

## Praveen Punia

Doctoral Candidate, University of Houston

Phone: (832) 929-5366 | E-mail: [ppraveen@bauer.uh.edu](mailto:ppraveen@bauer.uh.edu) | [Personal Website](#)

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### Education

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C.T. Bauer College of Business, University of Houston	2021 – Present
Doctor of Philosophy, Empirical Marketing	
<b>Advisor: Prof. Michael Ahearne</b>	
University of Hyderabad, India	2014 – 2019
Integrated Program in Financial Economics (MS)	

### Research Interests

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<b>Substantive:</b>	Career Management, Sales Incentives, AI-Human Interactions, Live Streaming, Video Gaming
<b>Methodological:</b>	Causal Inference, Machine Learning, Analytical Modeling, Time Series, Game Theory

### Doctoral Dissertation

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<b>Topic:</b>	Career Management in the Sales Force
<b>Committee:</b>	Michael Ahearne (Chair), Johannes Habel (Co-Chair), Jim Hess, Thomas J Steenburgh

### Papers Under Review

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#### **So Near Yet So Far: The Impact of Near Misses on Salesperson Turnover**

with Michael Ahearne, Arpit Agrawal, Yashar Atefi, and Johannes Habel – *under 4<sup>th</sup> round review at Journal of Marketing Research*

- Winner best paper award at 2024 OFR Symposium, Sales Management Track at 2024 AMA Winter Academic Conference

#### **Who Wins the War for Talent? Wage Levels, Unemployment, and Service Outcomes**

with Michael Ahearne, Johannes Habel, Jim Hess, and Phillip Wiseman – *under review at Journal of Marketing*

### Papers Preparing for Submission

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#### **How Does Sales Experience Affect Life Satisfaction?**

with Michael Ahearne, Arpit Agrawal, and Johannes Habel – *reject and resubmit at Journal of Marketing Research*

- Conference Presentations: 2024 AMA Winter Academic Conference, 2024 University of Houston Doctoral Symposium
- Winner AMA Sales SIG 2025 doctoral dissertation proposal award
- Accepted at MSI Working Paper Series

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### Work in Progress

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#### **A Predictive Framework for Forecasting Long-Term Video Game Performance Using Key Launch Period Metrics**

with Sam Hui and Rahul Suhag – *working on the analysis; completed model specification and data collection*

#### **AI-Human Collaboration in B2B Sales Negotiations**

*working on the data collection*

- Winner 2025 Lisa Scheer Best Early-Stage Research Proposal

#### **Build vs. Acquire: The Impact of Internal vs. External Sales Hiring on Firm Performance**

with Michael Ahearne, Johannes Habel, and Jim Hess – *working on the analysis; completed model specification and data collection*

#### **Freedom Isn't Free: How Self-Employment Reshapes Work, Health, and Happiness**

with Michael Ahearne and Johannes Habel – *writing manuscript; completed analysis*

### Awards & Honors

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AMA – Sheth Foundation Doctoral Consortium Fellow	2025
ISMS – Marketing Doctoral Consortium Fellow	2025
AMA – Marketing Strategy Doctoral Consortium Fellow	2025
Lisa Scheer Best Early-Stage Research Proposal	2025
Sales SIG Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Award Winner	2025
University of Houston Symposium Fellow	2024
President Fellowship, University of Houston	2021 – 2023
Bauer Doctoral Fellowship, Bauer College of Business, University of Houston	2021 – 2026
Indian Academy of Sciences & National Academy of Sciences Summer Fellow	2018

### Research Experience

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C.T. Bauer College of Business, University of Houston, Houston	2021 – Present
Graduate Assistant to Prof. Michael Ahearne	
Indian School of Business, Hyderabad	2019 – 2021
Research Associate with Prof. S. Arunachalam	

### Teaching Experience

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Instructor, MARK3338: Introduction to Marketing Analytics	Summer 2025
Instructor Ratings: 4.8/5.00	
Instructor, MARK3338: Introduction to Marketing Analytics	Summer 2024
Instructor Ratings: 4.64/5.00	
TA for Mike Ahearne, Professional Selling	Fall 2022, 2023

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### Industry Experience

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Academic Consultant, Xactly Corporation 2023 – Present  
Transform and analyze large, structured data into actionable business insights and solutions  
Work directly with industry professionals to present and discuss actionable insights  
Participate in regular meetings with executives across the organization

### Relevant Coursework

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#### Marketing

Marketing Models	Kachuen Sam Hui
Marketing Management and Strategy	Mike Ahearne
Seminar in Quantitative Marketing	Sriram Venkataraman
Marketing Research Methods (Dr.)	Ed Blair
Organizational Behavior and Management Theory	Derek Avery

#### Methods

Advanced Topics in Econometrics	Xun Tang
Data Science and Machine Learning	Randy Davila
Applied Econometric Analysis	Aimee Chin
Microeconomics Theory	Janet Kohlhasse
Quantitative Economic Analysis	Vikram Maheshri
Econometrics – Cross Sectional Data	Samarjit Das
Econometrics – Panel Data	Samarjit Das
Data Analytics in Marketing	Sudhir Voleti
Probability	Rajeeva Karandikar
Game Theory	Naresh Kumar Sharma
Time Series Modeling	Raja Sethu Durai
Financial Econometrics	Debashish Acharya
Mathematical Optimization Techniques for Economics	Phanindra Goyari
Financial Modelling	Raja Sethu Durai

### Method Workshops

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Causal Inference Main Workshop	Fall 2022
Northwestern University	
Advanced Causal Inference Workshop	Fall 2022
Northwestern University	
Mathematics and Finance Summer School	Summer 2018
Chennai Mathematical Institute	

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### Languages and Statistical Tools

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Programming	Python, R, Mathematica, MATLAB, SQL, JavaScript, React
Statistical Tools	STATA, EViews, Mplus, GAMS
Typesetting	LaTeX, Markdown, HTML
Languages	English, Hindi, Urdu, Telugu

### Institutional and Professional Service

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Coordinator, Thought Leadership on the Sales Profession	2025
Anderson School of Management, University of California, Los Angeles	
Organizer, 41 <sup>st</sup> Marketing Doctoral Symposium	2024
Bauer College of Business, University of Houston, Houston	
Coordinator, Thought Leadership on the Sales Profession	2023
Darden School of Business, University of Virginia, Washington D.C.	
Vice Chair Productivity Research, AMA DocSIG	2023 – 2024
Assistant Vice Chair Productivity Research, AMA DocSIG	2021 – 2023
Reviewer, AMA Summer Academic Conference (x2)	2024 – 2025
Reviewer, AMA Winter Academic Conference (x2)	2024 – 2025

### Conference Participation

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ISMS Marketing Science Conference, Washington D.C.	2025
Winter AMA Conference, Phoenix, AZ	2025
Winter AMA Conference, St. Pete, FL	2024
Winter AMA Conference, Las Vegas, NV	2022

### References

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#### Michael Ahearne

C.T. Bauer Professor of Marketing and  
Research Director, Stagner Sales Excellence  
Institute  
C.T. Bauer College of Business, University of  
Houston  
Email: [mahearne.uh@gmail.com](mailto:mahearne.uh@gmail.com)

#### Johannes Habel

Michael J. Cemo Associate Professor of  
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C.T. Bauer College of Business, University of  
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#### Rahul Suhag

Assistant Professor of Marketing  
Mays Business School, Texas A&M  
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#### Thomas J Steenburgh

Ralph Owen Dean and Professor of  
Marketing  
Owen Graduate School of Management,  
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### **Selected Research Abstracts**

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#### **How Does Sales Experience Affect Life Satisfaction?** (*Reject and Resubmit at JMR, MSI Working Paper*)

Business-to-business (B2B) sales is perhaps the most ambivalent career the marketing discipline offers, entailing extreme advantages and disadvantages that might change individuals' lives for the better or worse. Thus, it is unclear how experience in a B2B sales role impacts an individual's life satisfaction, a terminal outcome of utmost importance given our pursuit of better marketing for a better world. We test this effect in three studies including cross-sectional data of 64,090 individuals, longitudinal panel data of over 12,500 individuals, and qualitative interviews with salespeople. Interestingly, we find that having experience in a B2B sales role on average enhances life satisfaction. This is because sales experience equips individuals with distinct interpersonal skills that they use to find greater satisfaction outside the work context, such as helping others, enforcing own interests, and building social relationships. The effect of sales experience on life satisfaction is more positive for individuals with a plastic personality, who are more likely to gain and transfer skills. Thereby, this study adds a neglected antecedent to life satisfaction theory and offers actionable implications for managers and educators on improving life satisfaction within organizations and society at large.

#### **So Near Yet So Far: The Impact of Near Misses on Salesperson Turnover** (*Under 4<sup>th</sup> Round Review at JMR*)

The role of sales is unique within organizations, marked by its high-profile nature and objective performance metrics. Meeting sales targets is vitally important for salespeople, and failure to do so can lead to significant frustration. It is well-established that quota attainment is a key factor influencing a salesperson's decision to quit. Research consistently shows that the lower the quota attainment, the higher the likelihood of the salesperson quitting. However, our study offers a new perspective and adds a subtle complexity to this understanding. Drawing from the concept of counterfactual thinking, we propose that salespeople who narrowly miss sales targets are more likely to quit, even if they are generally high performers. We examine this with two studies: 1) a panel dataset of over 2,900 retail salespeople and 2) cross-industry data on over 25,000 salespeople. Our results confirm that repeated quota near misses cause turnover and reveal three sources of heterogeneity: the effect of quota near misses on turnover increases with higher variable pay percentage and decreases with higher maximum possible pay and higher group performance diversity. Our findings extend sales force turnover theory and provide actionable implications for managers who aim at reducing turnover.

#### **Who Wins the War for Talent? Wage Levels, Unemployment, and Service Outcomes** (*Under Review at Journal of Marketing*)

It is well established that service employees decisively shape service quality. Therefore, research has clarified how service firms should manage these employees, typically conceiving of them as a generally available and controllable resource. However, this general viewpoint faces severe limitations considering recent labor market disruptions, which pose severe challenges for service firms filling vacant positions. Building on this observation, we propose a theoretical model to explore the role of labor market and wages on expected service quality at a facility. Our model predicts that higher unemployment rates improve service quality by reducing employee turnover,

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higher wages enhance service quality through increased effort, with these effects demonstrating a significant negative interaction. Additionally, we predict these factors have a negative interaction, whereby high-wage facilities experience less benefit from rising unemployment than their low-wage counterparts. We empirically validate these predictions using two natural experiments in a retailing and fast-food restaurant context. The results suggest that as unemployment falls and labor supply becomes shorter, service quality decreases. Intriguingly, this effect particularly emerges for service firms that offer lower wages, while service firms that offer higher wages maintain their service quality levels. We discuss in detail how to evolve service quality theory based on these findings. Furthermore, we offer actionable guidance to managers and policymakers on how to safeguard service quality as the war for talent rages on.

### **Forecasting Platforms' Long-Term Revenue from Early Signals: A Temporal Fusion Transformer Approach** (*Work in Progress*)

When analyzing early performance signals on digital platforms, it is important for firms to understand how initial engagement metrics predict long-term revenue. We introduce a Temporal Fusion Transformer (TFT) framework that models the relationship between early-stage behavioral patterns and future value generation in environments with high temporal volatility. We propose a multi-head attention architecture that combines static characteristics with time-varying characteristics to forecast revenue trajectories. The model employs variable selection networks to identify relevant predictors from high-dimensional temporal data, while multi-horizon forecasting capabilities capture both immediate trends and long-term temporal dependencies. By processing known historical patterns through encoder-decoder structures, the TFT generates probabilistic predictions that account for heterogeneous lifecycle trajectories. We demonstrate this approach through an application to livestreaming platforms, where game revenue predictions based on early performance metrics inform promotion and investment decisions. Using daily game-level data from major Asian platforms, we show how managers can leverage temporal fusion mechanisms to optimize resource allocation under uncertainty. This results in more accurate revenue predictions and outperforms traditional forecasting approaches such as ARIMA models and gradient boosting methods. Beyond livestreaming, our temporal fusion framework provides a generalizable solution for forecasting long-term outcomes from early indicators across other domains.

### **AI-Human Collaboration in B2B Sales Negotiations** (*Work in Progress*)

In B2B sales negotiations where multi-stakeholder dynamics and trust are critical salespeople face challenges processing vast data and adapting strategies in real time. AI offers potential to enhance these capabilities but raises concerns about trust and alignment with human judgment. To explore AI's role in this context, we ask three critical questions: (1) How do AI agents balance efficiency and relationship-building in B2B sales negotiations? (2) What mechanisms explain AI's impact on social coordination costs and strategic decision-making in iterative negotiations? (3) How can prompt engineering align AI personas with salespeople traits to optimize collaboration and outcomes? We aim to develop *SalesSynergy* a custom platform enabling human-AI collaboration in simulated and real-world negotiation. We employ a mixed-methods approach with 2 interconnected studies. First, a controlled experiment with sales professionals randomly assigned to different conditions will complete negotiation tasks. Second, using a quasi-experimental design in a field study with a B2B firm to validate findings using real

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negotiations. By extending negotiation theory and human-AI collaboration frameworks, this research offer actionable frameworks for sales practitioners and AI developers while advancing academic understanding of AI-augmented negotiations in B2B.

### **Build vs. Acquire: The Impact of Internal vs. External Sales Hiring on Firm Performance** (*Work in Progress*)

In business-to-business (B2B) sales, firms face critical decisions about salesforce compensation and skill development that significantly impact performance. This paper examines two key questions: (1) What are the performance implications of hiring salespeople internally versus externally? And (2) Among the salespeople hired internally versus externally who are like to stay longer with the firm? We develop an analytical model that captures the key trade-offs in these decisions and test it using a unique dataset of 40 companies. For hiring source decisions, we show that while internal hires initially outperform due to firm-specific knowledge, external hires exhibit steeper learning curves and may eventually match or exceed internal hire performance. Our empirical analysis validates these theoretical predictions and quantifies the magnitude of these effects across different industry contexts. The findings provide actionable insights for sales managers making hiring decisions under uncertainty, while contributing to theories of salesforce management and human capital development.

### **Freedom Isn't Free: How Self-Employment Reshapes Work, Health, and Happiness** (*Work in Progress*)

Self-employment represents a fundamental trade-off between autonomy and personal well-being, yet its impact on individuals' lives remains incompletely understood. This research examines three critical questions: (1) How does transitioning to self-employment affect key life outcomes including income, work hours, life satisfaction, job satisfaction, health satisfaction, and leisure time? (2) How do individual characteristics—specifically gender and age—moderate these relationships? (3) How does business size influence the trade-offs between economic success and personal well-being in self-employment? Using longitudinal data from the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) tracking over 92,000 individuals. Our findings reveal that self-employment improves job satisfaction and life satisfaction but creates significant trade-offs, particularly around work hours, leisure time, and health. The effects are strongly moderated by gender – with men experiencing higher income gains but worse health outcomes, while women achieve better work-life balance at the cost of lower earnings. Age and business size further moderate these relationships, with older entrepreneurs and those managing smaller ventures better able to preserve work-life balance. These results enhance our understanding of how entrepreneurship shapes individual well-being and highlight important boundary conditions around gender, age, and organizational context. The findings have implications for theories of occupational choice and work-life balance, while offering practical insights for potential entrepreneurs and policymakers.