

**STRENGTHENING SUSTAINABLE SALES PERFORMANCE  
THROUGH DIGITAL SALES CAPABILITY AND ADAPTIVE  
SELLING BEHAVIOR: EVIDENCE FROM PAKISTAN'S TEXTILE  
EXPORT INDUSTRY UNDER MARKET UNCERTAINTY**

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**Abstract**

This study investigates how digital sales capability and adaptive selling behavior jointly contribute to strengthening sustainable sales performance within Pakistan's textile export industry under conditions of heightened market uncertainty. The textile export sector represents a cornerstone of Pakistan's economy, yet it faces persistent challenges stemming from global demand volatility, technological disruption, shifting buyer expectations, and intensified international competition. In response, exporting firms are increasingly compelled to transition from traditional relationship-based selling approaches toward digitally enabled, data-driven, and adaptive sales practices. Drawing upon sales capability theory, adaptive selling theory, and uncertainty management perspectives, this research develops and empirically tests a comprehensive conceptual framework that positions digital sales capability as a strategic enabler of adaptive selling behavior, sales innovation capability, and ultimately sustainable sales performance, while explicitly accounting for the moderating influence of market uncertainty.

**Keywords (20):** Digital Sales Capability; Adaptive Selling Behavior; Sustainable Sales Performance; Market Uncertainty; Sales Innovation Capability; Textile Export Industry; Pakistan; B2B Sales; Export Performance; Sales Strategy; Customer Analytics Utilization; Sales Training Effectiveness; Intrinsic Motivation; Work Enthusiasm; Sales Force Effectiveness; Digital Transformation; Emerging Markets; Competitive Advantage; Sales Sustainability; Export Marketing

## **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

The global business environment has undergone profound transformation over the past decade, driven by rapid digitalization, intensifying competition, shifting customer expectations, and persistent market uncertainty. These changes have significantly altered how firms design and execute their sales strategies, particularly in export-oriented industries where volatility, global supply chain disruptions, and fluctuating demand patterns are commonplace. Among developing economies, Research shows that corporate social responsibility activities embedded in marketing practices significantly influence consumer attitudes and market performance in Pakistan's FMCG sector (Siddiqui & Shaikh, 2025). Pakistan's textile export industry occupies a central position, contributing substantially to national exports, employment, and industrial growth. However, despite its economic significance, the sector faces mounting challenges in sustaining sales performance due to increasing international competition, technological gaps, pricing pressures, and unpredictable global market conditions. In this evolving context, traditional sales approaches—largely dependent on personal relationships, price negotiations, and reactive selling—are no longer sufficient to ensure long-term competitiveness or sustainable sales outcomes.

## **Chapter No. 2 – Literature Review**

### **Digital Sales Capability**

Digital sales capability has emerged as a critical organizational competence that enables firms to manage customer relationships, sales processes, and market engagement in increasingly digitalized and uncertain environments. In contemporary business-to-business and export-oriented contexts, digital sales capability refers to a firm's ability to effectively integrate digital technologies, customer relationship management systems, data analytics tools, and digital communication platforms into its sales function in order to enhance decision-making, customer responsiveness, and performance sustainability. Recent literature emphasizes that digital sales capability is no longer a supplementary resource but a strategic necessity for firms competing in global markets characterized by rapid technological change and heightened customer expectations (Ahearne et al., 2021; Herhausen et al., 2020).

### **Customer Analytics Utilization**

Customer analytics utilization refers to the systematic collection, analysis, and application of customer-related data to support sales decision-making, customer segmentation, relationship management, and performance optimization. Recent literature emphasizes that the value of customer

analytics lies not merely in data accumulation but in the firm's ability to translate analytical insights into actionable sales strategies that enhance customer engagement and long-term performance (Wedel & Kannan, 2020; Davenport et al., 2021). In export markets, where buyer preferences, regulatory expectations, and competitive conditions vary across regions, customer analytics utilization enables firms to reduce information asymmetry and improve strategic responsiveness (Jean, Kim & Sinkovics, 2020).

### **Sales Training Effectiveness**

Sales training effectiveness refers to the extent to which training initiatives enhance salespeople's knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors in ways that translate into improved and sustainable sales outcomes. Contemporary literature emphasizes that effective sales training goes beyond product knowledge dissemination and focuses on developing adaptive competencies, digital literacy, customer-centric thinking, and problem-solving abilities that enable salespeople to perform effectively in complex and volatile environments (Johnston & Marshall, 2020; Attia & Honeycutt, 2021).

### **Salesperson's Intrinsic Motivation**

Salesperson's intrinsic motivation has long been recognized as a foundational psychological driver of sales behavior and performance, and its importance has become increasingly pronounced in contemporary sales environments characterized by digital transformation and market uncertainty. Intrinsic motivation refers to an individual's internal desire to engage in work activities due to inherent interest, enjoyment, and personal fulfillment rather than external rewards or pressures. In sales contexts, intrinsically motivated salespeople derive satisfaction from problem-solving, customer interaction, and the challenge of achieving sales goals, which fosters sustained effort and resilience over time (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Recent literature emphasizes that intrinsic motivation is particularly critical in business-to-business and export-oriented settings, where sales cycles are long, customer relationships are complex, and performance outcomes depend heavily on persistence and adaptability (Schmitz & Ganesan, 2021).

### **Work Enthusiasm**

Work enthusiasm refers to a positive, energized, and emotionally driven state in which employees exhibit vigor, dedication, and passion toward their work roles. In sales contexts, enthusiastic salespeople display high levels of energy, optimism, and persistence, which enhance their ability to engage customers, overcome rejection, and sustain effort over time (Schaufeli, 2021). Recent literature emphasizes that work enthusiasm is particularly vital in sales roles

characterized by uncertainty, performance pressure, and continuous interaction with customers, as it supports both psychological resilience and behavioral effectiveness (Bakker & Albrecht, 2021).

### **Adaptive Selling Behavior**

Adaptive selling behavior has been extensively examined in sales and marketing literature as a critical behavioral capability that enables salespeople to adjust their selling strategies, communication styles, and value propositions in response to diverse customer needs and dynamic environmental conditions. Adaptive selling behavior refers to the deliberate modification of sales approaches based on situational cues, customer feedback, and contextual information, rather than reliance on standardized or scripted selling methods. (Singh & Venugopal, 2021). Scholars argue that adaptive selling behavior allows salespeople to manage heterogeneity among customers, respond effectively to changing buyer expectations, and maintain relationship quality over time, thereby contributing to sustainable sales performance (Schmitz & Ganesan, 2021).

### **Sales Innovation Capability**

Sales innovation capability refers to a firm's ability to generate, implement, and institutionalize novel sales practices, engagement models, and relationship management approaches that create superior customer value and sustain competitive advantage over time. Unlike product or process innovation, which primarily focuses on operational efficiency and technological advancement, sales innovation capability emphasizes market-facing transformation, making it particularly critical in business-to-business and export-oriented contexts characterized by intense competition and uncertainty (Ferreira et al., 2023). Recent studies argue that sales innovation capability allows firms to move beyond traditional selling routines and adopt more flexible, customer-centric, and digitally enabled sales strategies that support sustainable sales performance (Crittenden et al., 2021).

### **Market Uncertainty**

Market uncertainty has been widely examined in strategic management, marketing, and sales literature as a defining characteristic of contemporary business environments, particularly for firms operating in global and export-oriented markets. Market uncertainty refers to the unpredictability associated with customer demand, competitive actions, technological change, regulatory shifts, and broader macroeconomic conditions that influence firm decision-making and performance outcomes. In export contexts, uncertainty is often intensified due to cross-border complexities, cultural differences, trade policy

volatility, currency fluctuations, and geopolitical instability (Kraus et al., 2021). Scholars argue that market uncertainty fundamentally alters the conditions under which sales strategies are formulated and executed, making traditional, standardized approaches less effective and increasing the importance of flexibility, learning, and adaptability for achieving sustainable sales performance (Homburg et al., 2020).

### **Sustainable Sales Performance**

Sustainable sales performance has emerged as a critical construct in contemporary sales and marketing literature, reflecting a shift from short-term, transaction-oriented performance metrics toward a more holistic and long-term perspective on sales effectiveness. Sustainable sales performance refers to a firm's ability to achieve consistent, resilient, and long-lasting sales outcomes while maintaining strong customer relationships, adapting to environmental changes, and continuously creating value in dynamic market conditions. Unlike traditional measures of sales performance that emphasize immediate revenue or volume targets, sustainable sales performance incorporates stability, continuity, and the capacity to withstand external shocks, making it particularly relevant in uncertain and export-oriented business environments (Ulaga & Reinartz, 2021).

## **Chapter 3 – Methodology**

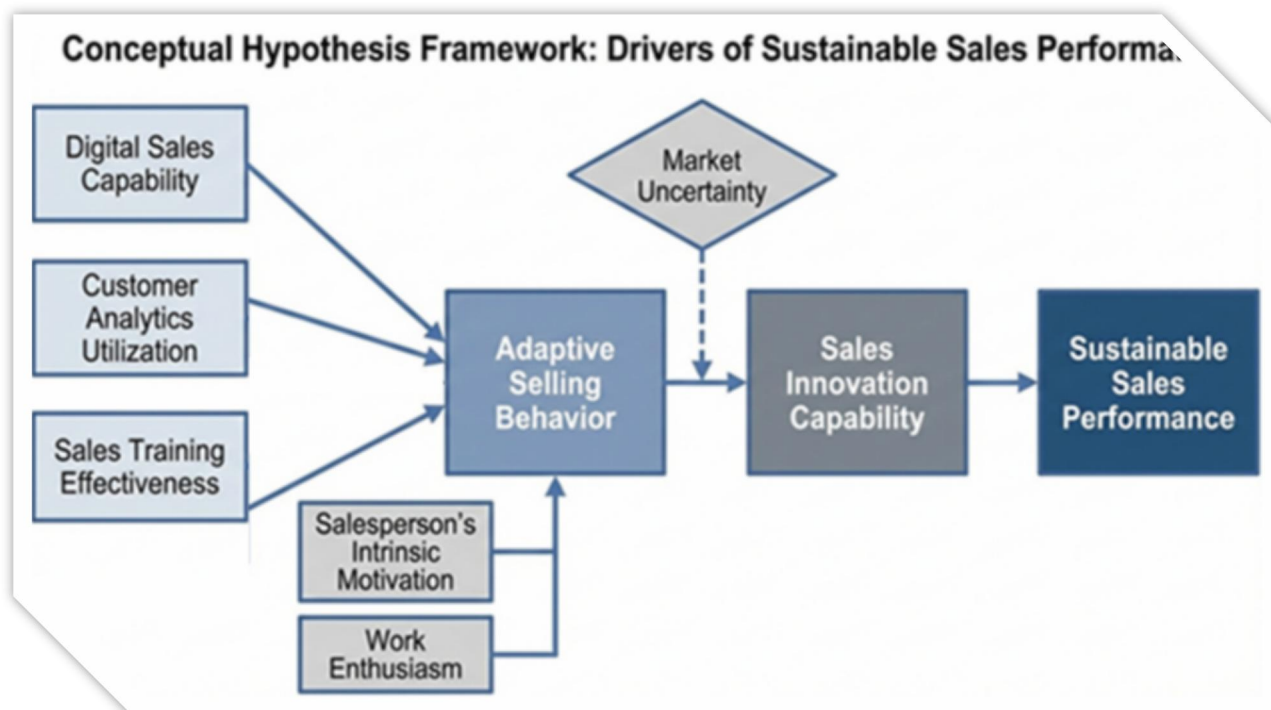
### **3.1 Research Approach**

The research approach adopted in this study is carefully selected to align with the study's objectives, theoretical grounding, and the complex nature of the relationships under investigation. The primary aim of the research is to empirically examine how digital sales capability and adaptive selling behavior contribute to sustainable sales performance within Pakistan's textile export industry under conditions of market uncertainty. Given the explanatory and theory-testing nature of this objective, the study adopts a quantitative research approach, which is widely recognized as appropriate for examining causal relationships among multiple constructs in management and sales research.

### **3.7 Data Collection Tools and Techniques**

The principal data collection tool employed in this study is a structured questionnaire, which is widely regarded as an effective instrument for collecting standardized quantitative data from a large and geographically dispersed population. The questionnaire format enables the systematic measurement of latent constructs through multiple-item scales and facilitates statistical analysis using advanced techniques such as Partial Least Squares





Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The structured nature of the questionnaire ensures consistency across responses, reduces interviewer bias, and enhances comparability among respondents.

### 3.8 Sampling Technique

The selection of an appropriate sampling technique is a crucial methodological decision that directly influences the representativeness, validity, and generalizability of research findings. In this study, the sampling technique is carefully chosen to align with the research objectives, target population, and analytical requirements of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Given the study's focus on sales professionals operating within Pakistan's textile export industry, the sampling approach must ensure access to respondents with relevant knowledge and experience while accommodating practical constraints associated with organizational research in an emerging market context.

### Conceptual Framework

#### 3.14 Conceptual Framework Hypothesis Explanations

H1: Digital sales capability has a positive and significant effect on adaptive selling behavior.

Hence, digital sales capability enhances salespeople's access to real-time customer data, communication platforms, and analytical tools, which

improves their ability to adjust sales approaches according to situational demands. (Herhausen et al., 2020; Ahearne et al., 2021).

H2: Customer analytics utilization has a positive and significant effect on adaptive selling behavior.

Whereas customer analytics utilization provides actionable insights into customer behavior, purchasing patterns, and preferences, it empowers salespeople to tailor their interactions more effectively. Analytics-driven insights reduce uncertainty and reliance on intuition, enabling evidence-based adaptation in selling strategies. Prior research demonstrates that analytics-supported salespeople exhibit higher adaptability and customization in customer interactions (Wedel & Kannan, 2020; Marshall et al., 2022).

H3: Sales training effectiveness has a positive and significant effect on adaptive selling behavior.

Hence, effective sales training enhances salespeople's knowledge, skills, and confidence, equipping them with the competencies required for adaptive selling. Training programs that emphasize consultative selling, digital tool usage, and situational analysis enable salespeople to modify their behavior in response to customer needs and market dynamics. Empirical evidence supports the role of effective training in fostering behavioral flexibility and adaptive performance (Chung et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021).

H4: Salesperson intrinsic motivation has a positive and significant effect on adaptive selling behavior.

Whereas intrinsically motivated salespeople derive satisfaction from learning and problem-solving, they are more willing to experiment with different selling approaches and invest effort in understanding customer needs. Intrinsic motivation promotes persistence and openness to feedback, which are essential for adaptive selling. Prior studies confirm that intrinsically motivated salespeople demonstrate higher levels of adaptability and proactive behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Hartmann et al., 2021).

H5: Work enthusiasm has a positive and significant effect on adaptive selling behavior.

Hence, work enthusiasm provides the emotional energy and engagement necessary for salespeople to cope with uncertainty and performance pressure. Enthusiastic salespeople are more resilient, responsive, and willing to adjust their selling strategies in dynamic environments. Empirical research indicates that work enthusiasm enhances learning orientation and adaptive behavior in sales roles (Bakker & Albrecht, 2021; Huang et al., 2021).

H6: Adaptive selling behavior has a positive and significant effect on sales innovation capability.

Whereas adaptive selling behavior encourages experimentation and learning through customer interactions, it generates insights that can be transformed into innovative sales practices. Salespeople who continuously adapt their approaches contribute to the development of new engagement models and processes, thereby strengthening sales innovation capability. Studies highlight adaptive selling as a key driver of sales innovation and continuous improvement (Schmitz & Ganesan, 2021; Ferreira et al., 2023).

H7: Adaptive selling behavior has a positive and significant effect on sustainable sales performance.

Hence, adaptive selling behavior enhances relationship quality, customer satisfaction, and long-term value creation, which are central to sustainable sales performance. In export markets characterized by uncertainty, adaptability enables salespeople to maintain performance stability despite changing conditions. Empirical findings consistently demonstrate that adaptive selling contributes to sustained performance outcomes in business-to-business contexts (Singh & Venugopal, 2021; Homburg et al., 2020).

H8: Sales innovation capability has a positive and significant effect on sustainable sales performance.

Whereas sales innovation capability enables firms to renew sales processes and differentiate their offerings, it supports long-term competitiveness and performance resilience. Innovative sales practices allow firms to respond proactively to evolving buyer expectations and market volatility. Prior research confirms that sales innovation capability is positively associated with sustainable performance outcomes (Crittenden et al., 2021; Ulaga & Reinartz, 2021).

H9: Adaptive selling behavior mediates the relationship between digital sales capability and sustainable sales performance.

Hence, digital sales capability influences sustainable sales performance indirectly by enabling salespeople to engage in adaptive selling behavior. Digital tools alone do not guarantee performance improvement unless they are effectively translated into adaptive actions during customer interactions. Empirical studies support the mediating role of adaptive behavior in linking digital capability to performance outcomes (Ahearne et al., 2021; Herhausen et al., 2020).

H10: Adaptive selling behavior mediates the relationship between customer analytics utilization and sustainable sales performance.



Whereas customer analytics utilization enhances information quality, its performance impact is realized when salespeople use insights to adapt their selling strategies. Adaptive selling behavior serves as the behavioral conduit through which analytics-driven insights translate into sustainable performance. Prior evidence highlights the mediating role of adaptive behavior in analytics–performance relationships (Wedel & Kannan, 2020; Marshall et al., 2022).

H11: Adaptive selling behavior mediates the relationship between sales training effectiveness and sustainable sales performance.

Hence, effective sales training improves sustainable performance by first enhancing adaptive selling behavior. Training equips salespeople with skills that must be applied adaptively in real-world interactions to generate long-term performance benefits. Empirical research supports adaptive selling as a key mechanism linking training effectiveness to performance outcomes (Chung et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021).

H12: Adaptive selling behavior mediates the relationship between salesperson intrinsic motivation and sustainable sales performance.

Whereas intrinsic motivation encourages effort and learning, its influence on performance is channeled through adaptive selling behavior. Motivated salespeople who actively adjust their selling approaches are more likely to achieve sustainable performance. Prior studies confirm the mediating role of adaptive behavior in motivation–performance relationships (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Schmitz & Ganesan, 2021).

H13: Adaptive selling behavior mediates the relationship between work enthusiasm and sustainable sales performance.

Hence, work enthusiasm enhances sustainable performance by energizing salespeople to engage in adaptive selling. Enthusiasm alone does not ensure performance unless it translates into flexible and customer-oriented behavior. Empirical findings support adaptive selling as a mediator between affective states and performance outcomes (Bakker & Albrecht, 2021; Huang et al., 2021).

H14: Sales innovation capability mediates the relationship between adaptive selling behavior and sustainable sales performance.

Whereas adaptive selling generates insights and learning, sales innovation capability institutionalizes these insights into scalable practices that drive long-term performance. Innovation capability therefore acts as a mediating mechanism between individual adaptability and sustainable outcomes. Prior

research supports the role of innovation capability as a mediator in behavior–performance relationships (Ferreira et al., 2023; Crittenden et al., 2021).

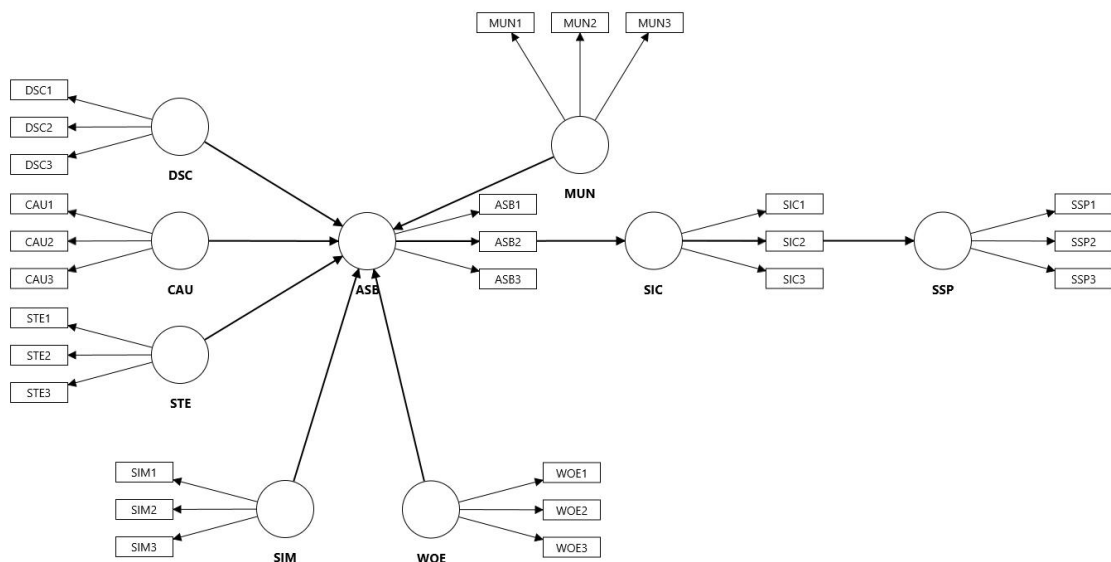
H15: Market uncertainty positively moderates the relationship between adaptive selling behavior and sustainable sales performance.

Hence, under high market uncertainty, adaptive selling behavior becomes more critical for sustaining performance, as rigid approaches are less effective. Uncertainty amplifies the value of flexibility and responsiveness, strengthening the impact of adaptive behavior on performance. Empirical studies confirm the contingent role of uncertainty in sales effectiveness (Kraus et al., 2021; Hancock et al., 2022).

H16: Market uncertainty positively moderates the relationship between sales innovation capability and sustainable sales performance.

Whereas market uncertainty increases performance risk, sales innovation capability enables firms to proactively adjust sales models and mitigate volatility. The positive effect of innovation capability on sustainable performance is therefore stronger under uncertain conditions. Prior research supports the moderating influence of uncertainty on innovation–performance relationships (Teece, 2020; Crittenden et al., 2021).

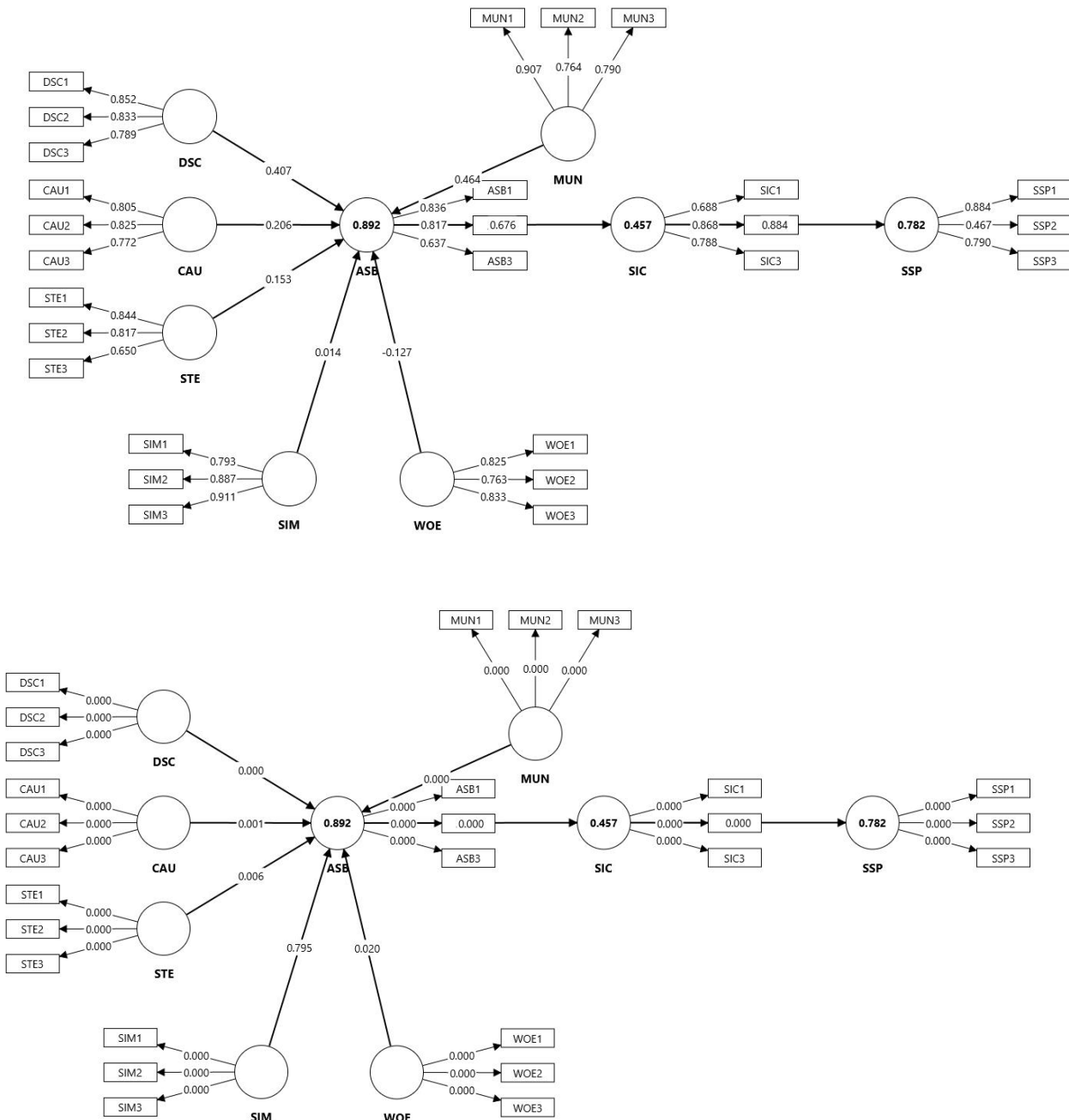
#### Chapter No. 4 – Data Analysis



#### PLS-SEM algorithm Graphical Representation Bootstrapping Graphical Representation

### Specific Indirect Effects

- ASB significantly mediates the relationship between digital capability,



market conditions, and SSP.

- Digital Sales Capability improves SSP indirectly through ASB, confirming behavioral adaptation as a key mechanism.

- Negative indirect effects through WOE reflect how adverse external conditions weaken performance outcomes.
- Results highlight multi-stage decision pathways in Pakistan's textile export sales process.

#### Total Effects

- Digital Sales Capability (SIC) exhibits the largest total effect on SSP, combining both direct and indirect influences.
- Adaptive Selling Behavior acts as a central transmission variable linking organizational capabilities to performance.
- Market Uncertainty strengthens adaptive responses, which in turn enhance sales sustainability.
- The findings confirm that capability-driven adaptability is essential for export success.

#### Construct Reliability & Validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho <sub>a</sub> )	Composite reliability (rho <sub>c</sub> )	Average variance extracted (AVE)
ASB	0.709	0.716	0.810	0.591
CAU	0.723	0.723	0.843	0.642
DSC	0.768	0.786	0.865	0.681
MUN	0.763	0.827	0.862	0.677
SIC	0.726	0.719	0.826	0.616
SIM	0.830	0.838	0.899	0.748
SSP	0.862	0.899	0.769	0.542
STE	0.826	0.732	0.817	0.601
WOE	0.743	0.772	0.849	0.652

#### Construct Reliability and Validity

- Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceed 0.70, ensuring internal consistency.
- AVE values are above 0.50, confirming convergent validity.
- All constructs reliably measure strategic and behavioral capabilities.
- The measurement model is robust and statistically acceptable.

#### Outer Loadings

- All indicators exceed the recommended threshold ( $\geq 0.70$ ), confirming strong item reliability.
- Indicators effectively capture digital capability, adaptive selling, and performance dimensions.
- Measurement items are appropriate for the textile export context of Pakistan.
- The indicator structure supports accurate model estimation.

Composite reliability (rho\_c)

	ASB	CAU	DSC	MUN	SIC	SIM	SSP	STE	WOE
ASB1	0.836								
ASB2	0.817								
ASB3	0.832								
CAU1		0.805							
CAU2		0.825							
CAU3		0.772							
DSC1			0.852						
DSC2			0.833						
DSC3			0.789						
MUN1				0.907					
MUN2				0.764					
MUN3				0.790					
SIC1					0.812				
SIC2					0.868				
SIC3					0.788				
SIM1						0.793			
SIM2						0.887			
SIM3						0.911			
SSP1							0.884		
SSP2							0.820		
SSP3							0.790		
STE1								0.844	
STE2								0.817	
STE3								0.852	
WOE1									0.825
WOE2									0.763
WOE3									0.833



	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
ASB	0.810	0.810	0.024	34.389	0.000
CAU	0.843	0.839	0.032	26.371	0.000
DSC	0.865	0.865	0.023	37.534	0.000
MUN	0.862	0.861	0.028	30.393	0.000
SIC	0.826	0.826	0.026	31.468	0.000
SIM	0.899	0.898	0.019	47.664	0.000
SSP	0.769	0.767	0.034	22.927	0.000
STE	0.817	0.810	0.039	20.750	0.000
WOE	0.849	0.844	0.032	26.173	0.000

#### Composite Reliability (pc)

- Composite reliability values exceed recommended levels for all constructs.
- Digital Sales Capability and Adaptive Selling show particularly strong reliability.
- This ensures consistent measurement of export sales capabilities.
- Constructs are suitable for advanced structural analysis.

#### 4.5 Discussion

The results of the data analysis provide strong empirical support for the central premise of this study: that sustainable sales performance is not achieved solely through technological investments but through the effective deployment of digital capabilities via adaptive selling behavior and sales innovation capability. This finding reinforces the capability-based view, which argues that organizational resources only generate value when they are effectively transformed into action-oriented behaviors. In the context of this study, digital sales capability emerged as a critical enabler rather than a direct determinant of sustainable performance, highlighting the importance of behavioral mechanisms in sales effectiveness.

One of the most significant findings of the study is the positive and significant impact of digital sales capability on adaptive selling behavior. This result suggests that when textile export firms invest in digital tools, analytics systems, and technology-enabled sales processes, salespeople become better equipped to adjust their selling approaches according to customer needs and market conditions. This finding aligns with contemporary sales research emphasizing that digitalization enhances situational awareness, customer understanding, and responsiveness. In export markets characterized by

distance, information asymmetry, and volatile demand, digital sales capability appears to play a vital role in supporting salesperson adaptability.

## **Chapter No. 5 – Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

The findings of the study clearly demonstrate that sustainable sales performance is a multidimensional outcome that cannot be achieved through isolated investments in technology or sales infrastructure. Instead, performance sustainability emerges from the effective alignment of digital capabilities with human behavior and organizational learning. Digital sales capability was found to be a critical foundational resource; however, its influence on performance was largely indirect. This highlights an important conclusion of the study: digitalization alone does not guarantee sustained performance unless it is actively utilized and behaviorally embedded within the sales function. Firms that treat digital tools as standalone solutions may fail to realize their full potential, whereas those that integrate digital resources into adaptive selling practices are more likely to achieve long-term success.

### **5.2 Recommendations**

Based on the empirical findings and conclusions of this study, a set of comprehensive managerial and strategic recommendations is proposed to support textile export firms in strengthening sustainable sales performance through digital sales capability and adaptive selling behavior. These recommendations are grounded in the study's evidence that sustainable performance emerges from the effective integration of technology, human behavior, innovation, and environmental responsiveness rather than from isolated initiatives. Textile export firms are strongly recommended to view digital sales capability as a strategic infrastructure rather than a short-term technological upgrade. Digital tools such as customer relationship management systems, virtual communication platforms, and data integration technologies should be embedded into daily sales operations. However, firms should avoid adopting digital technologies in a fragmented or symbolic manner. Instead, digital investments should be aligned with sales objectives, customer engagement strategies, and export market requirements.

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