

Adaptive selling, anxiety and emotional exhaustion among salespeople

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Abstract

The need to constantly adapt to the changes in the business environment and selling situations places enormous demands on salespeople. Applying the Job Demands-Resources theory, this study examines the negative impact of adaptive selling on salespeople. Using survey data from 384 sales professionals in different industries in an emerging market, we find that adaptive selling directly increases cognitive anxiety among salespeople. Furthermore, our research suggests that cognitive anxiety mediates the relationship between adaptive selling and emotional exhaustion. However, our study did not find support for the direct impact of adaptive selling on emotional exhaustion, suggesting that in some instances, the need to practice adaptive selling by itself might motivate salespeople to get more involved. Our study also demonstrates that salesperson perseverance reduces the negative impact of adaptive selling on cognitive anxiety, suggesting a moderating effect. The study concludes by providing theoretical and practical implications.

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