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# Collective Achievement Spirit and Salespeople' Performance: An Empirical Study in Indonesia

Sudarti KEN<sup>1</sup>, Fachrunnisa OLIVIA<sup>2</sup>

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## Abstract

The study aimed to investigate the concept of collective achievement spirit (CAS) developed from the need for achievement theory as a new approach to motivating salespeople. This study used a sample of 348 salespeople from the life insurance industry using a questionnaire. Data analysis technique employed structural equation modeling (SEM) with AMOS 22. The results showed that the spirit of empowering oneself and others in selling activities can improve sales performance. In addition, a customer-oriented team and a leadership style with a team spirit are believed to be the main motivators which enhances the enthusiasm of a sales person to achieve the expected level of performance in sales related activities. The findings of this study suggest that increasing CAS in salespeople can be done through the staffing process policy in sales team by prioritizing core value ownership in individual salespeople, namely religious values oriented towards creating service value to customers. Efforts to improve the orientation of the team leader towards the achievement of team performance can be done by implementing a career break requirement policy or the requirements to become a salesteam leader.

**Keywords:** Collective Spirit, Sales Team Strengths, Selling Performance

**JEL Classification Code:** D20, L10, L20, M20, M30

## 1. Introduction

The “people” element, especially the “front line staff”, including salespeople in service companies, plays an important role. This is related to the unique characteristics of services, namely: intangibility, inseparability, variability and perishability (Wolak et al., 1998). The characteristics of this service require salespeople to interact directly with the customers. The services provided by salespeople creates an impact on the willingness of customers to establish sustainable relationships (Gronroos, 2000). (Heskett et al.,

1997) also stated that the value of services provided by the frontline employees can increase profit and growth through satisfaction and loyalty.

The business phenomenon in the insurance world shows that the internal marketing activities applied to each salesperson do not always produce good performance. This means that even though salespeople are motivated in the same way, they do not always show optimal performance (Amyx & Alford, 2005). This may be because salespeople only focus on individual achievements and ignore the values that are derived from personal attributes. Apart from that, the relationship between the salesman and the team members is also assumed to contribute to the low performance of the salespeople and that is an indifferent attitude towards assisting the other team members in enhancing sales performance.

In this study, customer-oriented team and a team-oriented leadership are considered as antecedent variables that helps in creating an atmosphere for collective achievement. In the context of service marketing, customer orientation is one of the visions that all sales team members must have. Thus, a customer-oriented team is believed to facilitate the availability of the collective achievement spirit (CAS). In addition, in a team, the role of the team leader is also very significant.

<sup>1</sup>First Author and Corresponding Author. Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Management, Faculty of Economics, Universitas Islam Sultan Agung (UNISSULA), Indonesia [Postal Address: Jl. Raya Kaligawe KM 4 Semarang, Indonesia] Email: kensudarti@unissula.ac.id

<sup>2</sup>Professor, Dept. of Management, Faculty of Economics, Universitas Islam Sultan Agung (UNISSULA), Indonesia.  
Email: olivia.fachrunnisa@unissula.ac.id

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A model was developed and empirically tested that the combination of sales team strength (customer oriented team and leadership oriented team) motivates salespeople to have high collective achievement which then leads to increased sales performance.

## 2. Theoretical Background

Collective Achievement Spirit (CAS) is a new concept resulting from a synthesis between need for achievement theory, social capital theory and personal values. Collective Achievement Spirit is a person's behavior associated with social relational values. Individuals with a high CAS have a high need for achievement. However, the spirit of achieving remarkable performance levels in the CAS version is different from what has been defined by some previous researchers, such as for example (Lindgren, 1976) who states that individuals with high need for achievement have a strong desire to be successful in a competitive situation and want to prove their superiority over others without caring about being alienated by less successful co-workers. (Ward & Dranove, 1995) stated that individuals with high need for achievement prefer competitive rather than cooperative strategies. (Khan et al., 2015) in their study used several dimensions to measure need for achievement, namely: taking opportunities to develop themselves, taking on more challenging responsibilities, targeting new projects that are more interesting and challenging themselves to produce the best work.

Individuals with a high CAS show a tendency to remain concerned about achievement of coworkers or relatives. Such people realise that they work in a team which consists of individuals with different capacities and morale, strengthens his desire to "ask", inviting his colleagues to want to optimize their resources. Willingness to 'ask' because of the spirit of togetherness that exists among team members so that they are willing to accept critical thinking, hope for reciprocity and cooperation (Yu et al., 2013). HA (2020) states that empowering leadership factors have a positive direct effect on Knowledge Sharing and Teamwork Performance so that the role of the leader greatly determines the success of a team in an organization. Good communication will make the process of empowering others more effective. (Yen et al., 2011) stated that effective communication will affect trust.

## 3. Hypothesis Development

### 3.1. Customer Oriented Team – Collective Achievement Spirit

Customer orientation is generally defined as the extent to which an organization practices the marketing concept by helping customers make purchasing decisions that will

satisfy their needs (Smith & Roy, 2011). Customer oriented team shows the value or orientation of salespeople who join a sales team to meet customer needs and desires. A salesteam consisting of a number of salespeople with a strong customer orientation has a desire to provide customer satisfaction and build long-term relationships with them. The wish and desire for customer satisfaction leads to an increase in the enthusiasm of the sales people to achieve the optimal performance in in each of their sales activities. (O' Cass & Heirati, 2015) states that the marketing mix is able to mediate between market orientation and new product performance. This means that a high belief in the importance of customers encourages efforts to increase their capabilities in preparing a set of integrated marketing tools in order to achieve the best performance (Habel et al., 2020).

Based on some of the results of these studies, it can be concluded that when a salesperson is in a team with a mission to satisfy customers, they will be eager to make it happen by carrying out the the needed sales activities which is oriented towards meeting customer needs. (Henttonen et al., 2014) stated that employees who have the same values with the organization will be more involved in organizational activities and will appear more effective. Therefore, the hypothesis put forward is:

*H1a: Customer oriented team positively influences the achievement spirit.*

*H1b: Customer oriented team positively influences long-life learning spirit.*

*H1c: Customer oriented team significantly relates to voluntary asking spirit.*

*H1d: Customer oriented team significantly relates to voluntary helping spirit.*

### 3.2. Team Oriented Leadership – Collective Achievement Spirit

(Nelson et al., 2016) stated that team-oriented leaders emphasize collective group identity and team achievement rather than individual identity and achievement. To achieve collective achievement in a salesteam, the role of team-oriented leadership is very important. A team-oriented leader is aware that team members are made up of different individuals and that these differences should be used as a complementary and should reinforce team strength. (Nelson et al., 2016) also stated that team-oriented leadership emphasizes common goals. Pancasila et al. (2020) states that leadership affects work performance which can also be improved through work motivation. Mutually agreed goals strengthens each team member desire and action to make it happen. This means that if the salesteam has set specific performance targets, then each team member will devote his resources to doing his best. The team values set

and emphasized by the team leader sets the direction of the activities of each salesmen in the team. In addition, team-oriented leaders display inspirational behavior that can motivate employees to achieve the best results (Chang et al., 2015). Therefore, the hypothesis put forward is:

*H2a: team oriented leadership significantly influences excellence achievement spirit.*

*H2b: team oriented leadership significantly influences long life learning spirit.*

*H2c: team oriented leadership significantly influences voluntary asking spirit.*

*H2d: team oriented leadership significantly influences voluntary helping spirit.*

### 3.3. Collective Achievement Spirit – Selling Performance

The relationship between collective achievement spirit and selling performance can be traced through the concept of work motivation. Motivation plays an important role in improving performance (Ford et al., 2015). The encouragement that is placed at the team level will bring out the diversity of need for achievement that can affect team performance. Salespeople who are in a team are in a very complex situation because of the differences between team members such as: perceptions, expectations, opinions and emotional levels which can trigger conflict. This conflict was exacerbated by differences in their need for achievement. However, if the desire to achieve the highest results can be combined in the form of collective achievement, then a salesteam can better improve performance. (Khan et al., 2015) concluded that similarity in need for achievement can help teams be more successful.

Further, voluntary asking spirit is the spirit of a salesperson to ask colleagues to involve in sales activities which leads to optimal performance of the each team member. The spirit of asking to do goodness can be analogous to collectivism-based activities. Someone who has a voluntary asking spirit is a religious person (Sudarti & Zulfa, 2020). High spirit to do voluntary asking is based on cooperative norms that arise from a relationship. This openness to critical thinking and mutual hope allows an individual to be able to accept invitations and be willing to invite team members to do their best. This statement is supported by (Rusly et al., 2014) which states that the factors that influence someone to do knowledge sharing are; participation, collective commitment, need for knowledge and attitude (Papadopoulos et al., 2013) and cognitive collective engagement (Fachrunnisa et al., 2018).

More about this source text. Source texts are needed to obtain additional translation information (Chedli et al., 2016) to find a relationship between contextual motivation, sociological motivation and situational motivation on

performance as measured by efficacy, efficiency and effectiveness. Interestingly, in sociological motivation there are indicators of cultural motivation which are translated as forms of social influence on individual behavior such as norms, values, habits and religion. It can be interpreted that someone who is in a culture of inviting each other to goodness and a work atmosphere that encourages success will be able to improve performance. Paais (2020) in his research states that work motivation and organizational culture have a positive and significant effect on performance, but do not have a significant effect on employee job satisfaction. Although leadership has a substantial influence on employee job satisfaction, it does not affect performance. Based on the description above, the hypothesis is:

*H3a: Excellence achievement spirit drives selling performance.*

*H3b: Long-life learning spirit significantly influences selling performance.*

*H3c: Voluntary asking spirit significantly influences selling performance.*

*H3d: Voluntary helping spirit significantly influences selling performance.*

Based on a complete and in-depth literature review, the empirical research model can be presented in Figure 1. Customer-oriented team and team-oriented leadership will encourage collective achievement spirit and selling performance.

## 4. Research Methods

### 4.1. Population, Sample and Data Collection

The population in this study were salesmen from 63 insurance companies with sharia principles in Indonesia that were registered with the OJK, Indonesia (Financial Services Authority) in 2018. Salesperson was chosen to be the unit of analysis because most studies involving customer orientation involved sales and service activities (Singh & Venugopal, 2015). (Saxe et al., 1982) provided several requirements when using the customer orientation approach, namely: the seller has the expertise to help customers make the right choice, the customer is involved in complex buying, there is a cooperative relationship between the seller and the customer, repeat sales and referral is an important factor.

Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews with 348 respondents who were ready to be tested. Respondents were taken from 10 best performing Islamic insurance companies according to the 2018 OJK version. The sampling technique used the snowball sampling technique with the selection of respondents using purposive sampling with criteria 1) had worked as a salesman for sharia

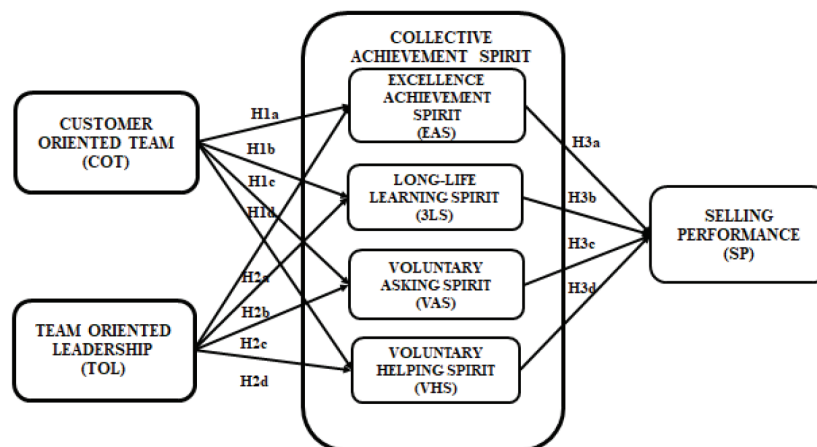


Figure 1: Research Model

insurance products for at least 1 year, (2) became a member of salesman team, (3) have a team leader.

#### 4.2. Measurement

The measurement uses a Likert scale of 1–5, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Measurement of variables and dimensions can be seen in Table 1 and Table 2.

#### 5. Results

The analysis in this study used SEM using AMOS version 22 software (Figure 2).

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for the complete sample found that from the observations of 29 indicators (5 COT indicators, 5 TOL indicators, 15 CAS indicators and 4 SP indicators), it obtained 29 relevant loading factor ( $\lambda_1$ – $\lambda_{29}$ ) values. Unidimensional assessment is done by examining general least square standardized estimates of loading estimates, which exceed 0.6. In accordance to the provisions in AMOS, the loading factor for all latent variables observed has good validity because it has a value above 0.6.

Internal consistency is shown by high construct reliability, meaning that indicators used consistently will represent the same latent construct. Construct reliability (CR) greater than 0.7, variance extracted (VE) greater than 0.5 and discriminant validity (DV) that exceed 0.7 are the basis for measuring the internal consistency of the indicators used. The results of data processing show CR values that exceed 0.7; VE that exceeds 0.5, AVE squared which exceeds the correlation value among the variables of COT, TOL, EAS, 3LS, VAS, VHS and SP show that each indicator has good validity in explaining the research variables.

The full structural equation model test results show a good Goodness-of-Fit index because it produces criteria as recommended by SEM. The value of  $\chi^2$  537.061, GFI index 0.907, TLI 0.963, CFI 0.968 which is the same or exceeds 0.90 and other criteria such as RMSEA 0.038 which is less than 0.08, CMIM/DF = 1.513 which is less than 2. is in accordance with the criteria recommended in SEM. This shows that the recommended model is fit or has the feasibility to test the relationship between variables (Table 3).

#### 6. Discussion and Conclusion

This study has made a very significant contribution to research on personal selling and salesman management. Specifically, this study provides empirical test results for a sales manager that the strength of salesteam members to motivate each other to achieve the best performance will result in high selling performance. Previous research has revealed that need for achievement in salespeople is often oriented towards the enthusiasm to fulfill one's own needs. Meanwhile, this research proves that when salespeople are able to build collective achievement through self empowering and empowering others, it will be very beneficial for an organization.

The new concept of Collective Achievement Spirit (CAS) tries to enrich Manifest needs theory as the parent of needs for achievement proposed by McClelland (1973) which was then used as the basis for the definition of motivation (Lindgren, 1976), it has ignored the ethical dimension, preferring a competitive strategy rather than cooperative strategy (Ward & Dranove, 1995) and ambitious (Soyer et al., 1999). This is different from the CAS concept developed in this study, the difference is in several ways, namely: First, the selfish and individualistic nature inherent in individuals with the version of the need for achievement

**Table 1:** Measurement

Variable	Measurement
<b>Customer Oriented Team (COT)</b> define a salesperson orientation that is incorporated in a channel to meet the needs and desires of customers by creating value and customer satisfaction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The mission of creating customer value</li> <li>2. Meeting customer needs</li> <li>3. Satisfying customers</li> <li>4. Monitoring customer satisfaction periodically</li> <li>5. Helping to solve customer problems</li> </ol> (Tang, 2014); (Wong et al., 2015)
<b>Team Oriented Leadership (TOL)</b> is defined as the perception of sales team members that their leaders emphasize collective group identity and team achievements rather than individual achievements and individual identities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The leader emphasizes respect for achievements</li> <li>2. The leader emphasizes the values of togetherness</li> <li>3. The leader emphasizes team goals</li> <li>4. The leader emphasizes that each team member is an important part</li> <li>5. The leader makes the member feel proud to be part of the team</li> </ol> (Nelson et al., 2016)
<p><b>Collective Achievement Spirit (CAS)</b> is the spirit of a salesperson who is incorporated in a sales team to always try to do the best and improve it continuously while asking and helping sales team members to do the best sales activities</p> <p>CAS has 4 dimensions namely EAS, 3LS, WAS and VHS</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>The Excellence Achievement Spirit (EAS)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doing the best based on worship</li> <li>• Professional</li> <li>• Optimizing the source and partnership</li> </ul>           (Khan et al., 2015)         </li> <li>2. <b>The Long-life Learning Spirit (3LS)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous improvement</li> <li>• Better without eliminating others</li> <li>• Lessons learned from self-previous experience and observational learning</li> </ul>           (Khan et al., 2015; Haq, 2014; Fryling et al., 2011)         </li> <li>3. <b>Voluntary Asking Spirit (VAS)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication intensity</li> <li>• Worship communication</li> <li>• Communicating personality</li> </ul>           (Yu, 2013); (Mahroeian and Forozia, 2012)         </li> <li>4. <b>Voluntary Helping Spirit (VHS)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enthusiastic helping others</li> <li>• Initiating helping spontaneously</li> <li>• Initiating helping without expecting a return,</li> <li>• Initiating helping in extra roles</li> </ul>           (Olowookere and Adekeye, 2016); (Cardoş and Mone, 2016)         </li> </ol>
<b>Selling Performance</b> is the achievement of salesperson sales results measured by financial and non-financial measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Achieving sales targets</li> <li>2. Increasing the number of new customers</li> <li>3. Retaining existing customers and increasing the number of customers</li> </ol> (Agnihotri et al., 2016; Polo Peña et al., 2017)

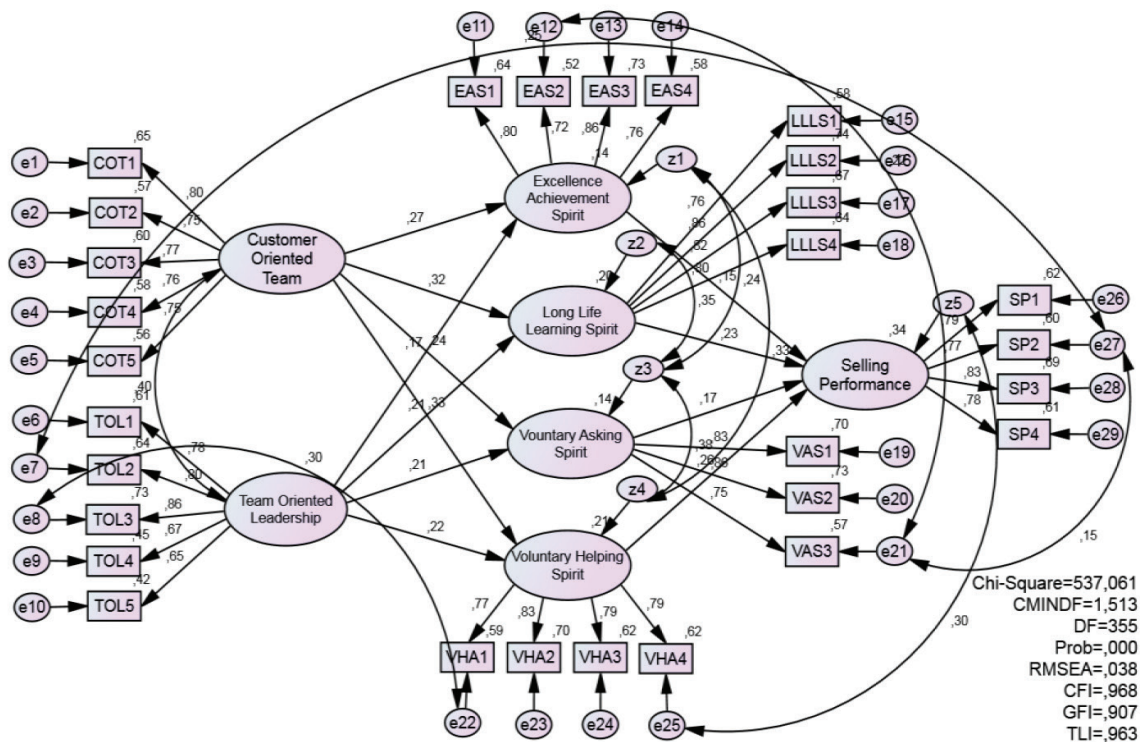
(Lindgren, 1976), does not exist in individuals who have CAS. The spirit of achieving excellence achievement in the CAS concept is not about wanting to be the “best” but always looking to get better with time. Colleagues are not positioned as competitors to be eliminated, but as objects of benchmarking towards self-improvement and community improvement or collectivism.

In this study, CAS ownership in individual salespeople can be increased through the existence of a customer-oriented team, namely a salesteam that is highly oriented towards meeting customer needs and desires and the existence of a leadership-oriented team. The alignment of the orientation and support of the sales manager on the basis of togetherness (togetherness) will facilitate the emergence of CAS in



**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistic and Correlations

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
COT	2.60	0.82	<b>(0.878)</b>						
TOL	2.66	0.86	0.397	<b>(0.819)</b>					
EAS	2.65	0.85	0.324	0.268	<b>(0.866)</b>				
3LS	2.66	0.83	0.387	0.328	0.375	<b>(0.885)</b>			
VAS	2.71	0.84	0.306	0.291	0.400	0.533	<b>(0.857)</b>		
VHS	2.63	0.89	0.404	0.346	0.439	0.407	0.539	<b>(0.873)</b>	
SP	2.62	0.86	0.363	0.296	0.417	0.460	0.490	0.531	<b>(0.873)</b>
AVE			0.590	0.571	0.618	0.859	0.666	0.633	0.631



**Figure 2:** Test Result Model

salesmen who are members of a salesteam. This study has proven that when a salesperson working in a salesteam directs all his sales activities to provide value to consumers and satisfy them, this kind of team orientation will increase the salesperson’s enthusiasm to carry out the best sales activities and make continuous improvement while together with salesteam members raise the team. through the activity “Asking and helping”. (Pousa and Mathieu, 2013) also state that culture and organizational climate are positively related to salesman orientation towards customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction is what ultimately increases selling performance (Estiri et al., 2011).

This study also proves that when salespeople are in a team led by a leader who prioritizes team achievements and always reminds us of team achievements, they will be motivated to support these values by encouraging themselves to achieve the best standards, but still partnering with colleagues as an effort to maximize endeavors. The effort to perform sales assignments to the highest standards is maintained in a spirit of “long-life learning”. The “asking” and “helping”

**Tabel 3:** Results of Structural Equation Model Regression Test

Hip	Path	Standardize Coefficient	Unstandardize Coefficient		C.R	Ket
		$\beta$	$\beta$	SE		
H1a	COT → EAS	0.270	0.271	0.066	4.080*	Supported
H1b	COT → 3LS	0.321	0.249	0.068	3.660*	Supported
H1c	COT → VAS	0.243	0.296	0.060	4.967*	Supported
H1d	COT → VHS	0.325	0.332	0.066	5.037*	Supported
H2a	TOL → EAS	0.168	0.175	0.068	2.580*	Supported
H2b	TOL → 3LS	0.208	0.198	0.060	3.285*	Supported
H2c	TOL → VAS	0.209	0.222	0.070	3.172*	Supported
H2d	TOL → VHS	0.221	0.234	0.068	3.448*	Supported
H3a	EAS → SP	0.146	0.237	0.066	3.586*	Supported
H3b	3LS → SP	0.228	0.163	0.065	2.508*	Supported
H3c	VAS → SP	0.175	0.140	0.057	2.447*	Supported
*H3d	VHS → SP	0.257	0.241	0.066	3.675*	Supported

\* $p$ -value < 0.05.

activities among team members were carried out at ASM's encouragement to focus on the team's goals. This is a form of salesman concern for raising the team and organization.

CAS has 4 (four) dimensions, namely excellence achievement spirit, long-life learning spirit, voluntary asking spirit and voluntary helping spirit that the salesman must have as a whole. The four CAS dimensions are the stages of the empowering process that are interrelated and supportive in order to create service quality. (Snipes et al., 2005) state that an employee is more capable of creating service quality if he feels empowered. The first and second stages are the stages of self-empowerment where the salesperson empowers himself to carry out the best sales activities and carry out continuous learning activities to improve his abilities in order to meet the varied needs of customers.

After completing internal improvements, the salesman will enter the third and fourth stages, namely empowering others. At this stage the salesperson begins to think about how to do da'wah by inviting his colleagues to provide excellent service to customers. Da'wah through "asking others" is carried out sincerely because of religious values and shared values as members of a teamwork. This similarity of values or identity directs its energy to grow the team, because team success is an outcome of self-success. In conclusion, when the company has a salesperson who shares the same values with the company, has a passion for development and provides the opportunity for leaders to explore underneath it will create mutual motivation to achieve company performance such as increased sales.

## 6.1. Managerial Implication

This study provides a number of managerial implications related to the related research variables. First, increasing CAS in salespersons can be done through a staffing process policy at salesteam by prioritizing the core value of ownership in individual salesmen, namely religious value with an orientation towards creating service value to the customers. Efforts to improve the orientation of the team leaders towards the achievement of team performance can be done by implementing a career gap requirement policy or the requirements to become a salesteam leader. Having a team achievement orientation beyond one's own achievement as a leader can be applied as a requirement to become a salesteam leader. Furthermore, to maintain ownership of this orientation, organizations need to conduct sales leadership training with the main material on monotheism and strengthening teamwork as congregations. In a company that sells Sharia products or services, it is important to foster the concept of the syari'ah ecosystem.

## 6.2. Limitations and Future Research

Although this study makes several important contributions, there are some limitations that should be noted by the future researchers. First, this study only considers 2 exogenous variables, this is what probably causes the  $R$ -square model of this study to be only 33.6%, so that further research can consider other variables to increase achievement spirit or achievement motivation and selling performance.

Second, self-response bias is most likely to occur in relation to respondents who only take sharia insurance salesmen, so it is possible to use non-sales respondents. Third, cross-sectional data was used. As a result, the findings cannot be used as proof of causality, but only to lend support or nonsupport for the hypothesized model.

Hence, some future research agendas related to the strengthening of the CAS concept are: first, there is a need for a more intensive and in-depth study of the indicators that make up each dimension, so as to be able to measure more accurately the role of personal values in CAS. It is considered that CAS is a new concept which tries to intervene in the concept of need of achievement in team level. To that end, increase the face validity and content validity of the CAS measurement concept with a more intensive panel discussion with experts across disciplines.

Second, including demographic variables as control variables in testing the effect of CAS and selling performance, because tenure, employment status, age and gender are predicted to differentiate the level of CAS influence on selling performance. This is supported by the results of a study by Kanfer and Ackerman (2004) which states that age can affect work motivation and can have a negative effect on performance (Fu, 2009). The younger the employee, higher will be the technology and energy capabilities (Kaplan, 2001). Atuahene-Gima and Lie (2006) state that marketing new products (such as Islamic insurance) requires dexterity, creativity, energy and innovation in approaching and influencing consumers.

Third, examine the CAS outcome from the customer's perspective. This is important because the service value created by the salespersons is one of the elements forming customer value received by customers (Heskett et al., 1997). In addition, examining CAS antecedents from a service marketing perspective such as: customer service style (Prior, 2016); entrepreneurial orientation (Oly Ndubisi, 2014); personal value system (Thuy & Hau, 2010); knowledge management (Guchait et al., 2011); and Service Oriented (Thomas-Francois et al., 2017).

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