The Influence of Supervisory Approaches on Sales Performance
Through a Regulatory Focus Perspective in Telemarketing in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The influence of supervisory control and empowerment was investigated through a regulatory focus perspective (promotion focus and prevention focus) on sales performance. The responses came from 387 telemarketers working in international call centers in Dhaka, Bangladesh and were obtained through an online self-administered survey and analyzed using structural equation modeling. The results indicated that between control and empowerment, empowerment was more impactful on telemarketers, whereas supervisory control had no influence on regulatory focus. Some of the variables of supervisory empowerment impacted regulatory focuses. The sales performance of telemarketers was influenced by their regulatory focus-based strategies that were connected to the regulatory focus of both telemarketers and customers. The findings obtained from this research can be applied in the call center industry by designing supervisory approaches to motivate employees to maximize revenue and ensure better sales performance. Future studies from varied geographic locations or with a sales-customer dyadic perspective may add more insights in this area of research.

Key Words: *Supervisory control, empowerment, regulation, international call centers*

Introduction

Business process outsourcing (BPO) is a major section of outsourcing provider services in sectors like IT, finance, customer service, sales, etc. Recently, the BPO industry has received attention because it provides services that help to reduce and control costs, enable an outsourcing organization to focus on its core functions, solve capacity issues, improve services, manage the business environment, and accelerate organizational transformation (Patterson, 2019). A call center is a subset of the BPO sector that focuses on customer services or customer relations and telemarketing. Call centers are the section where companies provide customer services by receiving or giving calls, selling products and services, taking orders, giving after-sales services, and providing maintenance and solutions.

Bangladesh is a country that is developing at a reasonably high rate of growth. However, the unemployment rate measured in Bangladesh in 2017 was around 4.2% (Bangladesh Unemployment Rate, 2019). Due to the alarming rate of no new job offerings and lack of proper part-time job opportunities in Bangladesh, the government is trying to create business and employment opportunities in the BPO sector and call center sector. The government of Bangladesh initiated formation of an association called the Bangladesh Association of Call Center and Outsourcing (BACCO) in 2014.BACCO is under the Information and Communication Technology Division, and aims to ensure fair and objective call center regulations and policies, provide proper governance for the growth of the BPO sector and call center industry, promote these industries globally, and generate sustainable employment through this sector (BACCO, 2019). The number of BPO companies and call centers in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, is increasing. This emerging industry is inspiring young entrepreneurs and investors to invest in this sector, which will generate additional revenue.

The international call centers in Bangladesh that focus on telemarketing usually conduct cold calls to customers living in foreign countries for a third party. In an international call center, revenue depends entirely on the productivity, quality, and competence of the employees. The employees who call the customers and sell products and services are known as telemarketers or agents. The telemarketers are responsible for making or receiving calls, closing the calls, generating leads, and transferring calls to a third party. The team leaders (TL) are the intermediaries between the manager and agents. The TLs have to manage and control the agents, ensure productivity, and obtain a minimum required number of sales. The manager oversees the call center as a whole and helps the

team to meet its targets. The chief executive officer (CEO) or chief operation officer (COO) is the head of the pyramid in call centers. The CEO or COO is accountable for handling existing clients, launching new campaigns, ensuring profitability, setting new policies, and generating rules for a sustainable environment in call centers (Barbier, 2016).

One of the vital pillars of growth in business is to have good leadership and supervision skills over employees and team members (Papadopoulos, 2018). The revenue of call centers is generated by the telemarketers, and it is vitally dependent on the number of successful sales calls they obtain. To manage these agents' performance, behavior and attitudes, the influence of management and supervisory factors are very important. The supervisory approaches include supervisory control and empowerment. Proper supervisory skill enables a business to grow more rapidly, bring change in the adaptive selling behavior of the telemarketers, and hit the target number of successful closing sales.

Regulatory focus theory is a goal pursuit theory that examines the relationship between a person's motivation and the way that is chosen to obtain his/her goals. Regulatory focus theory maintains that human motivation is based upon the search for pleasure or the avoidance of pain; these are referred to as promotion and prevention focus, respectively. Therefore, this study aimed to create a bridge between supervisory approaches, regulatory focuses, and then sales performance. This was done by examining the influence of supervisory control and empowerment on regulatory focuses, and then investigating the impact of regulatory focuses on the sales performance of the telemarketers.

In this study the following research questions were investigated:

1. What controlling methods lead telemarketers to use promotion focus and prevention focus techniques on customers?
2. What empowerment techniques lead telemarketers to use promotion focus strategies and prevention focus on customers?
3. To what extent do promotion focus and prevention focus influence sales performance?

Literature Review

This research investigated the controlling and empowering factors influencing regulatory focuses (promotion focus and prevention focus) strategies of telemarketers. Furthermore, it also aimed to explore the impact of regulatory focuses on the sales performance of telemarketers working in international call centers in Bangladesh.

Supervisory Control: Output Control, Activity Control and Capability Control

Control is considered as an organizational response to resource dependence, and the motive is to ensure that resources are used effectively and efficiently (Anthony, 1965). Managerial or supervisory control means that a supervisor attempts to influence employees to behave in accordance with an organization's goals. There are two kinds of supervisory controls based on personal surveillance and measurement of outputs (Ouchi & Macguire, 1975). Research distinguishes between behavior-based and output-based sales management control. Behavior-based control is characterized by monitoring a salesperson's activities and outcomes, by high levels of management direction and intervention in activities of the salesperson, and by use of methods that are complex and subjective for evaluating the sales force. On the contrary, the output-based control system is direct and straight-forward by measuring the output of the salesperson involved (Anderson & Oliver, 1987). Two kinds of behavioral control have been identified, i.e., activity control and capability control. Activity control refers to controlling routine activities and monitoring actual behavior (Challagalla & Shervani, 1996). Capability control indicates setting goals and targets for the level of skills and abilities that people must possess, monitoring their skills, and providing guidance for improvement when needed (Lawler, 1990).

To encourage creative thinking, problem-solving, and exposure to different scenarios, the use of a controlling technique can be very effective. Structural leadership over employees' behavior represents supervisory control that influences regulatory focuses (Neubert et al., 2008). Goal orientation also tends to alter the relationship with regulatory focuses (Johnson et al., 2010). These considerations lead to the following hypotheses:

H_{1a}: Output control positively influences promotion focus.
H_{1b}: Output control positively influences prevention focus.
H_{1c}: Activity control positively influences promotion focus.
H_{1d}: Activity control positively influences prevention focus.
H_{1e}: Capability control positively influences promotion focus.
H_{1f}: Capability control positively influences prevention focus.

Supervisory Empowerment: Structural and Psychological Empowerment

Empowering employees has been viewed from both a cognitive and managerial approach (Kim & Fernandez, 2016). Some researchers have considered empowerment to be sharing power with or moving power to those doing the work (Bardwick, 1991; Block, 1993). Others described empowerment as redistributing authority and control (Champy, 1995). There are two kinds of empowerment: structural empowerment (or relational empowerment), and psychological empowerment (or motivational empowerment) (Wong & Tan, 2018). From a psychological perspective, empowerment of employees is a state of mind in which someone believes strongly in his capability to perform a task (Conger & Kanungo, 1988) or experiences a heightened level of intrinsic task motivation (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

Thinking from a managerial point of view, empowerment describes managerial behavior or practices such as sharing information, resources, rewards, and authority with lower-level employees (Kim & Fernandez, 2016). Structural or managerial empowerment comes in the form of delegated authority and responsibility, situations where a project manager hands over to a team member, or as involvement in decision-making processes and goal setting (Yu et al., 2018). A high level of structural empowerment comes from access to opportunities and resources (Laschinger et al., 2001). Structural empowerment influences job satisfaction and innovation (Sun et al., 2012). Promotion of a regulatory focus has been shown to be a mediator of employee creativity and empowerment (Tung, 2016).

The previous studies lead to the following hypotheses adopted for this study:

H_{2a}: Formal power positively influences promotion focus.
H_{2b}: Formal power positively influences prevention focus.
H_{2c}: Access to information positively influences promotion focus.
H_{2d}: Access to information positively influences prevention focus.
H_{2e}: Access to support positively influences promotion focus.
H_{2f}: Access to support positively influences prevention focus.
H_{2g}: Access to resources positively influences promotion focus.
H_{2h}: Access to resources positively influences prevention focus.

Empowerment from the psychological perspective refers to the sharing of authority by the hierarchy with other levels in the organization (Spreitzer, 1995). Meaningfulness, self-determination, competence, and influence are the basic cognitions of psychological empowerment. Empowerment has been in the limelight recently and has been considered from motivational and structural perspectives. The feelings of employees regarding empowerment were notable (Kim & Lee, 2016). A study conducted on packing waste and recycling behavior indicated that psychological empowerment had an impact on regulatory focus. The researchers found that a regulatory focus had a positive influence on psychological empowerment as it works as an "amplifier" (Chen et al., 2019). This led to the following hypotheses being generated for this study:

H_{3a}: Meaningfulness positively influences promotion focus.
H_{3b}: Meaningfulness positively influences prevention focus.
H_{3c}: Competence positively influences promotion focus.
H_{3d}: Competence positively influences prevention focus.
H_{3e}: Influence positively influences promotion focus.
H_{3f}: Influence positively influences prevention focus.

Regulatory Focus

Regulatory focus theory highlights different kinds of self-regulation processes for reaching goals (Freitas & Higgins, 2002). The theory suggests that a similar goal attainment procedure operates through adopting a promotion or prevention focus. Promotion-focused people tend to be eager, and they respond more to the presence or absence of positive outcomes. On the other hand, prevention-focused people are more responsive towards the presence or absence of negative outcomes (Xie & Kahle, 2014). Customers with a promotion orientation usually concentrate on expected benefits and advantages, whereas customers with a prevention orientation are conscious about reducing risk and avoiding loss. A salesperson's point of view about a customer's regulatory focus causes the salesperson to use a certain tactic in an attempt to influence choice (Hartmann et al., 2020). People with different regulatory focuses view the end-state differently. For instance, people with a promotion focus view the end-state as a sign of hope and aspiration, and are responsive to nurture and accomplishments (Carver & Scheier, 2001; Lee & Aaker, 2004; Pham & Aaker, 2002). Salespersons and customers with a promotion orientation look forward to achieving things that lead to positive outcomes. By contrast, salespersons and customers with a strong prevention orientation view the end-state as an obligation, and they become concerned about their security and safety. These people focus on avoiding losses and undesirable outcome outputs (Cesario et al., 2008).

Studies indicate that salespersons should use a tactic that is relevant and consistent with their regulatory orientation because customers respond better to such influence tactics. Salespersons with a high promotion orientation view the customer-salesperson interaction as an opportunity for mutual advantage, where both parties will get a positive outcome for the successful completion of a sale. Customers with a high promotion orientation will consider the salesperson-customer interaction as a plus by thinking of it as an opportunity to obtain some advantage in the purchase (Forster et al., 2003; Forster & Higgins, 2005). Contrarily, a salesperson with a high prevention orientation views a customer-salesperson interaction as a challenge to avoid losing potential sales. Customers with a prevention focus avoid interaction with a salesperson and lower buying risk by not allowing a caller to proceed with the sales pitch (Puto et al., 1985).

Regulatory focus has an influence on and relationship to the performance of a salesperson. Some studies indicate that a promotion focus has positive effects, and a prevention focus has a negative predictive outcome (Hamstra et al., 2018). The regulatory focus has been the mediator in goal orientation and the sales performance of a salesperson (Johnson et al., 2011). These studies lead to the following hypotheses being generated for this study:

H_{4a}: Promotion focus has influence on sales performance.
H_{4b}: Prevention focus has influence on closing sales performance.

Figure 1 *Theoretical Framework (adapted from Challagalla and Shervani, 1996; Wong and Tan, 2018; and Hartmann et al., 2020)*
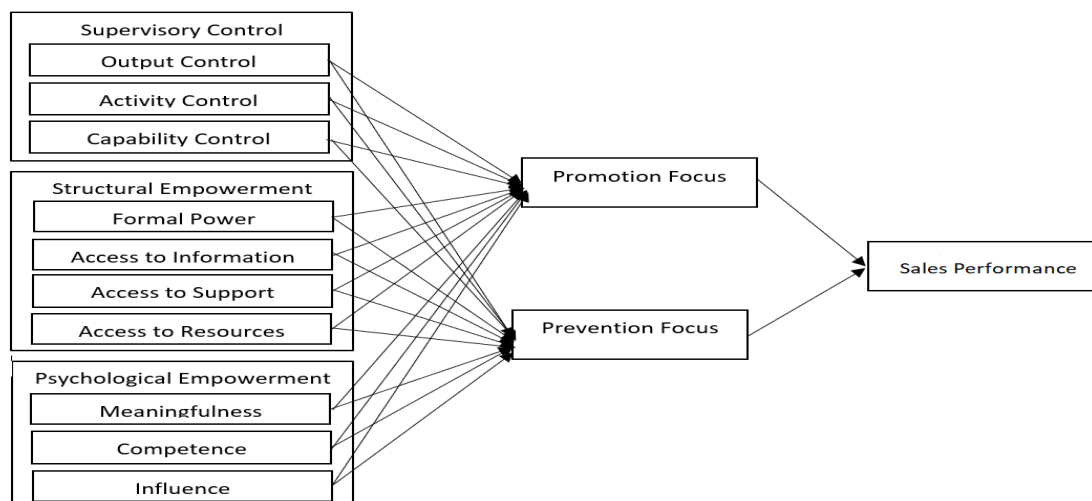
Table 1 *Definitions and Operational Definitions*

Variable	Definition	Operational Definition
Output Control	Enforced when formal directives from an organization are specified in the form of outputs. (Dalton, 1971)	Output control is enforced if telemarketers from call centers are evaluated based on their performance output.
Activity Control	Controlling routine activities and monitoring actual behavior. (Challagalla & Shervani, 1996)	Controlling routine activities, specifying tasks, activities, abilities, skills by providing scripts/monitoring telemarketers' behavior.
Capability Control	Setting goals and targets for the level of skills and abilities that people must possess, monitoring their skills, providing guidance for improvement if needed. (Lawler, 1990)	Setting goals and targets for the number of sales for each campaign, for the level of skills and abilities people must possess, monitoring their skills, providing guidance if needed to improve reaching the targeted number of closing sales.
Formal Power	Ability to mobilize resources to get things done. (Kanter, 1993)	Ability of telemarketers to mobilize the script, conversations with customers, participate in decision making to get the number of required closing sales calls done.
Access to Information	Having formal and informal knowledge that is necessary to be effective in the workplace. (Orgambidez-Ramos & Borrego-Ales, 2014)	Having formal and informal knowledge about customers and campaigns that are necessary to be effective for getting more sales.
Access to Support	Receiving feedback and guidance from subordinates, peers, and superiors. (Orgambidez-Ramos & Borrego-Ales, 2014)	Receiving feedback and guidance from subordinates, team leaders, quality assurers and supervisors.
Access to Resources	One's ability to acquire the financial means, materials, time, and supplies required to do the work. (Orgambidez-Ramos & Borrego-Ales, 2014)	Telemarketer's ability to acquire the financial means, campaigns and services offered, time and supplies required in order to close more sales.
Meaningfulness	The value of a work goal or purpose, with an individual's identity. (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004)	The value of closing sales and purpose, judged by each telemarketer's identity.
Competence	Ability to carry out roles/tasks, integrate knowledge, skills, attitudes and personal values, and abilities to build knowledge and skills based on experience and lessons. (Bartram & Roe, 2005)	Ability to carry out calls and sales, roles or tasks, to integrate knowledge, skills in selling and negotiating, attitudes and personal values, ability to build knowledge and skills based on experience/lessons in call centers.
Influence	Sense of progression towards a goal, individuals' belief that their actions make a difference in their organizations; contributes to employee engagement. (Stander & Rothmann, 2010)	Sense of progression towards a goal, or supervisor's or peers' belief that telemarketers' actions are making a difference in call centers, which contributes to a telemarketer's engagement.
Promotion Focus	People's perception or orientation that emphasizes hopes, achievements, and gain. (Carver & Scheier, 2001; Lee & Aaker, 2004; Pham & Aaker, 2002)	Telemarketers' strategies to use people's perceptions emphasizing achievement and gain that is consistent with their own orientation.
Prevention Focus	People's perception or orientation that emphasizes safety and security, that leads to avoiding and resisting (Cesario et al., 2008)	Telemarketers' strategies to use people's perception emphasizing avoidance, insecurity, and resistance that is consistent with their own orientation. Telemarketers' strategy that uses the perception of loss.
Sales Performance	The result of carrying out many discreet and specific activities that may vary greatly across different types of selling jobs and situations (Walker et al., 1977)	The degree to which the telemarketers could close a targeted number of calls.

Research Methodology

To examine the proposed hypotheses, a structured questionnaire was designed that included 55 scaling items for 13 variables. There were 14 questions for supervisory control, 17 questions for structural empowerment, 12 questions for psychological empowerment, eight questions for regulatory focuses, and four questions for sales performance, which were measured using the number of successful closed calls by the telemarketers. There were six demographic questions and one "click through" question. The survey used a five-point Likert scale for recording information from the respondents. The survey instrument was adapted from Challagalla and Shervani (1996), Laschinger (2012), Kanai-Pak (2009), and Kirmani and Campbell (2004).

Initially, a pilot test was conducted with 30 samples to test the validity and reliability of the measurement items. Reliability and Exploratory Factor Analysis were applied as a preliminary analysis for the pilot test. According to the results of the pilot test, the final questionnaire was updated for primary data collection by making some adjustments. The population of the study consisted of 100,000 telemarketers working in Bangladesh. The data were collected using a convenience sampling method; seven international call centers were specifically chosen for gathering the data. The questionnaires were distributed among 405 respondents working in seven international call centers through a self-administrated online platform (email, Skype, Facebook Messenger). Completed forms were received from 387 respondents and were subjected to analysis.

The data analysis was completed in three main steps. First, the reliability of the data was checked. The Cronbach's Alpha ranged from .54 to .92 for the variables of the study. Finally, to test the hypotheses, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Model (SEM) were used.

Results

Table 2 shows the demographic information of the respondents surveyed in this study. It can be observed that the sample involved predominantly male telemarketers who were relatively young. The educational level was almost equally divided between high school graduates and bachelor degree holders. The payment range of the respondents differed greatly. In the call center industry, telemarketers are paid on an hourly basis. This means that the salary of telemarketers with no prior experience or skills started at 60 Bangladeshi Taka (BDT) per hour or below. The more skill or experience that telemarketers acquired, the higher the increment or payment they received per hour. In this study, data were collected from telemarketers who had different levels of expertise in the sector. Hence, there was a range of payments that telemarketers received from their call centers.

Table 2 *Summary of Demographic Characteristics*

Attribute	Option	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	365	94.3
	Female	22	5.7
Age	18–25 years	268	69.3
	26–35 years	144	29.5
	36 years and above	5	1.3
Education Level	Higher School Certificate	182	47.0
	Bachelor Degree	177	45.7
	Master Degree and above	28	7.2
Prior Experience	Yes	239	62.6
	No	143	37.4
Duration of Work	6 months and below	109	28.2
	More than 6 months—1 year	123	31.8
	More than 1 year	155	40.1
Hourly Payment	60 BDT and below	13	3.4
	61 BDT–70 BDT	88	23.2
	71 BDT–80 BDT	98	25.8
	81 BDT–90 BDT	111	29.2
	91 BDT and above	77	18.4

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was applied to measure the hypotheses of the model and to understand which variables or factors were correlated. CFA was used because this method helps to determine the convergence and discriminant validity of the items or variables. This technique was utilized for finding the relationship among the measured variables and latent variables of the developed hypotheses. To apply CFA, the model was divided into four constructs, i.e., supervisory control, structural empowerment, psychological empowerment, and promotion-prevention focus and sales performances. Initially, the model consisted of 57 scaling items. However, for improving the fit-indices of the model, some of the items were removed and the final model was left with 36 scaling items to meet an acceptable level of goodness-of-fit (GFI).

Table 3 *Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results*

Item	CMIN/*df*	*p*-value	Degrees of freedom	GFI	AGFI	CFI	NFI	RMR	RMSEA
Criteria	< 3	> .5	NA	> .95	> .8	> .95	> .90	Smaller, better	< .08
Supervisory Control Model	2.77	.000	34	.96	.92	.96	.94	.04	.07
Structural Empowerment Model	2.15	.000	55	.96	.93	.97	.94	.02	.06
Psychological Empowerment Model	2.30	.000	38	.96	.93	.97	.95	.01	.06
Promotion-prevention Focus and Sales Performance Model	2.88	.000	32	.96	.91	.98	.96	.05	.07

Note. GFI = Goodness-of-Fit Index; AGFI = Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; NFI = Normed Fit Index; RMR = Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

The results presented in Table 3 show that the overall indices met the acceptance level of the key criteria. The $\chi 2/df$ was below the threshold of 3.0, p = 0.000, GFI > .95, AGFI > .90, AGFI > .98, NFI > .94, RMR = .03, RMSEA = .06. Hence, the CFA results obtained show a reasonable goodness of fit for the model. Following CFA, structural equation modelling (SEM) was used for evaluating the model. This allowed an analysis of the relation or covariance among the set of variables in the model and aided in formulating explanations for their variance with the specified model.

Table 4 *Overall Model Fit Results*

Model Fit	Acceptable Level	SEM Model
χ2	Smaller, the better	1599.03 (p =.000)
χ2/df	< 3	2.91 (df = 422)
GFI	> .80	.82
AGFI	< .80	.78
RMSEA	< .08	.07
SRMR	< .08	.18
RMR	Smaller, the better	.09
CFI	> .90	.86

Table 4 represents the goodness of fit of the model used in this study. Most of the fit indices met the standardized values used in SEM analysis. However, the GFI and AGFI of the model did not exceed the threshold value of fitness (.90). But according to Baumgartner and Homburg (1996) and Doll et al. (1994), the values are acceptable if the GFI is above .80 and the CFI figure is also close to the threshold

value, while the RMSEA, SRMR, and RMR values exceed acceptable levels (the threshold values). Thus, the proposed framework can be considered as having a good fit, as the results of the model fit the standardized values of the statistical analysis.

Hypothesis Testing

The results from the hypotheses testing of supervisory control (H_1) showed that supervisory control had no influence on telemarketers' promotion focus strategies and prevention focus strategies. The results for the hypotheses that tested structural empowerment (H_2) demonstrated that the variables within this concept had no influence on promotion focus and prevention focus excluding "access to resources." The hypotheses of access to resources, H_{2g} and H_{2h} had *p*-values of .037 and .007 with standardized coefficient values (beta) of 0.18 and 0.21, respectively. This indicated their positive influence on promotion focus strategies and prevention focus strategies. For psychological empowerment variables, hypotheses H_{3c} and H_{3d} gave significant *p*-values and CR values, which indicated that "competence" had an influence on promotion focus strategies and prevention focus strategies. The beta values for these hypotheses were 1.63 and 1.96 respectively, which indicated a positive influence. Promotion focus, prevention focus and sales performances indicated indirect relationships among controlling or empowerment techniques and sales performance. Hypotheses H_{4a} and H_{4b} had significant *p*-values with acceptable CR values. The beta values for these hypotheses showed that promotion focus had a negative influence on sales performance, whereas a prevention focus had a positive influence on sales performance. Therefore, promotion focus and prevention focus techniques negatively and positively impacted sales performance.

Table 5 *Summary of Testing Results*

Hypothesis Path	Standardized Coefficients (β)	CR (*t*-value)	*p*-value	Results
H_1				
a. Output Control → Promotion Focus	-0.16	1.005	.315	Not Supported
b. Output Control → Prevention Focus	-0.44	0.969	.333	Not Supported
c. Activity Control → Promotion Focus	0.32	0.373	.170	Not Supported
d. Activity Control → Prevention Focus	0.32	0.507	.132	Not Supported
e. Capability Control → Promotion Focus	0.12	0.832	.405	Not Supported
f. Capability Control → Prevention Focus	0.15	0.911	.362	Not Supported
H_2				
a. Formal Power → Promotion Focus	0.01	0.127	.899	Not Supported
b. Formal Power → Prevention Focus	0.07	0.874	.382	Not Supported
c. Access to Information → Promotion Focus	-0.60	0.683	.495	Not Supported
d. Access to Information → Prevention Focus	0.01	0.071	.943	Not Supported
e. Access to Support → Promotion Focus	-0.03	0.487	.626	Not Supported
f. Access to Support → Prevention Focus	-0.08	1.240	.215	Not Supported
g. Access to Resources → Promotion Focus	0.18	0.086	.037*	Supported
h. Access to Resources →Prevention Focus	0.21	0.718	.007**	Supported
H_3				
a. Meaningfulness → Promotion Focus	2.76	1.384	.166	Not Supported
b. Meaningfulness → Prevention Focus	2.62	1.356	.175	Not Supported
c. Competence → Promotion Focus	1.63	1.856	.063*	Supported
d. Competence → Prevention Focus	1.96	1.988	.047*	Supported
e. Influence → Promotion Focus	-3.96	-1.611	.107	Not Supported
f. Influence → Prevention Focus	-3.78	-1.591	.112	Not Supported
H_4				
a. Promotion Focus → Sales Performance	-2.71	-2.957	.003**	Supported
b. Prevention Focus → Sales Performance	3.07	3.632	***	Supported

Note. (*) *p* < .05, (**) *p* < .01, (***) *p* < .001

Theoretical Contribution and Managerial Implications

This research provided some valuable insights into management of business organizations. The results showed that supervisory control had no impact on promotion and prevention focus. Rather than controlling telemarketers, supervisors should provide more freedom to them when they make cold calls. In addition, results indicated that the call centers should focus on providing telemarketers with access to resources and facilities for maximum productiveness. Supervisors should also work on giving more information about the products, clients, and customers so that the telemarketers are more flexible and confident while making calls so as to get more sales. Competence had significant impacts on the promotion and prevention focus. It gave the telemarketers a sense of freedom to handle the persuasion process, and convince customers to buy the offered services and products.

The call centers of Bangladesh and developing countries like India and Pakistan can develop a managerial framework for better performance from their telemarketers by using the findings of this study. From this study, it was found that the promotion focus-based strategies had a negative impact on sales performances, while prevention focus-based strategies had a positive impact on sales performance, thus leading to successful sales performance. Sometimes the strategy used might vary from campaign to campaign. Customers responded more to prevention–that is, what they were missing out on by not using a product or service–than to promotions. This information can be applied to build new strategies to manage telemarketers and earn more revenue.

Discussion

In this research, the impact of numerous supervisory approaches on sales performance were investigated and measured by the sales performance of the telemarketers. The study investigated the influence of variables in the setup of international call centers situated in Dhaka, Bangladesh. In many studies it has been shown that supervisory control plays an essential role in role ambiguity and job tension; it also has an indirect relationship with the performance of the salesperson (Challagalla & Shervani, 1996). Behavior controls, output controls, and activity controls seemed to increase performance of salespersons (Henderson & Lee, 1992) or, in another study, decreased performance (Turcotte, 1974). In this study, the supervisory controls tended to have neither positive nor negative impacts on regulatory focus or telemarketer performance. In addition, the effects of employee-perceived empowering acts tended to have an influence on performance (Biron & Bamberger, 2010). Some empowering factors impact the final sales performance and the way that telemarketers handle their customers. Regulatory focus impacts creativity, sales performance, and innovation of a salesperson (Hamstra et al., 2018). The results of this research indicated that regulatory focuses had both negative and positive effects on sales performance.

Conclusions

In spite of having multiple years of experience, some of the telemarketers do not become successful team leaders and supervisors. This research will help us to understand the driving factors of effective supervisory practice in international call centers. The telemarketers often do not succeed in obtaining the targeted sales number for lack of proper guidelines and supervision. Hence, they cannot generate enough revenue to make the company profitable. The result of this research will enable the supervisors at call centers to understand how to tutor telemarketers to be more productive. The management of call centers can check and apply effective methods for their companies to get more successful outputs by using the results obtained through this study.

There were some limitations to this study. The population surveyed was from a developing country. The model and results may be different for less developed cities and developed countries. In this study, there were significant differences in the number of male and female respondents. The reason is that international call centers are male-dominated in Bangladesh. Hence, a majority of the international call centers telemarketers were male. The data was collected from telemarketers who had different hourly salary ranges, which implied their level of expertise in the profession. This means that their respective feelings towards the survey might vary from telemarketer to telemarketer at each

level. This study was conducted using quantitative methods; qualitative methods were not taken into consideration. Future research could be conducted on national call centers that are involved with customer care services. A wider geographic distribution of call centers might also be considered for studies in the future. Comparison among countries from different parts of Asia or countries with cultural and perception differences could also be examined in the future.

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