

Sales Behavioral Intentions of Distribution Channels in the Insurance Industry : A Systematic Review

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Abstract

The convoluted nature of insurance products promotes information asymmetry ensuing unethical behaviour of insurance agents. A systematic review of the sales behavioral intentions of agents will provide valuable insights into the issues of specious agent behavior. To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first that employed a systematic literature review with the objective to identify the variables that determine ethical or unethical behaviour and explicated its pattern amongst the agents of insurance companies. This study revealed that the behavioural intentions primarily depend upon the attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control. Loss of income, fear of losing a job, and lucrative incentives offered by insurance companies motivate agents to push the products by engaging in unscrupulous practices that violate the ethical norms. Hence, the sales managers should uphold a high moral attitude among sales agents, foster a diminution in unethical behaviour, and also provide extensive ethics training for establishing and maintaining long-term relationships with their customers to accomplish long-term profitability.

Keywords : sales behavioral intentions, insurance, distribution channels, commission, customer orientation, agents

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The distribution channels play an imperative role in reaching out to the target market in the insurance industry. The growth and sustainability of an insurance company are enhanced with more effective and efficient distribution network (Ennew, Kharouf, & Sekhon, 2011; Sinha, 2013). An effective agent is the one who offers service that is characterized by ethical sales behaviour. As customers value these behaviours, it contributes positively to the performance of insurance companies (Gautam, 2011; Haron, Ismail, & Razak, 2011). Leveraging healthier fruitful relationships between the insurer and the insured is one of the key ingredients to improved service quality (Crosby, Evans, & Cowles, 1990). In fact, in the insurance industry, ethical sales practices are considered to be the bedrock from which trust-based relationship between the agent and customer originates (Oakes, 1990). Therefore, if the customers feel that they are treated dishonestly by insurance agents, an inkling of disquiet may transpire, leading the customer to dissatisfaction towards the offered services. Hence, a trusting relationship between the agent and the client is significant to overcome the predicament (Howe, Hoffman, & Hardigree, 1994; Moin, Devlin, & McKechnie, 2015).

In this context, behavioral beliefs of agents are likely to be shaped by behavioural intentions that may be classified as ethical or unethical based upon the extent to which the performance of behaviour is perceived as right or evil, just or unjust, fair or unfair, and right or wrong (Hunt & Vitell, 1986). In the insurance domain, ethical behaviour is a prerequisite that shapes an agent's interaction and sales presentation with the customers (Haron et

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al., 2011). Nevertheless, increased malfeasance by sales agents continues to plague the insurance service industry (Cooper & Frank, 2002). This widespread phenomenon is known as “financial mis-selling,” and is argued to be a consequence of unethical behavioural intentions (Yi, Dubinsky, & Lim, 2012). A situation characterizes mis-selling, wherein an agent deliberately makes false statements to solicit financial products or services that are usually not relevant or suited to the customer (Sackey, Amoah, & Manso, 2013). It is argued that insurance sales agents possess expert knowledge as compared to potential clients about the pros and cons of insurance products and services. This, consequently, results in information asymmetry (Diacon & Ennew, 1996 ; Inderst & Ottaviani, 2009; Yi et al., 2012), possibly creating a situation, wherein agents take advantage of customers' lack of knowledge and expertise. Hence, such imprudent behaviour of insurance sales agents adversely affects the reputation of insurance companies, causing high lapsation rates leading to overall reduction in profitability (Vijaykumar, 2004 ; Sackey et al., 2013).

Experts posit that financial mis-selling can be curbed by customer-orientated behaviour where agents assist customers in purchasing an appropriate product after a thorough needs assessment (Hoffman, Howe, & Hardigree, 1991). Ethical selling can be promoted through high-quality services that satisfy customers by giving accurate facts and figures, thereby avoiding misinforming the customers about the product and, further, by refraining from pressurizing customers to buy policies that are not based on actual need-assessment (ibid). In fact, it is argued that agents who are high on ethics quotient exhibit exceptional customer-oriented behaviour. Therefore, customers consider agents showing ethical behaviour to be relatively more reliable and trustworthy as compared to those agents who engage in unethical sales behaviour (Saxe & Weitz, 1982). The extent to which an agent engages in customer- orientated behaviour depends on the pecuniary gains in the form of commission and other monetary benefits. Higher sales lead to the increased commission which in turn reinforces the behaviour that expands sales (Dubinsky & Ingram, 1984 ; Oakes, 1990). Therefore, the commission system is found to direct and channelize agents' efforts based on the activities that lead to an immediate payoff rather than a behaviour that contributes to building up a long-term relationship (Howe et al., 1994). Also, many other factors are found to foster unethical behavior among insurance agents. For example, insurance agents predominantly sell insurance to the prospective customers at their doorstep. This may lead to a scenario, where the insurance agent, taking advantage of the fact that the insurance company does not monitor the process of doorstep selling of insurance, may behave in a manner that is incompatible with the insurance company's objectives and ethical guidelines. Further, insurance agents on account of complex policy dossiers can easily mislead the customers by hiding relevant clauses and exclusions (ibid.). Unfortunately, the effectiveness of insurance products is not assessed by the customers until there is an occurrence of an event, for example, an accident, destruction of records, or loss of life. Hence, any form of mis-selling does not come to the notice of the customer within first few months or even years of sales (Hoffman et al., 1991). Most of the agents engage in unethical behaviour, regardless of their individual personal moral beliefs, as these behaviours are found to have beneficial consequences for the agents regarding commission and other monetary benefits (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985).

The fact that mis-selling is found to have a negative impact on both the insurance companies and customers, many researchers in the past have emphasized the importance of ethical conduct in the insurance industry (Cooper & Frank, 2002 ; Hoffman et al., 1991; Haron et al., 2011; Yi et al., 2012). Not confronting the extant work, the crucial area that has been implicitly ignored is the progenitors of mis-selling in the insurance industry (Yi et al., 2012). In fact, Insurance Regulatory Development Authority of India registered 210,795 complaints on unfair business practices or financial mis-selling by the distributors (IRDAI, 2015).

India is suffering from the menace of financial mis-selling and the studies on the antecedents of unethical behavior in life insurance industry in India are limited. Identifying this gap, our paper reviews the existing literature to understand the factors that shape sales behavioural intentions of distribution channel members. Our rationale for the study is to glean articles from relevant insurance sales ethics research discourse and to explore and consolidate the determinants of unethical behaviour. The purpose of this review is, therefore, twofold. First, it

seeks to offer a sound synthesis of empirical studies on sales behavioral intentions in the insurance industry, in particular, key antecedents to ethical/ unethical behaviour and the pattern of ethical /unethical behaviour amongst agents of insurance companies. Further, this review also attempts to provide insights into the various theories on the behavioural intention of insurance agents. A systematic review of this kind is expected to provide valuable insights into the issues of unethical agent behavior in the insurance industry and also how high profitability and a lasting customer relationship can be achieved through ethical sales behaviour (Dubinsky & Ingram, 1984).

Theoretical Foundation

The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) postulates that individual behaviour is influenced by behavioral, normative, and control beliefs (Kraft, Rise, Sutton, & Røysamb, 2005). Behavioral belief focuses on the outcome and evaluation of the behaviour. The belief about a motivational aspect is normative belief, while the belief that hampers the performance of behaviour is the control belief. Consequently, behavioral belief shapes a favorable or unfavorable attitude towards behaviour. Normative belief results in perceived social pressure and subjective norm. The control belief combines attitude, subjective norm, and perception of behavioral control leading to behavioural intention. If the attitude and the subjective norm are more favorable, and perceived behavioral control is greater, the person's intention to perform one's behaviour is stronger (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen, 2011 ; Kraft et al., 2005).

Another theory that explains behavioral intentions is the theory of self-monitoring. The theory proposes that people have different characteristics, and that they alter their behaviour and present themselves based upon the environment. In the case of high self-monitors, there is a tendency to adapt to the situation quickly and modify the behaviour ; whereas, low self-monitors believe in their intrinsic reflects and do not alter their behaviour in any situation (Snyder, 1979). Cooper and Frank (1991) identified issues such as the fake or disingenuous representation of products and services in marketing activities and failure to identify policyholder's needs. The factors affecting the unethical conduct and customer oriented behaviour are explicated by the theory of differential association (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985; Howe et al., 1994). The theory proposes that individuals adapt behaviour from others with whom they interact. The more the frequency of contact with the peer group, the higher will be the chances that the agents would emulate similar behaviour and beliefs (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985).

Methods

The review follows the guidelines prescribed by Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart (2003) in business management review. The authors specified a focused analytical question, a particular research strategy, and types of data to be extracted from each article. The research question is defined and discussed in the introduction section, while search strategy involved in defining inclusion criterion and identification of the database and search terms are elucidated in the current section.

(1) Inclusion Criteria : The inclusion criteria are :

- (i)** Intervention (object of the study): Sales behaviour intentions.
- (ii)** Outcome: Ethical/unethical intentions.
- (iii)** Type of the Study: Longitudinal /cross-sectional study.
- (iv)** Publication: Academic journal.
- (v)** Population: Distribution channel members ; all kinds of insurance products.
- (vi)** Period : 1980 to Present.
- (vii)** Language: English.

(2) Search Strategy : We used two approaches to search empirical papers :

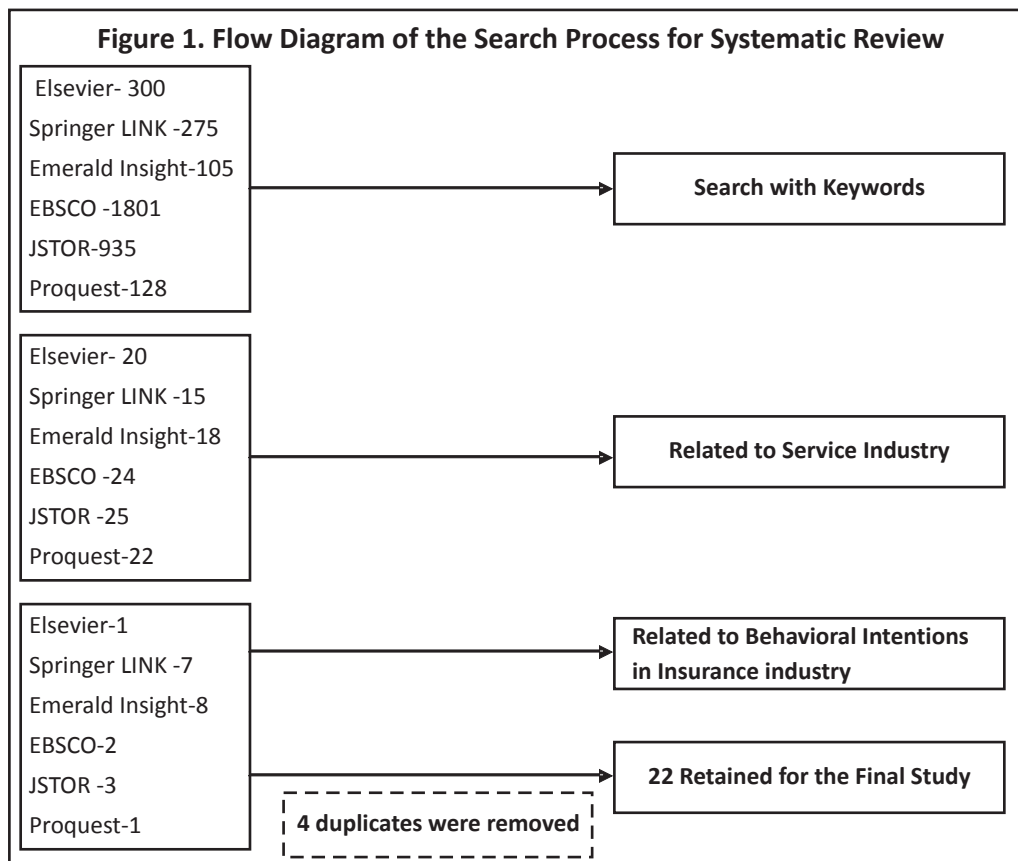
- (i)** Searches in multiple electronic databases on the Internet and,
- (ii)** Iterative references of retrieved empirical papers.

The databases include Science Direct (Elsevier), Emerald Insight, Springer LINK, PubMed, JSTOR, ProQuest, and EBSCO. These databases are largely regarded as well-established databases with high ranked peer-reviewed journals in the fields of finance and insurance.

The search strategy involved an initial search using the following terms: "insurance and ethics," "sales behavioral intention and insurance," "insurance and deceptive selling," "unethical behaviour and actuaries," "unfair trade practices and mis-selling in insurance," "insurance and commission." All searches were performed between November 2015 and June 2016. To reduce human error bias, a data extraction sheet in Microsoft excel was developed based on the protocol set by Tranfield et al. (2003) on authors, sample size, population focus, duration of the study, intervention, comparison, outcome journal, and publication details. Accordingly, data synthesis was done. A total of 22 empirical papers met the inclusion criteria of the study (Table 1).

Table 1. List of Articles Retrieved for the Study

SL No.	Journal	Authors	Database	Articles retrieved
1	Journal of Risk and Insurance	Dubinsky, Childers, Skinner, & Gencturk (1988)	JSTOR	1
2	Journal of the American Society of CLU & ChFC	Cooper & Frank (1990)	JSTOR	1
3	CPCU Journal	Cooper & Frank (1991)	JSTOR	1
4	Journal of Business Ethics	Cooper & Frank, (2002) ; Kurland, (1995) ; Howe et al. (1994) ; Eastman, Eastman, & Eastman, (1996)	Springer LINK	4
5	Human Relations	Kurland (1996)	Springer LINK	1
6	Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing	Brashear, Bellenger, Barksdale, & Ingram (1997) ; Boles, Brashear, Bellenger, & Barksdale Jr. (2000)	Emerald Insight	2
7	Jurnal Pengurusan	Noor & Muhamad (2005)	EBSCO	1
8	European Journal of Marketing	Román & Luis Munuera (2005)	Emerald Insight	1
9	Journal of Business Research	Roman & Ruiz (2005)	Elsevier	1
10	International Journal of Service Industry Management	Huang (2008)	Emerald Insight	1
11	The Service Industries Journal	Chen & Mau (2009)	Springer LINK	1
12	International Journal of Business and Social Science	(Haron et al. (2011)	ProQuest	1
13	International Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing	Singh & Das (2013)	Emerald Insight	1
14	Journal of Services Marketing	Yi et al. (2012)	Emerald Insight	1
15	Qual Quant	Cheng, Hsieh, & Yang (2014)	Springer LINK	1
16	Asia-Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistic	Ferdous & Polonsky (2013)	Emerald Insight	1
17	The International Journal of Human Resource Management	Ruiz-Palomino, Martínez - Ruiz, & Martínez - Cañas (2013)	EBSCO	1
18	The Journal of Financial Regulation and Compliance	Tseng & Kang (2014)	Emerald Insight	1



Results and Discussion

The original search of databases in Emerald Insight showed 105 results out of which 18 were related to the insurance industry, and eight were related to ethics in the insurance industry. In Springer LINK database, 275 results were found of which 15 were related to the insurance industry, and seven studies met our inclusion criteria. In JSTOR database, 685 results were found, out of which 25 were related to the insurance industry. Three studies focused on sales behaviour intentions. In ProQuest and Science Direct (Elsevier), only one study each met the inclusion criteria, whereas PubMed did not show any results on sales behavioral intentions of agents. In EBSCO database, 1506 results were found out of which 22 were related to insurance, and two articles were on behavioral intentions. Four duplicate studies were found, which were excluded from the review (Figure 1).

The findings revealed that theory of reasoned action and its extension theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) was extensively applied in predicting behavioural intention and reconnoiter unethical behaviour (Bellizzi & Hasty, 2003; Chang, 1998; Cupach & Carson, 2002; Haron et al., 2011; Kurland, 1996). Kurland (1996) found that sales target, supervisory influence, and role ambiguity affected unethical behavioural intention. Bellizzi and Hasty (2003) observed that the amount of reward for achieving sales target had a considerable influence on motivation and behaviour. Their finding was confirmed by Inderst and Ottaviani (2009) who posited that lucrative incentives offered by insurance companies motivated agents to push the products by engaging in unscrupulous practices, thus violating the ethical norms. A study by Ross and Robertson (2003) attributed the loss of income and fear of losing the job to a greater unethical behaviour. Chen and Wong (2004) asserted that TPB variables of attitude, subjective norm, and moral obligation mediated the relationship between unethical behavioral intentions and that certain organizational factors influenced behavioral intention. If managers in life insurance are reassuring, amiable,

advice-giving, and encouraging, agents would have less role ambiguity and greater job satisfaction (ibid.). Cooper and Frank (1991) found that in 'target oriented' compensation, the difference in regulation, inadequate controls, and intense competition fuelled unethical behaviour.

Antecedent Factors to Agent Behaviour

(i) Product Complexity : Haron et al. (2011) defined product complexity as the extent to which insurance products are perceived as difficult to understand by customers. Hence, there is a high scope for information asymmetry between sales agents and customers, as the former has bounteous information than the latter (Diacon & Ennew, 1996). Thus, the nature of the product regarding complexity and characteristics significantly increases the likelihood of mis-selling (Kennedy & Lawton, 1993; Yi et al., 2012).

(ii) Sales Approach : Crosby and Stephens (1987) found that behavioral effectiveness of agents relied on factors such as customer needs, resources of the sales person, and buyers' decision making. Howe et al. (1994) emphasized that top sales performers tended to spend more time in building a relationship with customers than endeavoring quick sales. Boles, Brashear, Bellenger, and Barksdale Jr. (2000) argued that sales performance was positively related to selling behaviours of agents such as interaction intensity, mutual disclosure, and cooperative intentions. In this regard, the likelihood of non-renewability would be lower and the insured's persistence would be higher if the policies were selected after a thorough need assessment of the investor (Crosby & Stephens, 1987).

(iii) Age of the Agent : In the sales environment, old people are edified by the company's code of ethics compared to younger ones. Evidently, a company's code of ethics would significantly impact the behaviour of seniors in making the right choice between ethics and profit (Lee, Beatson, Garrett, Lings, & Zhang, 2009). Cheng, Hsieh, and Yang (2014) in their study found contradicting results where the older and experienced sales agents acted unethically compared to younger sales agents. Previous research showed that age indeed had a significant influence on the ethical behaviour where younger sales agents accorded little weight to moral values and high priority to target achievements and monetary benefits compared to older sales agents (Shafer, Fukukawa, & Lee, 2007). However, no unequivocal evidence was found on the influence of age on unethical behavior (Lee et al., 2009).

(iv) Subjective Norms : Cooper and Frank (1991) in their study established several factors that influenced unethical behaviour namely moral values, family, friends' support, company environment, and pressure from supervisors. Later in 2002, they expanded the list by including unethical behavioural issues such as delivering dishonest advice to clients' queries, offering products and services of inferior quality, failure to be objective, and having a conflicting financial relationship while advising customers.

(v) Role Conflict : Román and Ruiz (2005) documented that control system and reward are vital contributing factors of behavioural intentions. They also proved that sales person's ethical behaviour reduced role conflict and improved job satisfaction. Role conflict inter - sender arises when the sales agents are pressurized with conflicting demands of peer group unethical behavior and group expectations to imitate their behaviour, which can produce emotional turmoil and anxiety. Hence, a sales person's ethical behaviour would lower role conflict inter - sender and increase job satisfaction (Román & Luis Munuera, 2005).

(vi) Organizational Characteristics : Bommer, Gratto, Gravander, and Tuttle (1987) proposed a model on a moral decision that highlighted the role of environmental factors in shaping moral judgment of an individual, whereas Trevino (1986) accorded importance to organizational and personal characteristics in influencing the ethical

decision making of employees and managers. Therefore, discerning the features of organization and personal context breeding unethical behaviour would help the management to take right decisions while recruiting the agents. To foster ethically healthy behavior, managers can strengthen the relationships and behavioral patterns that delineate an organization's operating culture (Kish-Gephart, Harrison, & Treviño, 2010).

(vii) Commission : Selling insurance products can increase ethical issues because of the encumbrance placed on insurance agents. Insurance companies utilize targets and commission to encourage sales agents and guide their behaviour (Kurland, 1996). Howe et al. (1994) observed that there is a significant relationship between agents' performance, commission, and unethical behaviour. Commonly in the insurance industry, sales agents either earn on a commission basis or salary and commission. Thus, the agent's burden to sell is exalted because it is directly

Table 2. Summary of Sales Personnel Ethics Research

Authors	Place	Type of the Study	Sample Size	Sample Description	Variables Observed	Analysis	Key Findings
Dubinsky et al. (1988)	Texas	Cross-sectional study	645	Agents in multiline insurance company.	Relationship between agents' supervisor, leadership behaviour, and agent attitudes and their performance.	Path Analysis	Agents who had higher level of autonomy tended to have lower role ambiguity and performed well.
Cooper and Frank (1990)	USA	Longitudinal Study	1173	Fellows of casualty actuarial (insurance) society.	Ethical problems facing the insurance industry.	Correlation and regression	The factors influencing unethical behaviour are moral judgement, supervisory pressure, sales target, commission, and product factors.
Cooper and Frank (1991)	USA	Longitudinal Study	1173	Fellows of casualty actuarial (insurance) society.	Ethical problems facing the insurance industry.	Correlation and regression	When resolving ethical dilemma, the agents first looked into personal values, business environment, and professional factors.
Howe et al. (1994)	Western state in the U.S.	Cross-sectional study	1200	Insurance sales agents (auto, home, health, and life).	Education, industry, agency, success, individual, and ethical issues.	Chi-square cross tabulation, t-test	Customer oriented agents were found to engage less in unethical behaviour, sales agents perceived a greater level of unethical behaviour among the peer group.
Kurland (1995)	U.S. (California, Texas, and Florida) except New York	Cross-sectional	245	Life insurance agents.	Ethical intentions, compensation system (product quality and product commission).	Multiple regression	The straight commission compensation system did not significantly affect insurance agents' ethical intentions positively or negatively.
Eastman et al. (1996)	USA	Cross-sectional	115	Life insurance agents	Personal ethics, age, level of education, income, code of ethics, the opportunity for unethical behaviour and job tenure.	t-test, Regression analysis	Insurance agents were highly likely to engage in unethical behaviour activity in a professional setting than personal setting.

Kurland (1996)	USA	Cross-sectional	245	Life insurance agents.	Ethics, incentives, and theory of planned behaviour variables.	Multiple regression	Theory of modified planned behaviour augmented moral obligation to predict ethical intentions. Straight commission compensation system is the only key to solving disputes - moral hazards and adverse selection.
Brashear et al. (1997)	Canada	Cross-sectional	497	Financial business to business insurance agents.	Sales behaviour, age, sex, education, work experience, previous employment, sales experience, marital status, spouse in insurance industry, intrinsic, extrinsic motivation, and vocational esteem.	ANOVA, Multiple regression	Sales agents who had prior experience had a higher mean level of selling servicing and planning insurance policies. Intrinsic orientation had a significant influence on fact-finding; the higher the level of intrinsic reward, the more hours the agents spent time on fact finding.
Boles et al. (2000)	North America	Cross-sectional	487	Financial business to business insurance agents.	Interaction intensity, mutual disclosure, cooperative intentions, and sales performance.	Simple ordinary least square, regression, and MANOVA	Interaction intensity, mutual disclosure had a significant effect on sales performance, but cooperative intentions did not influence sales performance.
Cooper and Frank (2002)	USA	Longitudinal study	1173	Fellows of casualty actuarial (insurance) society.	Ethical problems facing the insurance industry.	Correlation and regression	The study identified six issues namely false and misleading representation in sales efforts of products and services, failure in analyzing the need of the customers, lack of knowledge and skills to completely achieve one's duties, issues in incentives and personal gains, misrepresenting of facts, scornful remarks of competitors.
Noor and Muhamad (2005)	Malaysia	Cross-sectional	445	Life insurance agents.	Intrinsic motivation, organizational commitment, self-monitoring, customer orientation behaviour.	Regression analysis	Intrinsic motivation, organizational commitment positively influenced agents to perform customer orientation behaviour.
Roman and Luis Munuera (2005)	Spain	Cross-sectional	280	Financial sales personnel (banks and insurance).	Reward system, control system, age, education, role conflict, inter-sender performance, job	Confirmatory factor analysis, Structural	Age is a significant indicator of ethical behaviour, education is not significant to ethical

					satisfaction, ethical sales behaviour.	equation modeling, Chi-square	behaviour. Sales agents' ethical behaviour resulted in low role conflict intersender and increased job satisfaction.
Roman and Ruiz (2005)	Spain	Cross-sectional	210	Financial sales personnel (banks and insurance).	Perceived ethical sales behaviour, customer satisfaction, customer trust in the sales person, customer commitment, and customer attention in sales performance.	Confirmatory factor analysis, Structural equation modeling, Chi-square	Perceived ethical sales behaviour had a strong influence on customer satisfaction.
Huang (2008)	Taiwan	Cross-sectional	412	Agents (bancassurance and insurance).	Customer orientation behaviour, selling orientation behaviour, commitment, trust, satisfaction, and customer retention.	Confirmatory factor analysis, Structural equation modelling	The approach of customer orientation behaviour increased the relationship quality ; whereas, the selling orientation behaviour decreased relationship quality with clients of insurance.
Chen and Mau (2009)	Taiwan	Cross-sectional	215	Customers of life insurance company.	Ethical sales behaviour, customer trust, and customer loyalty.	Confirmatory factor analysis, Structural equation modelling	There existed a reciprocal relationship between clients' trust in agents and customer trust in the insurance company and customer trust had more influence on customer loyalty.
Haron et al. (2011)	Malaysia	Cross-sectional	246	Life insurance agents.	Supervisory influence, role ambiguity, sales target, attitude, and theory of planned behaviour variables.	Hierarchical multiple regression	There is an association between supervisory influence, sales target, & role ambiguity on intention to perform unethical behaviour.
Yi et al. (2012)	South Korea	Cross-sectional	250	Life insurance agents.	Ethics training, ethical climate, selling pressure, competitive intensity, salesperson ethical attitude, product complexity, and product variety.	Confirmatory factor analysis, Structural equation modeling	Ethical training and competitive intensity were positively associated with salesperson ethical attitude. Competitive intensity was irrelative to mis-selling. Sales persons ethical attitude was positively related to product complexity and product variety.
Singh and Das (2013)	India	Cross-sectional	380	Financial business to business insurance agents.	Adaptive selling behaviour, customer orientation, salesperson performance, and selling experience.	Exploratory factor analysis, Structural equation	In case of experienced sales agents, the performance was weak, and job satisfaction was low ; whereas, highly

						modeling	experienced sales agents' performance was explained using customer orientation selling than adaptive selling.
Ferdous and Polonsky (2013)	Bangladesh	Cross-sectional	205	Sales agents insurance.	Attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, ethical selling behaviour, intention and ethical behaviour.	Structural equation modeling	Attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control affected the ethical selling behaviour intention, which predicted sales person ethical behaviour.
Ruiz-Palomino et al. (2013)	Spain	Cross-sectional	525	Financial sales personnel (banks and insurance).	Ethical behaviour intention, relativism, Machiavellism, and religious beliefs.	Hierarchical stepwise regression	Positive significant effect between religiosity and ethical behavioral intention, organisational factors were positively associated with ethical behaviour and leadership had less effect on ethical behavior.
Cheng et al. (2014)	Taiwan	Cross-sectional	957	Sales agents insurance.	Age, experience, position, geographical region, scale, and unethical behaviour.	ANOVA and t-test	The difference of age and experience among sales agents had a significant impact on unethical behaviour. Unethical behaviour among old and experienced sales agents was more as compared to younger sales agents.
Tseng and Kang (2014)	Taiwan	Cross-sectional	253	Life insurance brokers.	Consequential evaluation (self) (peer) , ethical evaluation (self) (peer).	Correlation coefficient	Underwriting, claim management, and sales compensation had a significant impact on insurance brokers. Product recommendation behaviour, ethical and consequential evaluation, and behavioral intention had a significant effect on perceived peer reaction.

affected by their performance (no sales lead to no incentive). Inderst and Ottaviani (2009) contended that if the insurance companies provided high commission, sales agents would be enticed to exaggerate the perceived value of the insurance products or advocate their purchase even if it is not suitable for the customer.

(viii) Self - Monitoring : It was observed that high self-monitors modified their behaviour based on the situational cues than low self-monitors (Noor & Muhammad, 2005). Sales professionals with high self-monitoring traits would develop a better relationship with customers (Spiro & Weitz, 1990; Verbeke, 1994) and modify their behaviour because of a desire to be preferred by others. Further studies by Spiro and Weitz (1990) and Verbeke

(1994) showed that self-monitoring indeed had a positive effect on customer orientation behaviour.

Weeks and Nantel (1992) found that the sales personnel who understood their firm's ethical norms were moderately successful in their respective jobs. Also, Honeycutt, Glassman, Zugelder, and Karande (2001) affirmed that high-performing sales personnel would show more ethical behaviour. Noor and Muhammad (2005) provided empirical evidence of sales staff moral judgments being positively associated with job performance. The summary of the articles reviewed in this paper is given in the Table 2.

Some of the remedies suggested to overcome unethical behaviour include hiring ethically oriented agents since individual values are found to shape ethical attitudes, intentions, and behaviour (Obalola, 2010). The insurance companies have to encourage their agents to uphold ethics while soliciting insurance policies, enforce discipline, and moral values to enrich the organizational culture. Insurance companies should take punitive actions against the violator that will convey a strong message about the priority accorded to ethical selling and not profits. Insurance companies should also provide adequate training to handle ethical dilemmas in a given situation (Ferdous, 2008; Román & Luis Munuera, 2005). Also, other findings from this review indicate that TPB is aptly suited to predict unethical behaviour intentions. The behavioral intention largely is dependent on the extent of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control and the tendency is directly proportional. Further, from this study, we have identified few methodological issues such as reliability, internal validity, and transparency of the body of evidence. The population of these studies is heterogeneous consisting of managers, agents, brokers, and insurance officers. The non-response bias indicated that there were no correlative problems related to organizational and demographic variables. Considering the behavioral variables and unethical intentions, dichotomous classification of the dependent variable is questionable. Except for six studies, 16 studies drew a conclusion based on a small sample size ranging from 115 to 500. Most of the studies looked into organizational factors and individual factors, while only a few considered cultural factors, which also proves vital in a business environment. The researchers from the U.S. have focused on several issues related to ethical selling and have published the findings in top-ranked journals. Research contribution from other parts of the world, especially from India, is scarce. This is a matter of utmost concern because of the prevalence of high level of financial mis-selling in life insurance in India. Another issue is that the complaints about unethical behaviour intention are not available to the public as the regulatory board considers it as confidential. This issue needs to be further investigated through a well-structured survey focusing on the policyholders, and their perceived satisfaction with the services provided by their agents.

Practical and Managerial Implications

The findings of our review have several managerial implications. First, insurance companies need to foster sales agent's behaviour, not on the grounds of unethical sales, which can induce strife with customers resulting in litigation, but on positive consequences such as recognition and appraisal that would eventually lead to increased job satisfaction and lower role conflict. Insurance managers should spend time communicating with their sales agents from an ethical perspective. Second, the companies should avoid purely commission based recruitment with a situational incentive program; but instead adopt the salary plus commission model with incentives provided not just on sales performance, but also on parameters such as customer satisfaction to achieve long-term objectives of the company (Kang & Kang, 2014). Third, since older sales agents seem to behave more ethically than the younger counterparts, the training module content should be age specific. For instance, younger sales agents should be given inputs that reiterate the fundamental ethical norms and values of the company. Fourth, every insurance company should develop a grievance redressal mechanism in which clients can lodge complaints with the company over those agents who have violated the ethical codes. This way, the customer could be one of the supervisors in preventing sales agents from behaving unethically in a sale transaction (Chen & Mau, 2009). Fifth, during the induction program for recruits, it ought to be emphasized that it is preeminent for ethical selling by the agents and how the company values ethical practices (Ferdous & Polonsky, 2013). The companies should also use

communication tools in-house such as newsletters, notice boards, and newspapers in an integrated manner to foster an environment in which the employees imbibe the company's ethical values and norms (Ferdous, 2008). Finally, tracking agents through survey and focus group would develop corporate culture and inculcate ethically oriented attitude and behaviour (Akhter, Islam, & Uddin, 2009 ; Ferrell, Johnston, & Ferrell, 2007; McLaren, 2013).

Conclusion

There is little evidence on the sales behavioural intentions of distributional players in the insurance industry in India. Since agents are considered to be the intermediaries between the customers and insurance companies, they play a useful role in prospecting and retaining policyholders. There is evidence that sales target, supervisory influence, and company policies are the driving force that shapes unethical behaviour. When resolving the ethical dilemma, agent's values, business environment, and professional factors play a significant role. It would seem relevant for policymakers to demand scrutinization of applicants for agent's positions in insurance companies to assess their ethical behavioural intentions to curb financial mis-selling.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

The review only explores research published in peer-reviewed journals and makes it highly susceptible to publication bias, and future reviewers could correspond with the authors of unpublished studies, as well as consider conference papers and government reports. As noted above, some of the reviewed papers had few methodological issues that have adversely affected the results and limited the generalizability of findings. A more focused study is warranted as the heterogeneity of studies in this area increases the complexity of systematic reviews.

There are abundant research papers that explored the role of endogenous factors in influencing unethical behavioural intentions, while there is a shortage of studies on the effect of exogenous variables such as geographical location, the level of competition, culture, and other macroeconomic conditions. Therefore, a research study that incorporates both these factors is highly required to achieve robust conclusions. Since the behavioural intention is a dynamic phenomenon, there is a need to design a longitudinal study in the Indian context. Further, a meta-analytic review is needed to examine the inferences drawn out of the existing studies statistically.

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