1.5 to -1.5 (Table 5) the recommended values. These values established quasi normal distribution of our data set.

Table 5.   Values of Skewness and Kurtosis

	SP Mean	SK Mean	SP Mean	SE Mean	ITP Mean
Skewness	-1.399	-1.043	-.652	-.323	-1.039
Std. Error of Skewness	.113	.113	.113	.113	.113
Kurtosis	1.131	1.225	1.429	-.156	1.134
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.225	.225	.225	.225	.225

Finally, the outliers in data were identified by using Mahalanobis distance measuring method. Tabachnick and Fidell's (2007) suggested that cases with Mahalanobis alpha level of .001 would be considered as outliers. By following Tabachnick and Fidell's (2007) guidelines, we have calculated the critical chi-square value by using four independent variables and found that no case has less than .001 value, therefore no outliers were found.

3.3 Scale Reliabilities and Correlation Matrix

Scale reliabilities and correlation among sales perception subscales are given (Table 6). The Cronbach alpha of all variables except sales profession is greater than .70, the recommended threshold value for scale reliability. The Cronbach alpha value of sales profession scale is .69 which is just below the recommended value, therefore does not consider a serious concern. Next, the Table shows correlation among variables. The correlation among any two variables did not exceed from .90, therefore we did not find any multicollinearity issue among sales perception sub scales. Further, the correlation matrix shows that all independent variables about sales perception are significantly correlated with the dependent variable, the intent to pursue. It provides initial support to our hypotheses.

Table 6. Scale Reliabilities and Correlation Matrix

Variables	Alpha	1	2	3	4
1. Sales Profession	0.69	1			
2. Sales knowledge	0.72	0.190	1		
3. Sales People	0.73	0.250	0.266	1	
4. Sales Ethics	0.81	0.080	0.452	0.103	1
5. Intent to Pursue	0.75	0.407*	0.610**	0.437*	0.773**

*$p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$*

3.4 Hypotheses Testing

The basic conception of study hypotheses is to find out the difference in control and experiment group after applying study interventions. Study hypotheses are tested by applying t-test. The impact of sales competition on students' perception about sales. The difference in pre-test and post-test values highlighted the impact of relevant teaching intervention. The results of t-test show that impact of sales competition on all four dimensions of sales perception remain significant. Parallel to experiment group, a control group is also formed for each intervention. No such intervention is applied on controlled groups. The *t-test* analysis show that change in students' perception about sales profession among controlled group remain insignificant. Therefore, it supports our hypothesis H1 (Table 7).

Table 7. Sales Competition Impact on Sales Perception (Experiment and Controlled Group)

Effect on Sales Perception	Experiment Group			Controlled Group		
	Pre-test Mean (SD)	Post-test Mean (SD)	P-value	Pre-test Mean (SD	Post-test Mean (SD	P-value
Sales Profession	2.74 (.53)	4.06 (.48)	.000	2.86 (.51)	2.96 (.41)	NS
Sales Knowledge	2.83 (.64)	4.00 (.57)	.001	2.91 (.61)	2.95 (.57)	NS
Sales People	2.38 (.91)	3.84 (.68)	.001	3.00 (.39)	3.02 (.48)	NS
Sales Ethics	3.52 (.53)	2.61 (.46)	.000	3.24 (.53)	3.19 (.37)	NS

3.5 Impact of Students' Sales Perception on their Intent to Pursue Sales Career

The t-test comparison of experiment and controlled group show that non-conventional teaching practices are significant in changing students' negative perception about sales career. However, it is also important to find out whether this favorable perception about sales career leads to adopt sales career or not? In order to test this hypothesis, the researcher regress sales perception subscales on students' intention to pursue sales career. The results of regression analysis show that sales perception subscales have direct impact on students' intent to pursue sales career. The results in Table 8 show that among all four sales perception subscales, sales knowledge has strongest impact (**β=.398**) on intent to pursue sales career. On the other hand, sales ethics is lowest in terms of students' intent to pursue sales career (**β=.126**).

Table 8.   Subscale Impact on Intent to Pursue Sales Career

Subscale	Standard β	Significance
1. Sales Profession	.250	.01
2. Sales knowledge	.398	.01
3. Sales People	.215	.01
4. Sales Ethics	.126	.05

Note. R2 = .514, p < .01.

4.   FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The t-test analysis shows that students' perception regarding sales career is changed due to the application of sales competition. The impact of sales competition is significant, Finally the regression analysis confirm that students' perception has a direct impact on their intent to pursue sales career.

4.1   Discussion on Results

In this study, the researcher investigated the issue of students' ill perception about sales profession during their early graduation courses. Due to this negative presumptions prior to academic exposure and use of traditional class-room lecture methods, it becomes very difficult to counteract these misconceptions. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the most effective teaching techniques that build positive image of sales career among business graduates. Modern sales education helps students in developing an understanding of their own sales related skills and capabilities (Desai, Berger and Higgs, 2016). It encourages students to learn more practical aspects of sales profession.

Students' perception about all four dimensions (salespeople, sales profession value, sales ethics and sales knowledge.) changes significantly after applying sales competitition intervention. This intervention has reduced students' reticence about sales and endured a clear winner with respect to enhancing students' intention to pursue sales career. Finally, the researcher aims at examining whether the change in students' perception can change their desire to adopt sales career? The regression analysis shows significant impact of students' perception on their intention to pursue sales career. It shows that basic reason of avoiding sales career is the misconception about sales knowledge, sales profession, salespeople and sales ethics. Once this perception eliminated, students will be willing to adopt this profession enthusiastically.

4.2   Implications

In sum, the results of current research afford two significant repercussions for marketing educators and scholars in determining the antecedents of changing students' negative perception: To admit the importance of socialization of future Salesforce as a facilitative tool in guiding sales education pedagogy; and to better prepare business graduates for sales career focused on practical based sales job behavior. This study has several implications for different stakeholders. For marketing educators, the study suggests new innovative teaching methods to equip students with real time sales job skills and behaviors. The study also guides the policy makers in defining sales curriculum by incorporating modern ways of teaching. Our research highlighted the importance of learning by doing techniques instead of traditionally class based lecture techniques. Finally, it helps organizations to hire skillful sales people having experience of activities similar to real sales practices.

4.3   Limitations and Future Directions

This attempt to investigate the drivers of mitigating students' negative perception about sales is not without limitations. It opens several new directions for future researchers. First, the interventions are applied at only one university. Further research can be carried out by applying intervention in more than one university. This may lead to the generalizability of study. The comparison of students' perception in different universities can enhance the scope of topic. Only sales competition is used in current study to change students' negative sales perception. Additional modern and innovative teaching interventions can be utilized to remove students' reticence and increase their intent to pursue sales career. In addition to innovative class-room interventions, the use of academic-industry linkages can also help students in ameliorating their conceptions about sales. These linkages expose students with real time sales knowledge and practices and therefore remove many of their fallacies about sales. The guest speakers and role play are other practical dimensions that may help in mitigating student's negative perception about sales career.

4.4 Contributions

The true experiment study helps us to establish a causal relationship between different educational interventions and students' sales perception. The insignificant changes in student's perception in controlled group clearly highlights that changes in perception in experiment group occurred due to application of studied intervention. This study advanced our knowledge on sales education by conducting experimental study in a developing country Pakistan.

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ANNEXTURE

Dear students!
Below are series of statements about your personal perception about different dimensions on sales with different response scales. For each statement, please indicate your response by selecting the appropriate number
NOTE
- Please keep this form confidential and do not show this to anyone.
- The anonymity of the responses is assured and the information being collected under this study shall remain confidential.
- The responses will not bear any consequences on your class grades.

Annexure
The Survey Questionnaire

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the current statements about <u>sales profession</u>. The sales profession.....	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Gives a sense of accomplishment	1	2	3	4	5
2. Is doing something worthwhile on the job	1	2	3	4	5
3. Is personally satisfying	1	2	3	4	5
4. Is interesting	1	2	3	4	5
5. Is exciting	1	2	3	4	5
6. Is valuable	1	2	3	4	5
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the current statements about <u>sales knowledge</u>. I understand…..	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
7. Sales concepts and how to apply them	1	2	3	4	5
8. The sales process	1	2	3	4	5
9. How to structure a sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5
10. What a sales career is all about	1	2	3	4	5
11. What a salesperson does on a daily basis	1	2	3	4	5
12. That I am confident in my ability to apply sales techniques	1	2	3	4	5
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the current statements about <u>sales people</u>. Sales people are………..	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
13. Perceived favorably by others	1	2	3	4	5
14. Respected by others	1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the current statements about <u>your intention to pursue your career in sales.</u>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
15.	I am interested in pursuing a sales position when I graduate.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Obtaining a position in sales is a priority for me after graduation.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Obtaining a sales support position would interest me.	1	2	3	4	5
18	At some time during my career, I will probably hold a position in sales.	1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the current statements about <u>Sales Ethics</u>. The sales people……	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
19.	Stretch the truth to make a sale	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Take advantage of uneducated buyers	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Misrepresent guarantees and/or warranties	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Make something up when they do not know the answer to a question	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Inflate the benefits of the products they sell	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Sell products that people do not need	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Are more unethical than those in other business fields	1	2	3	4	5

STUDENT PERSONAL INFORMATION

Age (In Year):   Marketing courses studied before:

Gender: ☐ Male   ☐ Female

  Thank You!