

GRIT AND SOCIAL SUPPORT AS THE MODALITY OF SALES PROMOTER JOB PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

Sales promoters have an essential role in achieving the company's profit. Therefore, they are required to have a good performance. However, they often encounter various difficulties during their job performance that decrease employee performance. In overcoming this issue, grit exists in each individual, and social support from the sales promoter's environment can help them increase their job performance. This research objective is to examine the influence of grit and social support on the job performance of sales promoters. The sampling technique used is simple random sampling. The sample of this research is a group of 180 sales promoters consisting of 132 men and 48 women with an age range of 20-40 years ($M = 2.54$; $SD = 1.027$). The instruments used in this study were the Job Performance Scale (24 items, $\alpha = .856$), Grit Scale (20 items, $\alpha = .604$), and Social Support Scale (30 items, $\alpha = .877$). The analysis test by the multiple linear regression with the hypothesis testing t -test statistic showed a positive and statistically significant influence of grit and social support on the sales promoter job performance, adjusted $R^2 = .608$; $F(2, 177) = 140.057$, $p < .001$.

Keywords: grit; social support; job performance; sales promoter

INTRODUCTION

The tight competition of the global economic era recently demands the company to confront the business competition and make the human resource one of the assets that its potential development is maintained to achieve the company goal. Without humans as a business booster, the company's operations cannot run maximally. A company should have specific power gained from employee job performance to compete with the competitor, including their productive, innovative, creative, and competent working skills. Motowidlo and Kell (2012) defined job performance as the total value expected by the organization from discrete behavior in which employees' working results are above the standard within a specific time.

A sales promoter is one of the human resources that has an essential role in achieving the company's profit. Almost all companies need the sales promoter's role in running their business. One of the keys to successfully achieving the company profit depends on the sales' skills and ability to

interact with the consumer during the service or company product offer. Therefore, a sales promoter is frequently required to have maximal job performance.

Sales promoters who can get maximal job performance will open the opportunity for a faster product/service sale. It is also stated in the research by Schmitz (2012) that the job performance of sales promoters has a significant role in increasing sales. It was due to the sales promoter will face consumers directly, convincing them to be attracted and finally purchase the product offered, also delivering the product's information to the consumer (Rocco and Bush, 2016). Furthermore, Akbar (2018) revealed in his research that employees with a standard or even poor job performance would affect the working environment and lead to business loss or even harm both the company and the employee. Therefore, the increment in job performance came along with the increment in the organization's quality and effectiveness (Setiawan and Mujiati, 2016).

Aropah et al., (2020) revealed that job performance can be influenced by

transformational leadership, organizational support, and work environment. Meanwhile, Diamantidis and Chatzoglou (2019) stated that managerial support, organizational climate, job environment, flexibility, and intrinsic motivation have an impact on job performance. Furthermore, Riyadi et al., (2018) discovered that employee motivation has a considerable effect on performance. This demonstrates that the higher the level of work motivation, the higher the level of employee performance. Moreover, it was also connected to someone's attitude or psychological condition, such as grit.

The interview conducted with several target-personal achiever sales promoters revealed that they grow their working persistence and interest to overcome the issues in their workplace, and it affects their job performance as well. Although they receive the consumer's refusal, they will keep offering another product that might attract their interest. This psychological condition is called grit.

Duckworth (2016) defined grit as persistence and enthusiasm followed by the hard work to deal with the challenges and high consistency, although they encounter failure or difficulties in achieving the long-term goals. Pryiomka (2018) stated that people with strong perseverance would have high expectations, focus on fulfilling tasks, and continue to put forth effort despite failure, problems, and barriers.

Through the research conducted, Menges et al. (2017) stated that grit could motivate employees to give the best work they can in the work environment. Meanwhile, a study conducted by Coomer (2016) showed a positive influence of grit on the promotor sales job performance. Promotor sales who have a high grit level showed an increasing job performance. Dugan et al. (2019) conducted the following research to observe the grit's positive effect of sales on job satisfaction and performance also showed an equivalent result.

Furthermore, Nowlin et al. (2018) revealed that sales would feel connected with their colleagues and work well when they know they can rely on, communicate, and support each other. Jong (2018) defined social support as creating an employee's better working conditions. Meanwhile, Septianingrum and Supraba (2021) described social support could make individuals feel more optimistic because they feel confident that when facing challenges, there will be help from others. The form of social support is probably in the facilities fulfillment to support the activities, leaders/colleagues' support, help, feedback, and motivation for the workers in the workplace (Lambert et al., 2016).

Diamantidis and Chatzoglou (2018) elaborated that lack of managerial support for employee initiatives has a direct detrimental influence on job performance, organizational atmosphere, and work environment. This will result in a decrease in employee motivation, proactiveness, and adaptability. The same point delivered from the research was made by Shin et al. (2018), revealing that colleagues' assistance is one of the primary sources of workplace social support. Colleagues' emotional support claimed can improve the achievement and job performance. Besides, Lusianingrum et al. (2020) found that statistically, colleagues' support affects job performance. In other words, the more enthusiastic support gained from their colleagues, the more employees will feel capable of finishing their job, which also influences their job performance.

Grit and social support are suspected to impact sales promoter' job performance. Several sales promoter said that although they worked under pressure each month, their persistency in confronting the obstacles helped them still show good performance at work. Social support eases their work burden and affects their job performance. Moreover, suppose the team's individual has the grit to keep being hard workers and support each other. In that case, it leads to a conducive

working environment, which also helps them complete their responsibilities.

Based on the discussions, this research objective is to examine the influence of grit and social support on the job performance of sales promoter. Whether the grit and social support affect the sales promoter job performance. This research is expected to be a reference to overcome the performance of employees in the company. This research is also likely to consider considerations in conducting related research on employees in Indonesia.

The hypothesis proposed in this study is that grit and social support affect sales promoter job performance. The research topic of the grit concept has not been discussed much in the industrial psychology setting and organization involving Indonesian employees.

METHOD

Participant and procedure

The participants of this research were 180 sales promoter of an electronic houseware product company in Indonesia, consisting of 132 men and 48 women ($M = 2.54$; $SD = 1.027$). The respondent selection criteria applied by the researcher are: (1) worked as sales promoter; (2) ages 20 – 40 years; (3) \geq 1-year working experience as sales promoter. The chosen sample involved 180 samples based on the Slovincs formula by the population of 325 sales promoters and used a critical value (limits of accuracy) of 5%. The sampling technique used was simple random sampling. The reason for using this technique was that all population members would have the same opportunity to become participants so that the data obtained can be generalized to represent the population.

The research scales were distributed through the Google Form platform (online) since it allows them to approach respondents in many places, and it was expected that the research data would be accessible in the same way.

Participants in the study were asked to sign an informed permission form before being given instruments to fill out, expressing their desire to participate in the whole instruments process. By comparing personal data fields such as name, age, gender, geographical origin, duration of work, and telephone number, the researcher confirmed that data entry was valid and reduced double-filling by respondents.

Measurement

The instrument used in this study was the Job Performance designed by Goodman and Svyantek (1999) and adapted by Hasan (2020). Three aspects of performance are measured: task performance, altruism, and conscientiousness. There are 24 items on this scale with Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$, and this scale is a Likert scale which consists of four categories with a range of 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree), and 4 (strongly agree). An example of item sound in this instrument are "Working together at work can assist me to finish the job" and "Always achieve work targets and goals".

The Grit Scale, created by Duckworth et al. (2007) and adapted by Gustia (2019), is the second scale used. Grit is measured by consistent interest and perseverance in the effort. There are 20 items on this scale with Cronbach's $\alpha = .60$, which is in the type of a Likert scale with four possible replies on each scale with a score value, with answer option A has a score of 4, B has a score of 3, C has a score of 2, and D has a score of 1. An example of item sound in this instrument is "When my job does not match my interests, I will..." with the answer choices "A. Survive and be responsible for what I have chosen; B. I try to receive well even though it does not suit my interests; C. I will look for another job that matches my interests; and D. Stop working".

The last measure used is Caesaria's (2010) social support scale, based on House et al. (1985) theory of four aspects: emotional support, appreciation support, instrumental

support, and informational support. This scale has 30 items with Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$, and it is a Likert scale with four categories with a range of 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree), and 4 (strongly agree). Examples of items in this instrument are "My co-workers appreciate my work" and "My boss does not appreciate my presence at my workplace".

Data analysis

Before testing the research hypotheses, the researcher had finished the normality test, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity to determine the analysis method used. All assumptions needed for the multiple regression test have finished, and the researcher used 24th versions of SPSS for the statistical calculation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of the hypothesis test showed a significant effect of grit and social support on

the job performance of sales promoters by the significant value $F(2, 177) = 140.057, p < .001; R^2 = .613$. It indicates that the hypothesis was approved, grit and social support contribute to job performance were around 61.3%; and the other factor influences the rest of the percentage. The result of this research follows the research done by Coomer (2016), as grit influenced the sales job performance positively. Sales with a high grit would increase job performance and benefit the company. Moreover, the research by Dugan et al. (2019) also showed a positive influence of grit on work satisfaction and performance. The research revealed that gritty sales would always try their best to finish their job even if they overcame multiple refusals from consumers. Therefore, it would lead to better performance rather than the employees with a low grit. Duckworth et al. (2007) described that by grit, individuals would better know what they should pay attention to and their interest in finding their goal and avoiding failure.

Table 1.

Regression Analysis of The Variables				
Predictors	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	16.650	3.905	4.264	< .001
Grit	.196	.066	2.984	.003
Social Support	.514	.041	12.471	< .001
<i>R</i> ²		.613		
<i>Adj. R</i> ²		.608		
<i>F</i>		140.057		< .001
<i>Note.</i> Dependent variable: Job Performance.				

The job performance of sales promoters would also be better when they gained social support from the environment. The support perhaps appeared from their family, leaders, or colleagues in the form of empathy or attention, positive appreciation for the result of their work, material or financial assistance, and suggestion to help sales promoter run their job well. This research followed the research by Nowlin et al. (2017), which revealed that social support and connection improved the sales job performance through the sales strategy or

sales effort for the company profit. The previous research by Shin et al. (2018) was also in accordance with this research since there was a positive influence from social support on the employee's job performance. Social support in the form of emotional support and assistance from colleagues was the primary source to increase employees' job performance and achievement. Lusianingrum et al. (2020) also found that social support, specifically colleague support, affected employees' job performance. Additional explanation mentioned that a

good relationship between colleagues increases work motivation or enthusiasm. The characteristics of a good working relationship are the collaboration skills between employees and supporting each other. Therefore, sales promoter needed social support during their work. Accepting social support from colleagues or leaders would bring the spirit, appreciated feeling, and persistence, which helped sales promoter finish their work and create a good performance.

Sales promoters who enjoyed their working process and focused on their target would strive to fight any failure or difficulties because they had the grit and social support from their environment. Grit releases the desire and enthusiasm of individuals, which also releases positive emotions and becomes their source of energy to overcome any obstacle. Furthermore, the leader or colleagues' support would help them finish their work well, affecting the increasement of their job performance.

Based on the regression analysis, social support had the highest influence on job performance ($t(178) = 12.471, p < .001$) rather than the grit variable ($t(178) = 2.984, p = .003$). People that receive social support will realize that they are totally welcomed inside the current social network. Moreover, this awareness may lead people to feel that they will be acceptable in the face of adversity. As a result, it can boost optimism, self-esteem, and performance. Colleagues and leaders who showed concern or psychological and physical involvement to the sales promoter who found their working difficulties and supported by the positive family support arose the sales promoter's feeling of pleasant and connected to their environment. The sales would feel connected and work well when they can support one another and depend on and communicate with colleagues and leaders (Nowlin et al., 2017). Furthermore, the organizational culture was always in a team or collective and transparent. All employees discussed the

idea, strategy, or even problems they faced together under the name of company development. Organizational culture was also one of the factors why social support had a bigger influence.

The form of support given by the leaders or employees was commonly in the form of information support or strategy to sell and offer products that attracted consumer's interest, also the solution to overcome the global era competition by meeting twice a month. Furthermore, in the meeting, the leader commonly motivated the sales promoter to boost their work spirit and run their responsibilities well. A leader who constantly evaluates the relationship with their employees can develop and implement strategies to increase social support and reduce work stress. This strategy can increase productivity, reduce costs, increase profits and improve the quality of an employee's daily life (Foy et al., 2019). Moreover, the company would generally reward the sales promoter who achieved their monthly target. It was common in the form of points collected and exchanged for any houseware such as motorcycle and gold.

Another form of support commonly given was to help the difficulties employees faced when the product was out of stock when the consumer requested it. Colleagues commonly helped by looking for the product stock in other stores, and those forms of support helped the sales promoter to achieve 'sell out'. The advice and suggestion given to the sales promoter who showed poor performance caused by any personal problem was also one of support given by the colleagues so that those who confronted any problems could fix it soon. Wang et al. (2018) also said that colleagues have a significant role in assisting workers in dealing with difficult clinical situations and demanding occupations by providing emotional support, advice, and hands-on aid. Meanwhile, the form of family support was the concern or attention when the sales promoter confronted problems in the

workplace or the difficulties to achieve the target. Those forms of social support obtained influenced the job performance of sales promoters. It also brought a dominant influence. The support given by the colleagues, leaders, or family boosted the passion of sales promoters in achieving their goal or job target expected, which also influenced their job performance.

Moreover, social support could also reduce the stress felt by the sales promoter due to the high standard of monthly selling target. Sales promoter who failed in overcoming the problems, or in other words, the stress they felt, would affect their bad performance. It was also following the research conducted by Iswanto and Agustina (2017), stating social support reduced problems or burdens confronted by the employees; therefore, employees would have a good work engagement. Employee engagement would cause better job performance since they became optimistic. The interview result conducted to several sales promoters also revealed that leaders or colleagues who ignored the support for those who gained low sales results would cause disappointment, which affected their job performance. Social support in the form of emotional support from colleagues increased achievement and job performance (Shin et al., 2018).

The other result revealed that grit significantly statistically influenced job performance. The higher the grit score, the better job performance will be pointed out so that company or personal goals will be achieved straightforwardly. This result was in accordance with Menges et al. (2017), who said that grit would motivate employees by encouraging themselves to do the best work they could, and it influenced the increasement of their job performance. A similar result to the research by Ion et al. (2017) conducted on Romania employees discovered that grit emphasized individual achievement and job performance in the workplace. It shows how employees adapt and are responsible for their tasks. Besides, research conducted by Dugan et al. (2019),

which involved 256 salesmen of a company in America, showed that grit was related to the sales' persistence in achieving their selling target and positively influenced their job performance. Research from Southwick et al (2019) also showed that grit affects job performance, while a wider body of research has demonstrated grit's ability to predict performance outside of the office. As expected of the individual who works hard to complete their job responsibilities, they tend to outperform peers of the same ability due to grit.

Several previous types of research of grit were mostly conducted in Western society as its subject, which emphasizes the individualistic cultural values in work. It was not quite popular to be observed through Asian employees, specifically Indonesian. It proved that grit observed employee independence by the independence characteristics relevant to the statement of Duckworth (2016), who said that one of the factors related to grit was how individual developed their self-potential and moved forward to achieve their success. However, this research showed a different result through Indonesian society characteristics, mostly collective. Grit had less contribution than social support since sales promoters emphasized working cooperation. The research was done by Nasurdin et al. (2018) on the Malaysian employee indicated that social support, specifically colleagues support, influences job performance. Supportive colleagues had an important role to guarantee the employee did the job effectively and helping them avoid negativity such as stress at work. Furthermore, through their research of Iranian employees, Javadian and Hosseini (2020) proposed that social support given by family, friends, and society increased job performance. The family would provide attention, intimacy, and helps needed, while friend and society commonly support and appreciate.

That research revealed how West people work by emphasizing individualism and Asian people by emphasizing collectivism.

Another reason for the bigger contribution for sales promoters came from social support: the organizational culture that emphasized teamwork in achieving the profit and company's goal. Cooperation, easier for the team to finish the job and responsibility since everything is done together. In addition, it caused an interdependence feeling. Collectivist society would mostly focus on a good relationship with their environment and direct involvement in certain groups or organizations (Sutampi et al., 2018). Furthermore, the cause of sales promoters' collective work was the sense of belonging. Therefore, they would simultaneously promote the company and build good relationships with colleagues and leaders.

The less good sources to analyze and connect to the demography data are this research limitations. Therefore, the following researcher is expected to consider the analysis of it. Moreover, this research can be replicated with more subjects and considering the various company means not only from a company. Besides, the following researcher can input another variable, which increases future knowledge references.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research result, the hypothesis of this research is approved. In other words, there is a significant and positive influence of grit and social support on the sales promoter's job performance. The result shows that the higher grit and social support sales promoters had, the better output of their job performance. This research also revealed that the influence of grit and social support variables on the job performance variable is 60.8%. The highest contribution is gained from the social support rather than the grit.

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