ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF COMMISSION-BASED INCENTIVES ON LOTTERY AGENT MOTIVATION IN GALLE DISTRICT SRI LANKA

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Abstract

In an era marked by escalating living standards, the allure of lottery as an alternative revenue stream has surged globally, exemplified by Sri Lanka's long-standing lottery systems. However, the ethical dimensions of lottery sales practices remain critically under-explored. This study delves into the ethical implications of predatory sales tactics, misinformation, neglect of customer needs, and the erosion of trust on lottery agent motivation within the Galle District, Sri Lanka. Employing a positivism philosophical standpoint along with deductive approach and has applied, mono-quantitative choice to surveyed 135 agents, utilizing simple random sampling and statistical analysis conducted, including Spearman correlation, and Chi-square tests. Our findings reveal a significant positive relationship between unethical sales behaviors and agent motivation. Despite the potential for short-term gains, these practices jeopardize long-term trust and customer loyalty. This research bridges a critical gap by highlighting the necessity for ethical sales practices in the lottery sector, a domain often overlooked. We advocate enhanced ethical training, transparent communication, and incentive restructuring to foster sustainable sales practices. By integrating Self-Determination Theory principles, organizations can cultivate an environment that prioritizes agent well-being and customer trust. This study underscores the importance of ethical integrity in lottery sales, offering actionable insights for regulatory bodies and lottery boards to safeguard both agents and consumers. Ultimately, this research contributes to a more responsible and sustainable lottery sales ecosystem in Sri Lanka and beyond, emphasizing that ethical conduct is not merely a moral imperative but a strategic necessity for long-term success.

Keywords: Ethical Implications, Commission-Based Incentives, Lottery Agents, Motivation, Sales Practices

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1. Introduction and problem statement

In today's world, when living standards are rising, the demand for alternative revenue sources such as lotteries has grown. Countries worldwide have built their own lottery systems, beginning with Sri Lanka with the "Establishment of Arogyashala Lottery under Finance Act no.4 of 1955" (NLB, 2024). Implementing these drawing systems not only provides excitement and potential financial benefit for the people but also serves as a key revenue stream for the government, adding to the general economy (Smith, 2009). Importantly, this system is not considered gambling due to Jones and Williams, (2010) mentioned that it is completely regulated by the government, ensuring that all transactions and activities are transparent and ethical. The funding received by these lotteries is frequently allocated towards societal improvement, sponsoring various public welfare projects. Sri Lanka has two main lottery boards the National Lotteries Board and the Development Lotteries Board. Even though these boards have been in place for a long time, the ethical implications of lottery sales methods in Sri Lanka and around the world have received not much attention. The Ethical implication on sales practices of lottery agents can be considered as A Double-edged Sword (Hakeoung and Gargroetzi, 2023). Fatima, (2022) argues that this research identifies ethical implications for both salespeople and customers. It is mentioned by the author that future studies should examine if these effects are consistent across countries and cultures. Further, it is required to find if the implications of ethical behavior vary depending on the country and culture.
According to the article of Yangzom and Chhetri, (2021) in Bhutan's civil service, management officials should properly express desired results to their employees, and ad hoc criteria may be unacceptable. Feedback should be considered when defining goals, and organizational standards should be established in an open environment to prevent concerns, suspicions, and mistrust. The authors present that Park et al., (2021) the paper studied the influence of incentives on unethical behavior in multiple professional areas, including education, healthcare, and for-profit corporations. The observed research gap is contextual, indicating a lack of concentrated research on this problem in the country and industry at large. While researchers have studied the ethical implications in various areas, they have not done enough to sufficiently address the issues of aggressive sales tactics, misunderstandings, omission of critical information, disregard for customer demands, and the resulting loss of trust in lottery agents' sales practices. The current issue focuses on research gaps addressing unethical practices in lottery sales.
This study attempts to fill this gap by examining the ethical consequences of aggressive sales methods, misunderstandings, missing information disregard of customer demands, and the loss of trust in lottery agents' desire to engage in sales practices. The primary aim of the study is to research the ethical implications of commission-based incentives on lottery agent motivation in Galle district Sri Lanka, the ethical implications of commission-based incentives has been identified through of predatory sales practices, misinformation and omission, neglecting customer needs, and undermining trust in lottery agent motivation towards sales practices. This study is particularly significant to lottery agents who want to engage in ethical sales behaviors. Many agents struggle to achieve their sales targets due to unethical

activities, as per Brown and Smith, (2015), a lack of sufficient training and education, and a disrespect for consumer demands and trust. These difficulties have an impact not just on lottery sales, but also on the reputation of lottery boards. The appropriate authorities must take responsibility for eliminating these unethical tactics by implementing strict regulations and providing enough training to ensure that agents conduct their sales skillfully and appropriately. The consequence of not addressing the question would directly affect the Lottery agents, lottery authorities, and customers. Further, when consumers believe there is misinformation or disregard, their trust in the lottery system might be damaged, which will result in lower participation. As per the author Gefen, (2000), gaining trust again is difficult, despite it being an essential element of customer behavior. Unethical actions could have a serious negative effect on the National Lotteries Board and Development Lotteries Board's reputation, which could affect its legitimacy and public confidence.
Furthermore, Laczniak and Murphy, (2012), regulatory agencies could find themselves more involved in cases with unethical sales tactics. Individuals who ignore these problems risk fines, legal action, or the implementation of stricter regulations. Furthermore, a culture that accepts or encourages unfair tactics can lead to low morale and ethical disillusionment among employees, resulting in high turnover rates and trouble attracting and maintaining ethically conscious individuals.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Ethical Implications of Commission-Based Incentives

The authors Zelenskiy et al., (2023) studied that the lottery is probably the oldest and most well-known game of chance, having been played since antiquity. In its various forms, the lottery keeps a basic structure and technical procedure that makes it the simplest and most popular game of chance and random draw from an urn of some objects (in Sri Lanka they only use balls, other countries tickets, lots, plates, slips, etc.) containing predesigned symbols (numbers, zodiac signs, words, etc.), followed by the distribution of prizes to lottery customers who correctly predicted the outcome of this draw, according to some pre-established rules. Nowadays, the most common type of lottery is one with randomly drawn numbers, the accurate sales determine winning categories. The authority is only with the government. Based on Iswarya and Bhuvaneshwari(2018), Ethics is the systematic study of moral decisions and behaviors, including their implementation. As per Chandrarathne and Herath, (2020), Unethical behavior by salespeople can harm client relationships, limit commitment, and decrease sales. Furthermore, Resende, (2022) stated buying lottery tickets is a quick dream, attracting customers from various backgrounds. Some groups consistently participate in multiple lottery types, even with minor jackpots.
The risk of unethical implications in lottery agents would affect the lottery sales, as well as the short-term joy of winning, which can make lottery purchases appear to be “buying a dream.” Moreover, Tsang, (2002) stated that employees' self-centered behaviors lead to violations of ethics. Nguyen, (2015) mentioned that all organizations know that retaining existing consumers is critical to the smooth operation of their products in the market. According to Schwepker and Good (2017), in a highly competitive market, salespeople can notice difficulty meeting sales

targets, leading to negative ethical decisions. As a result, salespeople can engage in inappropriate selling methods. This will affect the lottery sales. Whereas, Hsu et al. (2008), sales representatives with low opinions regarding sales ethics are more likely to participate in unethical behavior, such as making false promises and giving misinformation to customers. However, the relationship between the customers and the lottery agents may be harmed by the agent's dishonest and untrustworthy actions. These immoral activities not only influence customers' perceptions, but also undermine customer commitment, trust, and loyalty. Ramsey et al. (2007) have discussed ethical sales conduct based on supervisor perceptions. Nonetheless, the current study focuses on ethical implications of commission-based incentives on lottery agent motivation toward sales activities from the standpoint of customers.

2.2 Lottery Agent Motivation towards Sales Practices

The ethical climate of the business has an immense effect on lottery agent motivation. The researchers Trevino and Nelson (2011), show that A favorable atmosphere that encourages and rewards ethical behavior can enhance motivation by integrating agents' values with their professional locations. Robbins and Coulter (2018), define motivation as the intensity, individuality, direction, and persistence required to attain a goal. To do this, the organization needs to motivate its employees or agents to increase accuracy in their own sales practices. Employee incentive, rather than external compulsion, plays a vital role in maximizing task performance. Furthermore, research indicates that employee motivation positively improves the development of sales practices (Al Ghifari and Mahfudiyanto, 2023; Suryani et al., 2020).

Incentives have a considerable benefit on job satisfaction. Kimarapeli (2019), the study found a positive correlation between job satisfaction and both financial and non-financial incentives, such as salary, profit-sharing allowances, and fringe benefits, as well as indirect payments like bonuses and overtime. Non-financial incentives include working conditions, recognition, and training facilities.

Lottery agents' motivation is influenced by the trust and quality of relationships they build with their customers. Schwartz (2017), implies that strong, trusting relationships lead to increased motivation as agents see the value in their work and feel a sense of responsibility. Conversely, customers with past misinformation and unethical practices may be demotivated due to a lack of positive feedback and reinforcement. Delaney and Royal (2017), imply that motivating investments enhances convenience by achieving the highest return on overall commitment toward lottery sales practices.

In the opinion of Ferinia et al. (2016), Believed highly motivated employees have a strong sense of belonging to the organization, enhanced job quality, efficiency, and more significant employee output. Whereas Trevino and Nelson (2011), argue that an unethical setting can demotivate agents by encouraging predatory and misleading lottery sales techniques. Asaari et al. (2019), found that employees value other benefits like salary and recognition for enhancing motivation and satisfaction. These incentives encourage employees and lottery agents to perform better. As a result, organizations must create acceptable reward systems to motivate employees, otherwise, consequences will be serious, including absenteeism.

As for Rahman (2015), Training can bring tremendous advantages for a business. The company's sales personnel must be appropriately trained to provide excellent sales presentations. Whereas they must understand their large consumer base and find ways to serve them ethically. Lottery agents are entitled to understand their clients' demands, motivations, and purchasing behaviors. Even though the lottery agent's motivation for lottery sales is mainly affected by predatory sales practices, misinformation, omission, neglecting customer needs, and undermining trust will be discussed further.

2.3 Predatory Sales Practices on Lottery Agent Motivation Toward Sales Practices

Trevino and Nelson (2011), demonstrated that a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that motivate employees or lottery agents and promote ethical behavior is gaining momentum as more organizations investigate the ways in which individuals work and the factors that contribute to their success. According to the study of Khan et al. (2023), higher perceived competitiveness in the sales environment increases the possibility of unethical sales techniques due to a lack of discipline. Ethical leadership is critical to controlling this influence. The research of Khan et al. (2023) recommends that decision-makers and managers understand the psychological aspects that influence salespeople's conduct and build suitable control mechanisms to offset the impact of a demanding sales environment. Albrecht et al. (2015), found that sales agent involvement enhances a company's competitive advantage by increasing sales, improving customer experience, and engaging with product and service offers. Fathima (2022), argues that unethical sales practices can result in disagreements and litigation. Furthermore, the research indicates that ethical sales behavior is crucial for building and maintaining long-term customer and lottery agent relationships. Bolander et al. (2015), conducted a laboratory experiment with 134 undergraduate students to determine if salesmen behave ethically or unethically following multiple failures. The study found that when salesmen cannot convince buyers, they may engage in unethical behavior. Hartman et al. (2021), stated that the quality and regularity of training provided to lottery agents have an essential effect on their motivation. Further equipping them with ethical sales practices can enhance their confidence and motivation, nevertheless, poor or sales-focused training can result in demotivated agents directly affect the lottery sales practices. According to the research by Jadoon, et al. (2024), the growing popularity of lottery among consumers can be positively and significantly caused by ethical sales practices. Ethical sales behavior further affects a customer's faith in authorities. Which positively affects the lottery agents' sales practices.

Ha1: There is a relationship between ethical implication of Predatory Sales Practices and Lottery Agent Motivation toward Sales Practices

2.4 Misinformation and Omission on Lottery Agent Motivation Toward Sales Practices

Early researchers Fritzsche and Becker (1982), argued that scenarios or incidents provide practical information in ethically challenging circumstances. Whereas Schwepker and Good (2017), stated that sales individuals have a crucial role in promoting positive sales behavior. Consider a high-quality leader-member exchange relationship that lowers salespeople's ethical dilemmas through effective communication between sales managers and sales representatives. This undermines their intention to engage in unethical sales activities. Berger et al. (2010), found that forced ranking systems lead to improved employee performance here, experiencing the correct information about lottery winning from an agent is a must to strengthen their sales if not they will be disappointed and demotivated with the process. The researcher Ngubelanga (2012), emphasized that the targeted distribution approach encourages management to differentiate among employees or the lottery agents, rather than simply evaluating everyone equally. According to the information given by the distributors, agents have the privilege of ranking their sales and can benefit from the respective lottery boards. Moreover, Berger et al. (2010), precise that forced ranking as per the number of sales selects highly recognized and deserving individuals (lottery agents) for incentives under a performance-based incentive scheme by the authorities.

Hartman, DesJardins, and MacDonald (2017), argue that Misinformation can erode long-term customer relationships, resulting in a lack of faith in the lottery system and its agents. Further, this can lead to decreased loyalty and repeat business, which demotivates lottery agents who rely on solid relationships to meet sales targets with existing customers. In another way, as experienced working with the agents, they believe that their efforts to build rapport and trust are hampered by the need to engage in dishonest methods that should be strictly governed by the authorities suggesting clear jackpot disclosure and distribution of prizes in favorable methods communicate necessary information among the customers. González-Gancedo et al. (2019), found that career-related factors influence employee satisfaction, overall health, and work participation. To increase employee satisfaction and work engagement, the organization will undertake interventions on these elements. As per the experience working with lottery agents' misinformation and omissions in lottery sales techniques have a wide-ranging bearing on lottery agent motivation. Fasasi (2020), argues that these activities can undermine trust, disrupt job satisfaction, harm customer relationships, raise stress of covering up the targeted sales quota, and generate legal concerns that will negatively affect the behaviors of lottery agents, all of which contribute to poor motivation and fewer sales. Moreover, Fasasi (2020), stated that 360-degree response approaches are a type of application that allows individual employees or agents to gain access to information about their sales activities. However, to retain motivated and ethically engaged agents, lottery boards must promote transparency, honesty, and integrity in all sales processes.

Ha2: There is a relationship between ethical implication of Misinformation and Omission on Lottery Agent Motivation toward Sales Practices

2.5 Neglecting Customer Needs on Lottery Agent Motivation Toward Sales Practices

Ece Kaynak and Rahman, (2024) the literature on transparency sheds light on this subject where the basic premise in this literature is that transparency functions as a control mechanism and encourages good behavior, as shown by Jeremy Bentham's landmark work on the panopticon, which asserts, "The more strictly we are watched, the better we behave" (Bentham 2001, p. 277). Desmet et al. (2015), found that market competition can cause moral disengagement, with employees transferring moral penalties and benefits of their errors to their authority figures and neglecting customer needs. This shift in accountability indicates that agents are more prone to blaming their leaders for the negative consequences of their actions. Nkundabanyanga et al. (2011), performance pressure of agents in a highly competitive market can also lead to unethical activities, since employees may rationalize these practices to avoid causing harm. According to the experience, agents who are frightened by missing sales targets in a highly competitive market are more likely to defend unethical behaviors by claiming that they are motivated by a desire to achieve sales targets rather than cause harm to customer needs. The authors Trevino and Nelson (2011), put up an example of the banking sector, "Investment bankers frequently depend on historical default patterns to trust mortgage-backed securities, which can understate risk due to the prevalence of no-doc loans and riskier subprime mortgages. To avoid the confirmation trap, banks should consider future challenges, changes, and unanticipated circumstances. This strategy aids in identifying potential errors and ensuring that key data are not overlooked, allowing customers to gain a better understanding of the risks involved in their investments." This emphasizes that agents should be guided through their sales practices' information and should listen to customer needs or perspectives without behaving unethically to maximize lottery sales. According to Maduka, and Okafor (2014), one of the most difficult challenges for higher authorities is determining facts to best motivate employees or lottery agents to commit to their sales practices achieve customer needs and give their ethical behaviors to achieve the organization's goals. Okolo et al. (2015), states that supply, manufacture, market, and sell industrial and consumer goods must set goals, formulate objectives, and design streamlined strategies and tactics to survive the deluge of challenges that await them in their quest to satisfy the innumerable needs and wants of their target customers. As experienced in the scope of lottery sales, the number of jackpots and the winners subjected to deciding the lottery customers' willingness to buy a ticket. The agents must have a clear understanding of the facts and should promote them to the customers.

Further, the researcher Okeke (2014), suggested sales force training is a systematic strategy for improving sales success that includes continual learning, coaching, and feedback for all sales representatives. It strives to boost lottery board efficiency and earnings by promoting agents with the necessary information, skills, and habits to fulfill customer needs.

Ha3: There is a relationship between ethical implications of Neglecting Customer Needs on Lottery Agent Motivation toward Sales Practices

2.6 Undermining Trust on Lottery Agent Motivation Toward Sales Practices

Kethan and Basha (2022), stated that the customer is king in the market. Where the customers may leave a company if they do not receive satisfactory service and also, they may change their preferences and purchasing decisions for several reasons. Alrubaiee (2012), defines "Trust" is essential for building long-term business relationships. Chen and Mau (2009), emphasized the need for ethical behavior among salespeople or lottery agents to build long-term relationships with consumers, organizations must motivate salespeople to prioritize ethics in their sales practices.

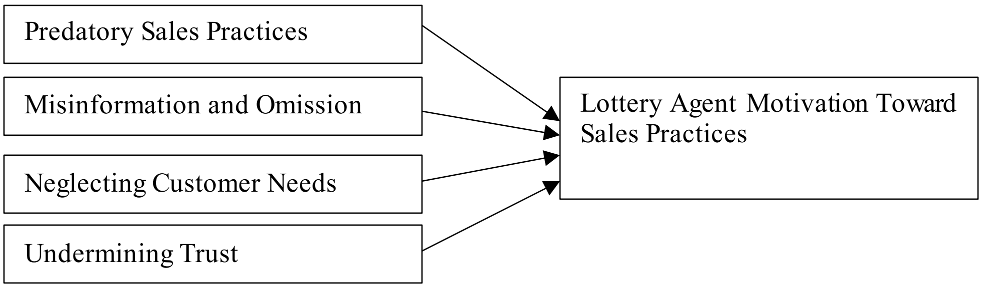
This indicates that customer pleasure significantly affects trust. Kethan and Basha (2022), argue that developing good customer trust is essential for any business. This trust is strengthened when lottery agents give honest, fair, and prompt services throughout multiple transactions with customers. Communication, promotion, and product offers all build trust with clients and foster a solid relationship that will enhance lottery sales. Pezhman et al. (2013), showed that a salesperson's ethical behavior significantly affects customer satisfaction and trust in their business of lottery sales. However, this influence is transmitted by consumer fulfillment and trust in lottery agents

Research by Lagace et al. (1991), mentioned the relationship between doctors and pharmaceutical salespeople in the United States. A regression analysis of 90 doctors' data revealed that pharmaceutical salespersons' ethical behavior increases trust and satisfaction with the transaction. The study found that pharmaceutical salespeople who deliver timely and ethical information earn the trust and pleasure of doctors. Whereas this applies to the lottery agent’s scenario. Undermining trust in lottery agents' motivation toward lottery sales. Tuan (2015), mentioned that effective management methods focus on internal processes to build lottery customer trust and commitment, leading to future loyalty. In this sense, the lottery board should have proper rules for hiring agents and reinforce sales ethics for their personnel to increase client confidence in buying lottery tickets. Further, Okolo et al. (2015), stated that adequate training and educating lottery agents on the consequences of distrust of lottery sales in the future. Phong and Khoat (2020), stated that to increase the quality of their connections sales agents and customers must prioritize trust building, commitment fulfillment, and meeting customer satisfaction. Kethan and Basha (2022), further mentioned that their study found no significant relationship between ethical sales behavior and customer trust, loyalty, and commitment which is tested in the research by testing the hypothesis that There is no relationship between ethical implication of Undermining Trust on Lottery Agent Motivation toward Sales Practices and There is a relationship between ethical implication of Undermining Trust on Lottery Agent Motivation toward Sales Practices. Although the researcher mentioned that Hasan (2015), it found that employees' ethical behavior has a favorable and significant influence on customer satisfaction, retention, and attitude. According to the survey, customers' attitudes about brands will improve if staff engage in more ethical actions. The survey also revealed that if customers have a positive opinion of the brand, customer satisfaction and retention will improve. According to the findings of Alrubaiee (2012), perceived ethical behavior has a major impact on the creation and maintenance of the customer-bank relationship, further customer trust and commitment play an important role as mediators.

Ha4: There is a relationship between ethical implications of Undermining Trust on Lottery Agent Motivation toward Sales Practices

The previous literature on the ethical implications of sales practices has mostly concentrated on numerous industries with lower emphasis paid to the unethical environment of lottery sales, in the context of Sri Lanka. The ethical implications of predatory sales techniques, misinformation, omission, overlooking consumer demands, and weakening trust have also been discussed. Further, their effects on one's motivation are generally of concern, but their specific implications on lottery agent motivation, particularly in commission-based systems, have not received much attention. Moreover, the gap is due to a shortage of associated studies on which unethical activities influence lottery agents' motivation and alignment with ethical sales behaviors in Sri Lanka's Galle District. Previous studies mentioned before have frequently generalized the implications across various industries without delving into the unique nature of lottery agents' relationships with customers and the ethical behavioral challenges for their motivation. The study aims to identify those gaps and determine the ethical implications of commission-based incentives on lottery agents' motivation and their sales practices in Galle District.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



3. Methodology

This study investigates the ethical implications of commission-based incentives on lottery agent motivation towards sales practices in the Galle District, Sri Lanka. The selection of the Galle district for this research study relies on two factors, where all the different categories of the lottery agents available at Galle district and this further cover the large geographical area in Sri Lanka. To address the research questions, a quantitative research approach was adopted, underpinned by a positivism philosophical stance. Positivism was selected to ensure the validation and reliability of the findings through objective measurement and statistical analysis. This philosophical foundation aligns with the deductive approach, which was employed to test pre-defined hypotheses derived from existing theories and literature. A mono-quantitative research design was chosen to provide a clear and focused analysis of the relationships between variables. Specifically, a survey strategy was implemented to gather data from lottery agents in the Galle District. The survey instrument was designed to elicit responses regarding commission-based incentives, agent motivation, and sales practices. The population for this study comprised approximately 200 lottery agents operating within the Galle District. To determine an appropriate sample size, the Morgan table was utilized, resulting in a target sample of 135 agents. A probability sampling method, specifically simple random sampling, was employed to ensure each agent had an equal chance of being selected. An online simple random sample generator was used to facilitate this selection process, thereby minimizing selection bias. The survey instrument consisted of closed-ended questions designed to capture quantifiable data. To assess the internal consistency and reliability of the survey items, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated. This statistical measure ensured that the survey questions consistently measured the intended constructions. Data analysis was conducted using statistical software. To examine the relationships between commission-based incentives, agent motivation, and sales practices, Spearman Correlation Coefficient was used. This analysis aimed to determine the strength and direction of linear relationships between continuous variables. Additionally, the Chi-square test was employed to test the hypotheses.

4. Results

4.1 Reliability, Validity and Normality Test Analysis

Table 1. Reliability analysis Results

Type	Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
Independent Variables	Predatory Sales Practices	0.703	4
	Misinformation Omission	0.762	4
	Neglecting Customer Needs	0.755	5
	Undermining Trust	0.720	4
Dependent Variable	Lottery agents' motivation toward sales practices	0.770	4

The reliability test results indicate that all independent and dependent variables have acceptable internal consistency, as their Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0.703 to 0.770, exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70. This suggests that the survey items measuring Predatory Sales Practices, Misinformation Omission, Neglecting Customer Needs, Undermining Trust, and Lottery Agents' Motivation Toward Sales Practices are reliable. Furthermore, the overall reliability of all 21 items is 0.912, which is classified as highly reliable, indicating strong internal consistency across the entire questionnaire. These results confirm that the instrument used for data collection is suitable for further analysis.

Table 2. Validity Test Results

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.873
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1234.565
	df	210
	Sig.	.000

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.873 determines if the sample as a whole is sufficient to compute explorative factor analysis and should have its values evaluated. The other is mentioned by Hair et al., (2019) is Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, which monitored whether the data are free of "single response bias" by comparing them to an identity matrix. The study test shows an acceptable value of higher than 0.7, indicating KMO > 0.8 which is Good. Therefore, the researcher can conclude that the data set of this study is valid.

Table 3. Tests of Normality

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
DV	.879	135	.000

The Shapiro-Wilk test (n=135) revealed a significant departure from normality for the dependent variable (W=0.879, p<0.001). This non-normal distribution necessitates the use of non-parametric statistical methods, such as Spearman's rank-order correlation, to ensure robust and valid analysis.

4.2 Descriptive Statistical analysis Results

Table 4. Descriptive Statistical analysis

Predatory Sales Practices				
	Misleading communication	Deceptive Sales Tactics	Aggressive selling	Competitive perspective
Mean	2.51	2.58	2.52	2.56
Mode	2	2	2	2
Std. Deviation	1.078	1.026	0.999	1.076
Misinformation and Omission				
	Fabricated information	Influences the customer's decision	Delays vital conversations	Unclear sales practice records
Mean	2.59	2.52	2.51	2.50
Mode	2	2	2	2
Std. Deviation	1.148	1.092	1.092	1.126
Undermining Trust				
	Dishonesty	Customer loyalty	Misuse of personal information	Manipulating customer trust
Mean	2.47	2.56	2.60	2.44
Mode	2	2	2	2
Std. Deviation	1.105	1.062	1.045	0.998
Neglecting Customer Needs				

	Ignore customer feedback	Delay responses	Long-term customer relationships	Customer expectations	Misalignment with customer needs
Mean	2.48	2.56	2.56	2.50	2.53
Mode	2	2	2	2	2
Std.Deviation	0.961	1.049	1.034	0.992	1.006

The descriptive statistics reveal that respondents generally reported low to moderate agreement with all dimensions of unethical sales practices, as reflected by mean scores ranging from approximately 2.44 to 2.60 on a likely 5-point scale. Across all categories Predatory Sales Practices, Misinformation and Omission, Undermining Trust, and Neglecting Customer Needs the mode is consistently 2, indicating that the most common response was low agreement. Standard deviations range from around 0.96 to 1.15, suggesting some variability in responses but not extreme dispersion. Overall, the results imply that while unethical practices exist to some extent, they are not strongly prevalent according to the participants' perceptions.

4.3 Inferential Statistical analysis Results

IV Dimension	Spearman Correlation Coefficient	Chi-Square
Predatory Sales	$.470^{**}$	0.000
Misinformation Omission	$.553^{**}$	0.000
Neglecting Customer Needs	$.535^{**}$	0.000
Undermining Trust	$.469^{**}$	0.000

The Spearman correlation analysis and Chi-square tests, reveals statistically significant positive relationships between all four independent variable dimensions and lottery agent motivation. Misinformation and omission demonstrated the strongest association ($\rho = 0.553$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that unethical communication practices such as withholding or distorting information substantially influence agent motivation. This was followed closely by neglecting customer needs ($\rho = 0.535$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that overlooking client expectations and feedback also plays a major role in shaping motivational outcomes. Predatory sales practices ($\rho = 0.470$, $p < 0.001$) and undermining trust ($\rho = 0.469$, $p < 0.001$) also showed moderate positive correlations, highlighting how aggressive selling tactics and breaches of trust are linked to increased agent motivation, likely due to incentive structures that reward outcomes over ethics. The Chi-square significance values ($p = 0.000$ for all variables) further confirm the existence of non-random associations between these unethical practices and motivational patterns among lottery agents in the study context.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study offer clear empirical evidence that all four identified ethical dimensions predatory sales practices, misinformation and omission, neglecting customer needs, and undermining trust have statistically significant relationships with lottery agent motivation, as demonstrated through Spearman's correlation and Chi-square tests. These relationships also align consistently with established literature, reinforcing the relevance of ethical considerations in understanding motivational dynamics within sales contexts, particularly in the lottery sector.

Among the variables, misinformation and omission emerged as the strongest predictor of agent motivation ($\rho = 0.553$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that unethical communication, including fabricated information and the withholding of vital details, substantially influences how motivated agents feel to engage in sales. This supports Schwepker and Good (2017) and Neves and Borges (2020), who argue that misleading or vague information not only undermines consumer trust but also affects employee engagement and decision-making. Moreover, delays in critical conversations and ambiguous sales documentation often overlooked were also shown to disrupt customer confidence and indirectly shape agent attitudes, a finding echoed by Sandbank et al. (2018) and Mintah et al. (2022).

The dimension of neglecting customer needs also showed a strong correlation with lottery agent motivation ($\rho = 0.535$, $p < 0.001$). The qualitative indicators, such as ignoring feedback, misalignment with customer expectations, and delayed responses—point to a sales culture that may prioritize transactions over relationships. This finding aligns with Sammour and Al-Balkhi (2023), who stress that customer-centric behavior is foundational to ethical selling. Agents operating in such ethically grey environments may become desensitized, focusing more on meeting short-term goals than nurturing long-term customer trust. As Friend et al. (2014) noted, failure to adapt to customer needs diminishes both consumer satisfaction and employee morale.

Predatory sales practices, including aggressive selling and deceptive tactics, were also found to be significantly correlated with motivation ($\rho = 0.470$, $p < 0.001$). This paradox—where unethical practices appear to enhance motivation suggests that incentive structures may inadvertently reward behavior that compromises ethical standards. Supporting this notion, Poujol et al. (2016) and Das and Barman (2021) noted that such tactics can lead to short-term gains at the cost of long-term trust and organizational reputation. The findings further suggest that agents, driven by commissions and competitive pressure, may rationalize or normalize these practices, a trend mirrored in Jadoon et al. (2024)'s research on competitive market ethics.

Finally, undermining trust measured through dishonesty, misuse of personal information, and manipulative tactics was also positively correlated with motivation ($\rho = 0.469$, $p < 0.001$), though its regression coefficient was not statistically significant. This points to a more complex relationship: while trust-related breaches may align with higher motivation under certain structural conditions, they do not consistently predict motivational outcomes when other factors are controlled. As Hasan (2015) and Tuan (2015) observed, trust is not only a customer issue but also a moral driver for agents. The weak regression output may suggest cultural or institutional nuances within the Sri Lankan lottery context, where agent behavior may be shaped more by external sales targets than by intrinsic ethical standards.

Overall, the study confirms that unethical sales practices though sometimes associated with higher agent motivation pose significant ethical risks. The findings align closely with the literature and offer valuable insight into the motivations of lottery agents operating in commission-based environments. Addressing these ethical concerns through training, monitoring, and regulatory reforms is essential to fostering sustainable and responsible sales practices.

6. Conclusion

The study has demonstrated the ethical implications of predatory sales practices on lottery agent motivation in Galle, Sri Lanka. The statistical findings, including significant correlations and regression results, indicate that unethical sales behaviors—such as misleading communication, deceptive sales tactics, misinformation, and neglecting customer needs—positively influence agent motivation, albeit with varying degrees of impact. The results align with existing literature, reinforcing the argument that ethical considerations play a crucial role in sales practices. Notably, while unethical practices may temporarily enhance motivation through competitive incentives, they pose long-term risks to trust, customer loyalty, and overall sustainability in sales. The study’s findings provide valuable insights into the ethical dynamics within the Sri Lankan lottery sales sector, highlighting the importance of responsible sales approaches to ensure sustainable business growth and agent well-being.

To enhance ethical sales practices and improve lottery agent motivation, organizations should prioritize transparency, ethical training, and incentive restructuring. Open communication strategies can rebuild trust, while ethical sales training and stress management workshops help agents develop sustainable practices aligned with organizational goals. A robust code of ethics, consumer protection laws, and team-based incentives can reduce unethical behaviors and foster collaboration. Applying Self-Determination Theory (SDT) principles—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—creates a supportive environment, boosting agent satisfaction and customer trust. Additionally, implementing structured customer feedback systems, loyalty programs, ethical selling workshops, and anonymous reporting mechanisms can enhance accountability and integrity. These measures promote a more sustainable and customer-centric sales environment, benefiting both agents and customers.

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