

# Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice in Sales Education

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## Introduction

Sales and marketing are essential components of any business, directly influencing customer acquisition and retention. However, educational approaches often emphasize theoretical concepts, leaving students with limited practical experience. The SalesPro Racer simulation game was developed to address this gap by providing an innovative, hands-on learning tool for students in the Sales Management course at Polytechnic Port Dickson. This chapter explores the unique features, practicality, and market potential of the SalesPro Racer while emphasizing its environmental and societal impacts.

In this digital era, sales and marketing challenges are also growing. There are various high-level approaches that require advanced skills to apply effectively, ranging from strong communication methods to sophisticated digital marketing tactics. For students, understanding modern sales techniques such as content marketing, digital advertising, customer relationship management, and data analysis is critical to their future success in this field (Khan, 2024). SalesPro Racer provides a conducive platform for students to try out various techniques in a controlled simulation, which helps them understand which strategies are more effective. At the same time, students experience the real challenges faced by sales and marketing professionals in making quick decisions and responding to market changes.

SalesPro Racer helps students learn to work under pressure and manage their time wisely. This element is important because in the real world, time management and resistance to stress are critical skills for sales and marketing professionals (Kolb, 2020). With the training they get through this game, students can build self-resilience, improve focus, and become more proactive in facing the challenges of globalization (Mao, 2022; Armawi, 2021).

The rationale behind the development of the SalesPro Racer innovation is to provide students with practical sales and marketing skills in an increasingly challenging and dynamic business world. In the era of globalization and digitalization, sales and marketing competencies are essential for students aspiring to succeed in business careers (Khan, 2024).

SalesPro Racer is specifically designed to fill a gap in formal education that tends to focus on theory but provides less opportunity for practical experience and soft skills training. Here are some of the main interests that form the rationale for developing this innovation:

1. Develop participants' abilities in planning and implementing sales strategies.
2. Enhance decision-making skills through scenario-based problems rooted in problem based learning (PBL), which aligns with Outcome-Based Education (OBE) that emphasizes specific and measurable learning outcomes.
3. Provide participants with knowledge about efficient sales management.
4. Strengthen understanding of customer relationship management and how to use sales techniques successfully.

Overall, the rationale for developing the SalesPro Racer innovation is to meet the needs of students and the business world in producing highly skilled and confident individuals in the field of sales and marketing. This game set offers an effective learning approach by providing a risk-free platform, developing soft skills, and fostering a competitive spirit among students. This simulation innovation also helps students connect theory with practice, making learning more relevant and fun (Hsu et al.,2023). With SalesPro Racer, students can not only improve their practical skills but also build the confidence and resilience needed to succeed in the challenging world of sales and marketing.

### Novelty and Inventiveness

The SalesPro Racer sets itself apart by combining theoretical knowledge with experiential learning in a simulated, risk-free environment. Key innovations include:

1. **Interactive Game Design:** Incorporates tools such as customer/prospect cards and golden buttons to replicate real-world scenarios.
2. **Scenario-Based Learning:** Challenges students to handle diverse sales situations, fostering adaptability and critical thinking.
3. **Immediate Feedback:** Utilizes sales reports and timecards for real-time performance evaluation, enabling continuous improvement.

This novel approach transforms traditional sales education, making it engaging, reflective, and aligned with real-world demands.

### Practicality and Usefulness

SalesPro Racer is designed for ease of integration into both academic curricula and corporate training programs. Its modular components (game boards, customer cards, and evaluation tools) allow flexible use across various settings, such as classrooms and corporate training sessions. The practicality is further enhanced by its focus on:

1. **Ease of Use:** Its modular components—game boards, cards, and evaluation tools—are simple to understand and implement.
2. **Comprehensive Training:** It covers essential areas such as customer interaction, digital marketing, and strategic planning through scenario-based gameplay and interactive learning activities.
3. **Scalability:** Adapts to diverse group sizes, from small classrooms to large-scale training programs.

Students develop key skills like time management, negotiation, and decision-making, essential for thriving in the competitive business landscape.

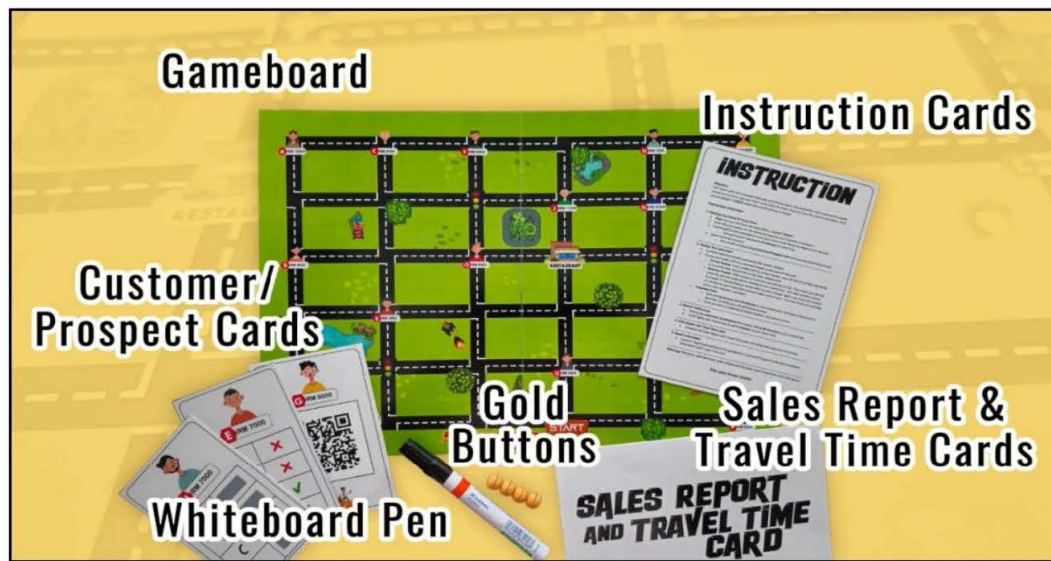


Figure 1: The Tools in SalesPro Racer Gameboard

### Presentation and Demonstration

The SalesPro Racer uses an interactive format to engage participants actively:

1. **Game Setup:** Participants navigate a sales journey using game boards and customer scenario cards.
2. **Real-Time Challenges:** Players face dynamic situations requiring strategic thinking and quick responses.
3. **Evaluation:** Facilitators assess participants' performance based on outcomes recorded in sales reports and travel time cards.

This hands-on approach ensures that learners internalize concepts through experience, making the learning process both effective and enjoyable.

## Market and Commercial Potential

The SalesPro Racer Simulation Game Set has strong commercial potential, making it a highly marketable innovation, especially in the educational and corporate sectors. Here are the main aspects that contribute to its commercial potential:

### 1. Increased Market Demand

Appeals to universities and polytechnics aiming to enhance experiential learning in sales and marketing (JPPKK,2024). With an increasing focus on experiential learning, educational institutions are looking for innovative tools to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application (Wang et al., 2024). The SalesPro Racer Simulation Game Set meets this demand by offering a hands-on and immersive learning experience that prepares users for real-world sales challenges. As sales training evolves, the demand for interactive training tools like this will increase and create a strong market opportunity.

### 2. Corporate Sales Training

In addition to its use in academic environments, the SalesPro Racer Simulation Game Set can benefit industry players by enhancing their sales performance. It can be integrated into sales training programs and used to simulate various scenarios, such as customer negotiations and closing successful deals (Yu et al., 2021). This innovation can be marketed to the industry as a comprehensive solution for improving sales techniques, customer relationship management, and overall team dynamics.

### 3. Competitive Advantage

Businesses that use the SalesPro Racer Simulation Game Set in their training programs have an advantage over the competition. This is because the set equips sales teams with up-to-date techniques through innovative training tools. Improved decision-making, objection-handling, and strategic thinking skills lead to better customer interactions and ultimately higher sales targets, making companies more competitive in their markets (Törmä et al., 2022).

### 4. Global Applicability

The SalesPro Racer Simulation Game Set has strong international market potential, addressing the needs of both educational institutions and multinational companies. Its universal application in developing critical sales techniques and soft skills supports global adoption-particularly as organizations worldwide increasingly prioritize these competencies.

## Impacts on Environment and Society

The SalesPro Racer fosters positive societal and environmental outcomes:

1. **Skill Development:** Equips learners with critical soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, and resilience, contributing to personal and professional growth.
2. **Sustainability:** Reusable components reduce waste, ensuring the tool aligns with environmentally friendly practices. By addressing modern educational needs, this innovation prepares individuals for the challenges of globalization while promoting responsible resource use.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The SalesPro Racer represents a transformative approach to sales education, bridging the gap between theory and practice. It provides an engaging, effective, and sustainable solution for developing essential sales skills. To maximize its impact, it is recommended that:

1. Educational institutions integrate the tool into their curricula.
2. Corporate training programs adopt it to enhance employee performance.
3. Future iterations will incorporate digital components such as mobile applications and online learning modules to enhance accessibility and user engagement.

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