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Organizing for cross-selling: Do it right, or not at all

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ABSTRACT

This study draws on the structural perspective of organization theory to investigate how firms can organize for cross-selling. Specifically, it analyzes how configurations of organizational structures and steering instruments are associated with cross-selling performance. Results show that mechanistic and organic organizational cross-selling structures should be closely aligned with financial and nonfinancial steering instruments: while the interactions between mechanistic cross-selling structures and non-financial steering instruments are likely to result in high levels of cross-selling performance, organic cross-selling structures should be combined with financial steering via cross-selling incentives. Findings also reveal a U-shaped relationship between cross-selling performance and firm EBITDA. These results suggest that to enhance profits, firms should either organize for very high levels of cross-selling performance or refrain entirely from investing in cross-selling structures or steering instruments.

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1. Introduction

Cross-selling entails selling additional products and services to current customers (Kamakura, 2008). While this sales approach seems intuitive, simple, and appealing, many cross-selling initiatives actually fail (DeGabrielle, 2007), primarily because cross-selling requires salespeople from different business units to collaborate and share their resources, customer information, and other market intelligence (Duclos, Luzardo, & Mirza, 2007). Strong silo mentalities may lead many business units in large organizations to resist such collaborations and even sabotage firm-wide cross-selling initiatives (Malms & Schmitz, 2011) owing to fear of losing control and ownership of certain customers or product lines (Duclos, Luzardo, & Mirza, 2007).

Research has begun to provide important insights into cross-selling. In particular, prior studies have investigated salesperson factors such as self-efficacy, ability, and motivation as antecedents of individual cross-selling performance (Jasmand, Blazevic, & de Ruyter, 2012; Schmitz, Lee, & Lilien, 2014). Additionally, research has found that team factors (Schmitz, 2013), supervisor leadership style, and cross-selling incentives (Schmitz, Lee, & Lilien, 2014) can influence cross-selling performance. Thus, while previous research has established important cross-selling success factors at the individual and team levels, less clear is how firms can leverage factors at the organizational level, such as organizational structures and steering instruments, to improve cross-selling performance.

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Table 1

Overview of existing research fields and contributions of this study.

Authors (Year)	Theory	Investigated levels			Investigated structures and steering instruments	Dependent Variable
		Individual level	Team level	Org. level		
Research on B2C cross-selling ^a						
Jasmand, Blazevic, & de Ruyter, 2012	Ambidexterity theory Regulatory mode theory	✓				- Cross-selling behavior - Customer satisfaction - Sales performance - Efficiency
Patterson, Yu, & Kimpakorn, 2014	Social cognitive theory Social learning theory	✓		^b	Sales/service climate	Cross-selling performance
Research on B2B cross-selling ^a						
Schmitz, 2013	Social norm theory Reputation theory	✓	✓			Cross-selling performance
Schmitz, Lee, & Lilien, 2014	Cognitive evaluation theory Motivation crowding theory	✓		^c	Cross-selling incentives	Cross-selling performance
This study	Organizational theory (structural perspective)	✓	✓	✓	Mechanistic and organic cross-selling structures Financial and non-financial steering instruments	- Cross-selling performance - Firm EBITDA
 Contribution 1 Investigation of the interaction between organizational cross-selling structures and financial and non-financial steering instruments						Contribution 2 Identification of a non-linear relationship between cross-selling performance and profits

^a We focus on studies investigating intra-organizational cross-selling antecedents.^b Although the authors included sales/service climate as an antecedent to frontline employee service-sales performance, their analysis focus was not at the organizational level.^c Although the authors included cross-selling incentive as a contingency factor to cross-selling performance, their analysis focus was at the individual level.

This neglect offers an important research opportunity for two reasons. First, organizational structures can lessen resistance to cooperation across business-unit boundaries. Specifically, empirical evidence indicates that organizational structures can alter salespeople's silo mindset and provide clear guidelines that institutionalize collaboration across organizational units (Aaker, 2008). Second, steering instruments may facilitate employee behavior aligned with organizational objectives (Anderson & Oliver, 1987). For example, organizations can direct their business units toward achieving common organizational objectives by offering training or special incentives (Homburg, Jensen, & Hahn, 2012).

Against this background, this study focuses on investigating how organizational-level factors are associated with firms' cross-selling performance and how this cross-selling performance manifests in firm profits. We thereby address recent calls for organizational sales research (Cron, 2017) and advance the literature in at least two ways (Table 1).

First, we examine how mechanistic and organic cross-selling structures and firm steering instruments, along with their interactions, are related to cross-selling performance. To do so, we conducted a cross-industrial, multi-phase, and multi-source survey of 549 sales managers, the results of which emphasize the importance of considering cross-selling determinants at the organizational level. Specifically, organizational cross-selling determinants and their interactions increase the explained variance of cross-selling performance by 19.8 percentage points when we control for firm-related variables, market-related variables, and cross-selling antecedents identified by prior cross-selling research. Moreover, the study's findings provide firms with actionable guidance on how to organize for cross-selling. While mechanistic cross-selling structures are linked to highest cross-selling performance levels when combined with non-financial steering instruments, organic cross-selling structures are better combined with financial steering instruments. A post hoc analysis illustrates the relevance of these findings, showing, for example, that cross-selling performance may be almost four times higher if steering instruments and organizational structures are well aligned.

Second, this study is the first to investigate the relationship between cross-selling performance and firm profits (i.e., earnings before interest, tax, depreciation, and amortization, or EBITDA). Prior cross-selling research has either examined cross-selling performance as the final outcome variable (Patterson, Yu, & Kimpakorn, 2014; Schmitz, 2013; Schmitz, Lee, & Lilien, 2014) or focused on customer-specific outcomes, such as customer lifetime value (Kumar, George, & Pancras, 2008). We disentangle the relationship between cross-selling performance and firm EBITDA and, interestingly, find a U-shaped relationship. This finding emphasizes that, if a firm decides to improve its organization for cross-selling, the firm needs to aim for high levels of cross-selling performance. This recommendation emerges because, owing to U-shaped relationships, low or mediocre levels of cross-selling performance may actually result in lower firm EBITDA than conducting no cross-selling at all.

2. Theoretical background, conceptual framework, and constructs

2.1. Cross-selling and organization theory

In line with prior cross-selling research (Schmitz, 2013), we define “cross-selling” as the sale of products or services offered by the same firm but beyond salespeople’s area of responsibility. For example, if salespeople are exclusively responsible for the sale of product category A but sell product category B to their customers, any sales of category B represent cross-selling. Thus, cross-selling interconnects multiple areas of responsibility in a firm and therefore needs to overcome intra-organizational barriers. To do so, it needs to be managed holistically in the organization. Therefore, we investigate organizational cross-selling determinants. Drawing on organization theory, we examine the interaction of different forms of organizational structures with various steering instruments (Daft, 2015).

Within the frame of organization theory, a primary concept is the structural perspective (Burns & Stalker, 1961), which identifies mechanistic and organic structures as determinants of organizational performance (Eisenstadt, 1958). Mechanistic structures are characterized by rigidly defined tasks, high levels of hierarchy, and a strong focus on vertical communication and interactions (Ambrose & Schminke, 2003; Burns & Stalker, 1961; Daft, 2015). Thus, in more mechanistic organizations, management precisely defines processes and employees’ respective tasks and behaviors with the aim of ensuring that employees act in line with organizational objectives (Homburg & Fürst, 2005). By contrast, organic structures require flexibility and adaptation in decision making (Burns & Stalker, 1961). Hence, an organic structure is based on the assumption that employees know best from their expertise inside and outside of the company how to achieve specific organizational objectives. Thus, instead of defining strict guidelines, organic organizations provide an environment that facilitates employees’ achievement of the firm’s objectives (Slevin & Covin, 1997), for example by offering cross-hierarchical advice and appreciation (Ambrose & Schminke, 2003) or through fostering common values and norms (i.e., organizational culture) (Homburg & Fürst, 2005).

In general, research accepts that both mechanistic and organic organizational structures can exist simultaneously (Goffee & Scase, 1985; Homburg & Fürst, 2005) and that different degrees of these structures may also co-exist (Burns & Stalker, 1961).¹ However, the effectiveness of organizational structures depends on other organizational mechanisms such as *steering instruments* (Slevin & Covin, 1997). Whereas organizational cross-selling structures describe a firm’s general mindset of how to achieve its objectives, steering instruments are more operative measures an organization can employ (Jaworski, 1988). The performance impact of organizational structures and steering instruments is thus highly interdependent (Ouchi, 1977). Hence, identification of organizational cross-selling determinants requires investigation of organizational cross-selling structures, steering instruments, and their interdependence.

2.2. Conceptual framework and constructs

Fig. 1 illustrates our conceptual framework. We build on the structural perspective of organization theory, which emphasizes the focal role of organizational structures for performance outcomes (Eisenstadt, 1958). However, as the performance impact of organizational structures is interdependent with steering instruments (Ouchi, 1977), we conceptualize different forms of organizational cross-selling structures and various steering instruments as predictor variables and focus on their interactions’ relationship with cross-selling performance. Finally, we link cross-selling performance to firm EBITDA. Web Appendix B provides an overview of all variables, their conceptual definitions, items, and standardized item loadings.

2.2.1. Organizational cross-selling structures

We focus on mechanistic and organic cross-selling structures as predictor variables. Organizations applying mechanistic structures aim to increase their performance (e.g., cross-selling performance) by precisely defining employees’ respective tasks and behaviors (Burns & Stalker, 1961). We refer to such formally defined processes and employee behaviors as “guidelines” (Homburg & Fürst, 2005, p. 96). Thus, we define *mechanistic cross-selling structures* as the degree to which formal guidelines on cross-selling-related processes and behaviors exist, are clearly formulated, make sense, and are applicable.

In contrast, organizations applying organic structures aim to increase their performance by providing an environment that facilitates flexibility and adaptation in decision making because it assumes employees know best how to achieve specific objectives

¹ To verify that mechanistic and organic structures affect performance outcomes independently, we conducted an additional analysis that considers the interaction of these two constructs (see Web Appendix A). The results show that the interaction between mechanistic and organic structures is not related to cross-selling performance, nor does it change any other relationships in the model.

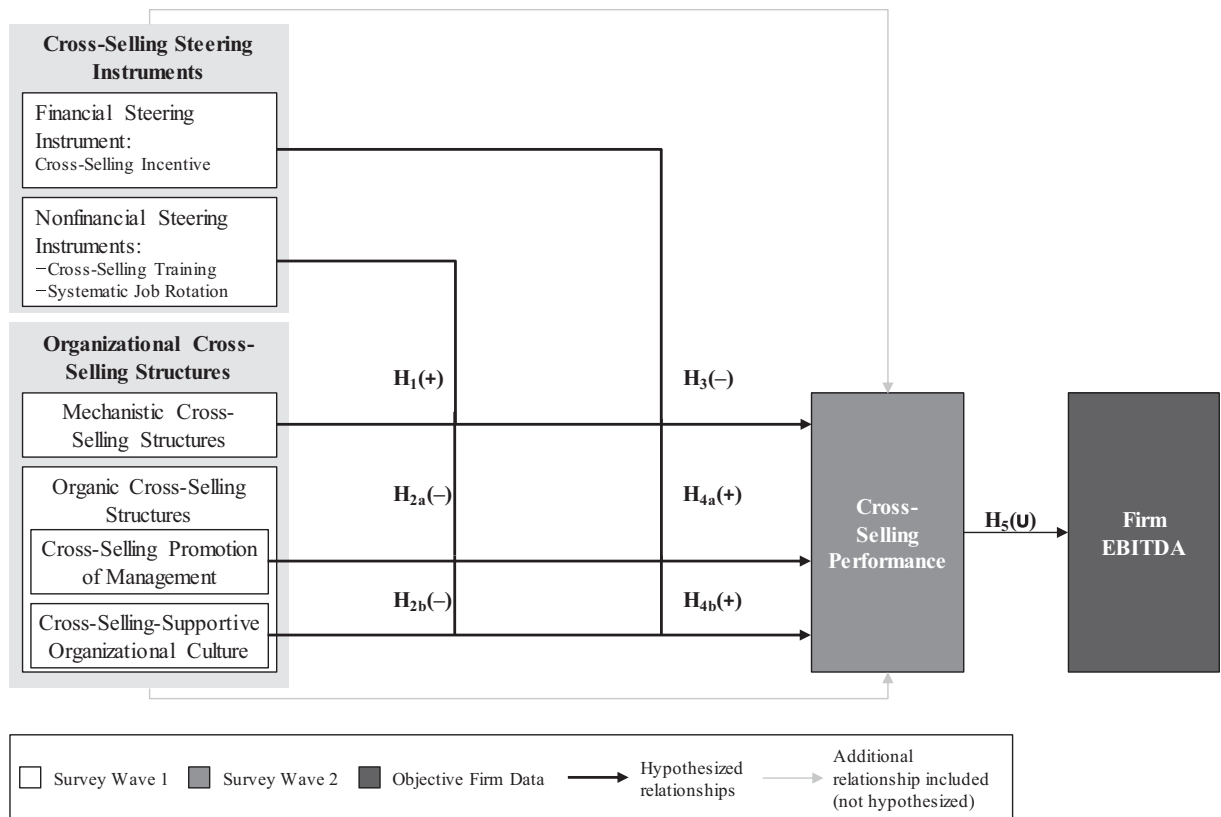


Fig. 1. The relationship of organizational determinants, cross-selling performance, and firm EBITDA.

(Slevin & Covin, 1997). As prior work shows, such a facilitative environment can be provided through cross-hierarchical communication (Ambrose & Schminke, 2003) and organizational culture (Homburg & Fürst, 2005). First, in an organic organization, management may support employees in their cross-selling activities by offering advice and appreciation (Ambrose & Schminke, 2003). Second, through its organizational culture, an organic organization may help employees adopt the organizational objective of cross-selling through shared values and norms (Homburg & Fürst, 2005). With this twofold notion of organic structures, we conceptualize organic cross-selling structures with two constructs: (1) cross-selling promotion by management (to capture the influence of hierarchical cross-selling communication) and (2) cross-selling-supportive organizational culture.

Cross-selling promotion by management refers to the extent to which organization supervisors influence sales force behavior by fostering cross-selling activities through commitment, support, and non-monetary appreciation (Hohenberg & Homburg, 2016). A *cross-selling-supportive organizational culture* is the degree to which organizational culture favors cross-selling. Prior research has identified four main dimensions related to this type of organizational culture. First, a cross-selling-supportive culture emphasizes collaborations across areas of responsibility (i.e., cross-business-unit orientation), for example by sharing relevant information (Schmitz, Lee, & Lilien, 2014). Second, in such an organizational culture, business units have a sense of belonging to one common organization (Podsakoff & Mackenzie, 1994). Third, such a culture contemplates customer orientation, as cross-selling requires identifying additional customer needs (Kumar, Venkatesan, & Reinartz, 2008). Fourth, a cross-selling-supportive organizational culture strengthens an orientation toward long-term customer relationships, as additional customer needs (i.e., cross-selling potentials) might arise over long time intervals (Li, Sun, & Montgomery, 2011).

2.2.2. Steering instruments

Further drawing on the structural perspective of organization theory, we investigate non-financial and financial steering instruments.² In particular, we consider the two non-financial steering instruments cross-selling training (Lassk, Ingram, Kraus, & Mascio, 2012) and systematic job rotation (Campion, Cheraskin, & Stevens, 1994). In line with prior research, we define *cross-selling training* as the extent to which sales training conveys explicit cross-selling competencies to the sales force (Lassk,

² We use the terms “(non-)financial” and “(non-)monetary” synonymously. A slight difference exists between steering instruments (e.g., Hohenberg & Homburg, 2016) and the commonly used term “rewards” (e.g., Lim, Ahearne, & Ham, 2009; Steenburgh & Ahearne, 2012). Specifically, steering instruments are “mechanisms that firms can employ to motivate their sales reps for desired activities” (Hohenberg & Homburg, 2016, p. 101), whereas rewards generally require a contingency of achieving a certain goal to have the reward granted (Zoltners, Sinha, & Lorimer, 2006). Thus, the term “steering instrument” is broader, as it includes rewards but also non-contingent mechanisms, such as training or systematic job rotation.

Ingram, Kraus, & Mascio, 2012). *Systematic job rotation* is the extent to which members of the sales force regularly switch their area of responsibility in the organization (Campion, Cheraskin, & Stevens, 1994). Finally, *cross-selling incentives* is the extent to which the sales force compensation system monetarily rewards cross-selling (Schmitz, Lee, & Lilien, 2014).

We focus on these steering instruments for three reasons. First, they derive from the structural perspective of organization theory (Burns & Stalker, 1961). More precisely, organizational structures aim to guide employees by influencing their behavior and objectives. Therefore, steering instruments that entail learning mechanisms such as training and job rotation (Atefi, Ahearne, Maxham III, Donovan, & Carlson, 2018) and instruments that make achievement of organizational objectives more attractive through incentives are important for organizational structures' effectiveness (Jaworski, 1988). Second, these steering instruments fit particularly well with the research subject. Sales training improves cross-selling because it prepares sales forces to move "beyond task-related knowledge, skills, and abilities" (Lassk et al., 2012, p. 141) and thus to be able to conduct cross-selling. Systematic job rotation is related to cross-selling because it familiarizes the sales force with products from diverse areas of responsibility, resulting in a greater inclination to engage in cross-selling (Schmitz, Lee, & Lilien, 2014). Incentives are important for cross-selling because they can motivate sales forces to sell products beyond their area of responsibility (Schmitz, Lee, & Lilien, 2014). Moreover, these three steering instruments are often managed at the organizational level to align all sales activities with the organization's objectives (Guenzi, Baldauf, & Panagopoulos, 2014). Thus, they are particularly important when examining organizational cross-selling antecedents. Third, the three steering instruments in this framework are highly actionable, as firms may apply steering instruments in the short run to support existing organizational structures (Zoltners, Sinha, & Lorimer, 2012).

2.2.3. Dependent variables

The structural perspective of organization theory identifies determinants of organizational performance (Eisenstadt, 1958). In this regard, we view cross-selling performance and firm EBITDA as performance outcomes. We define *cross-selling performance* as the extent to which organizations exploit their potential to sell additional products to their customers (Schmitz, 2013; Schmitz, Lee, & Lilien, 2014). Additional products are products or services that customers need that are offered by other units within the firm (Schmitz, Lee, & Lilien, 2014). We focus on *firm EBITDA* as the ultimate dependent variable of this study to demonstrate how cross-selling performance is related to overall firm performance.

2.2.4. Control variables

Appropriate controls are important in causal models to exclude alternative explanations for identified relationships (Antonakis, Bendahan, Jacquart, & Lalive, 2010). Thus, we account for factors that may be related to cross-selling performance and firm EBITDA. Specifically, we control for three firm-related characteristics: industry, number of employees, and the sales share of products (vs. services) (Netessine, Savin, & Xiao, 2006). We also include three market-related factors (Jaworski, 1988): demand instability, competitive intensity, and technological turbulence. Further, as prior cross-selling research has identified individual salesperson characteristics as important cross-selling performance determinants (Schmitz, 2013; Schmitz, Lee, & Lilien, 2014), to estimate cross-selling performance we control for salesperson cross-selling motivation, cross-selling ability, and customer orientation as well as for the existence of key account management structures.

3. Hypotheses development

This study investigates how organizations should align organizational cross-selling structures and steering instruments to enhance cross-selling performance and firm EBITDA. Therefore, the hypotheses focus first on the interaction between organizational cross-selling structures (i.e., mechanistic cross-selling structures, cross-selling promotion by management, and a cross-selling-supportive organizational culture) and steering instruments (i.e., cross-selling training, systematic job rotation, and cross-selling incentives) and their relationship with cross-selling performance. Second, we develop a hypothesis for the relationship between cross-selling performance and firm EBITDA.

With regard to the direct relationships of organizational cross-selling structures and steering instruments with cross-selling performance, we build on prior research providing rich evidence that these organizational determinants are important drivers of various facets of performance (Ambrose & Schminke, 2003; Burns & Stalker, 1961; Campion, Cheraskin, & Stevens, 1994; Lassk, Ingram, Kraus, & Mascio, 2012; Zoltners, Sinha, & Lorimer, 2012). Specifically, for organizational cross-selling structures, we expect that the guidelines entailed in mechanistic cross-selling structures result in higher cross-selling performance, because they precisely define the cross-selling activities, thus guiding the sales force to higher cross-selling performance. We further assume that cross-selling promotion by management and a cross-selling-supportive organizational culture are positively related to cross-selling performance, as these organic cross-selling structures facilitate employees' autonomous behavior regarding the organizational objective of cross-selling. For cross-selling steering instruments, we anticipate a positive relationship to cross-selling performance, as these instruments increase the focus of the sales force on cross-selling (Anderson & Oliver, 1987; Jaworski, 1988; Ortega, 2001). However, as prior research has closely investigated these relationships, we do not develop hypotheses for them.

3.1. Interaction between organizational cross-selling structures and steering instruments

Drawing from previous sales research (Anderson & Oliver, 1987; Hohenberg & Homburg, 2016; Jaworski, 1988), we sort steering instruments into two categories: non-financial and financial. We first derive hypotheses for the interaction between

organizational structures and non-financial steering instruments and then delineate hypotheses for the interaction between organizational structures with a financial steering instrument.

3.1.1. Interaction between organizational structures and non-financial steering instruments

We expect that the interaction between mechanistic cross-selling structures and non-financial steering instruments will improve cross-selling performance. Specifically, according to the structural perspective of organization theory, organizations with mechanistic structures define formal guidelines employees should follow to achieve high performance (Burns & Stalker, 1961). In addition, prior sales research has found that training and job rotation help employees attain specific knowledge about organizational behavior, the organization, and its products (Campion, Cheraskin, & Stevens, 1994; Lassk, Ingram, Kraus, & Mascio, 2012). Thus, these learning mechanisms may help inculcate behaviors and processes defined by mechanistic guidelines (Atefi, Ahearn, Maxham III, Donovan, & Carlson, 2018). These notions suggest that the interaction of mechanistic structures with non-financial steering instruments positively influences performance outcomes, because these structures and steering instruments help guide employees to a common approach on how to achieve specific outcomes.

In a cross-selling context, we expect mechanistic cross-selling structures to be positively related to cross-selling performance because these structures provide sales forces with actionable guidelines on cross-selling processes and suitable behaviors (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Homburg & Fürst, 2005). We further anticipate that non-financial steering instruments (i.e., training and systematic job rotation) will be positively associated with cross-selling performance because they enable sales forces to conduct cross-selling. With regard to the interaction, in cross-selling training the application of mechanistic guidelines may be repetitively practiced and cross-selling competencies and awareness may be imparted to the sales force (Lassk, Ingram, Kraus, & Mascio, 2012). Additionally, systematic job rotation implies that sales forces gather extensive knowledge about many areas of responsibility (e.g., about the product portfolio) (Campion, Cheraskin, & Stevens, 1994), which may also improve their ability to follow cross-selling guidelines. For example, if cross-selling guidelines require that sales forces present many products from other areas of responsibility during sales presentations, sales forces will be more likely to comply if they have profound knowledge about other areas of responsibility (Schmitz, 2013; Schmitz, Lee, & Lilien, 2014). Thus, we propose the following:

H1. The interaction of cross-selling training and systematic job rotation with mechanistic cross-selling structures is positively related to cross-selling performance.

We further argue that the interaction between non-financial steering instruments and organic cross-selling structures will weaken cross-selling performance. More precisely, organic structures positively affect performance by providing an environment that facilitates beneficial employee behavior (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Slevin & Covin, 1997). Thus, by applying organic structures an organization trusts its employees to know best how to achieve organizational objectives. However, training educates employees on how to behave in specific situations (Lassk, Ingram, Kraus, & Mascio, 2012). Accordingly, employees may believe that they have less discretion in achieving a specific objective, lowering the autonomy they have in organic structures (Jaworski, 1988). Moreover, job rotation regularly exposes employees to areas of responsibility with varying tasks and working environments (Campion, Cheraskin, & Stevens, 1994; Ortega, 2001), and recurrently changing jobs may force employees to work their way into their new positions, making the adoption of organizational objectives less important to them (Jaworski, 1988; Lee, Park, & Koo, 2015). These notions suggest that the interaction between organic structures and non-financial steering instruments will negatively influence performance outcomes, because these structures and instruments represent a dissonant approach on how to attain high performance.

We adapt these rationales to the cross-selling context. We assume that organic cross-selling structures are positively related to cross-selling performance. Sales forces identify with the organizational objective of cross-selling and become sensitized to it, thus engaging in cross-selling beneficial behavior (Burns & Stalker, 1961). However, cross-selling training teaches sales forces specific behaviors (Lassk, Ingram, Kraus, & Mascio, 2012). Thus, in conflict with organic cross-selling structures, sales forces may believe that they have less cross-selling autonomy (Gagné & Deci, 2005). In addition, members of a sales force who switch their areas of responsibility regularly through systematic job rotation must focus on getting to know the product of the focal business unit to be able to conduct sales activities with the main products, making cross-selling a secondary priority to them (Campion, Cheraskin, & Stevens, 1994; Ortega, 2001). Thus:

H2a. The interaction of cross-selling training and systematic job rotation with cross-selling promotion by management is negatively related to cross-selling performance.

H2b. The interaction of cross-selling training and systematic job rotation with a cross-selling-supportive organizational culture is negatively related to cross-selling performance.

3.1.2. Interaction between organizational structures and financial steering instruments

We presume that the interaction between cross-selling incentives and mechanistic cross-selling structures will be negatively related to cross-selling performance. According to the structural perspective of organization theory, the positive relationship between mechanistic structures and performance stems from detailed guidelines that determine processes and behaviors that favor attaining organizational objectives (Burns & Stalker, 1961). Moreover, financial steering instruments are positively linked to performance outcomes because employees are incentivized to accomplish organizational objectives (Oliver & Anderson,

1994). Thus, whereas mechanistic structures determine how the sales force should behave to achieve a desired outcome, financial steering instruments reward solely for attainment of the outcome. Therefore, these structures and steering instruments convey a different approach on organizational performance management.

In a cross-selling context, we expect that mechanistic cross-selling guidelines direct sales forces to accomplish high cross-selling performance by determining exactly how to behave when conducting cross-selling (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Homburg & Fürst, 2005). By contrast, we anticipate that cross-selling incentives are positively related to cross-selling performance because they motivate sales forces to find their own way to achieve cross-selling targets. Thus, cross-selling incentives might actually undermine the impact of mechanistic cross-selling structures. For instance, owing to cross-selling incentives, sales forces may deviate from mechanistic cross-selling guidelines' recommended behavior, because they could assume they know better how to achieve cross-selling targets. As a result, we expect cross-selling incentives to interact negatively with mechanistic cross-selling structures because they represent a dissonant attempt of how to increase cross-selling performance.

H3. The interaction between cross-selling incentives and mechanistic cross-selling structures is negatively related to cross-selling performance.

By contrast, we expect cross-selling incentives to positively interact with organic cross-selling structures. The structural perspective of organization theory suggests that organic structures provide an environment that facilitates employees' discovery of their own ways of accomplishing organizational objectives (Slevin & Covin, 1997). Similarly, financial steering instruments (i.e., incentives) are positively linked to organizational performance because employees receive rewards for enhancing that performance (Oliver & Anderson, 1994). Thus, organic structures and financial steering instruments are likely to be consonant organizational performance management approaches.

Adapting these rationales, we propose that organic cross-selling structures foster cross-selling performance by providing a cross-selling facilitative environment (i.e., cross-selling promotion by management and cross-selling supportive organizational culture) (Slevin & Covin, 1997). Moreover, we anticipate that cross-selling incentives will further enhance the drive induced by organic cross-selling structures. We hold this expectation because both organic structures and financial steering instruments motivate sales forces for higher cross-selling performances by enhancing the importance of the result while also encouraging sales forces to choose the most appropriate behavior themselves. Thus, we expect the combination of organic cross-selling structures and cross-selling incentives to be positively related to cross-selling performance.

H4a. The interaction between cross-selling incentives and cross-selling promotion by management is positively related to cross-selling performance.

H4b. The interaction between cross-selling incentives and a cross-selling-supportive organizational culture is positively related to cross-selling performance.

3.2. Relationship between cross-selling performance and firm EBITDA

We expect that the costs related to cross-selling lead to a negative relationship between cross-selling performance and firm EBITDA up to a certain threshold. After this threshold, however, we expect the cross-selling-implied sales increase to outweigh its costs. More precisely, for low levels of cross-selling performance, we anticipate a negative relationship to firm EBITDA because being able to conduct cross-selling successfully and achieve a certain cross-selling performance requires high ongoing investments. For example, updating and instructing sales forces on changing product portfolios, preventing silo mentalities, and gathering customer information to identify cross-selling opportunities represent continuous costs (Duclos, Luzardo, & Mirza, 2007). Thus, for low cross-selling performance levels, costs are likely to outweigh the higher turnover from cross-selling (Kamakura, 2008).

By contrast, for high levels of cross-selling performance, we expect a positive relationship to firm EBITDA. For instance, an established cross-selling infrastructure and a cross-selling mindset do not require high investments to set additional cross-selling triggers (Watts & Dodds, 2007). Thus, the marginal costs of cross-selling performance decrease and are outweighed by the turnover increase realized through cross-selling.

In summary, we argue that up to a certain cross-selling performance level, cross-selling costs exceed increased sales, resulting in a low firm EBITDA. After that point, the marginal costs for cross-selling performance are lower than the implied turnover increase. Thus, we propose the following:

H5. A business unit's cross-selling performance has a U-shaped relationship with firm EBITDA.

4. Method

4.1. Research setting

To analyze the interaction of organizational cross-selling structures and steering instruments with cross-selling performance, we conducted a large-scale **cross-sectional survey**. **Survey** research has important advantages for investigating complex intra-organizational phenomena such as cross-selling (Wittink, 2004), as surveys can provide insights into the practices of business-to-business (B2B) organizations (Hulland, Baumgartner, & Smith, 2018; Lilien, 2016) and, accordingly, into all aspects of the organizational research subject (Wang, Li, Ross, & Craighead, 2013). **As a consequence, prior organizational research suggests that surveys with carefully selected key respondents and multi-item scales can outperform other research designs** suited for cross-

sectional investigations in terms of reliability and validity (Jap & Ganesan, 2000; Kumar, Stern, & Achrol, 1992). Thus, we believe that survey research is an appropriate approach to examine our research questions.

4.2. Data collection

Consistent with our goal to assess cross-selling in an industry-overarching context, we conducted a survey of sales managers across various B2B industries comprising both manufacturing firms (Schmitz, 2013; Schmitz, Lee, & Lilien, 2014) and various B2B wholesalers and service firms. To collect our data, we used a financial database to identify 3898 B2B German firms. We regard these firms as the relevant survey population, covering six industry sectors (Table 2) according to the statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community (NACE Rev. 2). Through a business social network, we were able to identify 3125 sales managers from these firms whom we invited to participate in two survey waves. The first questionnaire collected information about all independent variables and controls, and the second questionnaire focused on the dependent variable cross-selling performance. We asked these sales managers to answer questions in relation to their organizational business unit or, if the organization was not sub-divided into specialized business units, the entire organization (Krush, Sohi, & Saini, 2015). To increase key informant reliability, we contacted two sales managers from every business unit (Homburg, Klarmann, Reimann, & Schilke, 2012). As an incentive, we provided a report on the study results.

We received 549 usable questionnaires from sales managers for a response rate of 18%. Matching these datasets, we obtained questionnaires in two waves from two respondents for 204 business units. Table 2 presents the detailed structure of the sample, including business-unit and key-informant characteristics.

Moreover, to investigate the relationships between cross-selling performance and firm EBITDA, we gathered objective information on the firm EBITDA of the investigated business units from a financial database. This database provided firm EBITDA information for 199 of the 204 business units.

Table 2
Sample structure.

	Sample
Industry of business units	
Manufacturing	
Chemicals and chemical products	18%
Rubber and plastic products	0.5%
Non-metallic mineral products	20%
Metal products	0.5%
Computer, electronic and optical products	5%
Electrical equipment	10%
Machinery and equipment	3%
Motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers	3%
Wholesalers	28%
Information, communication, and financial activities	5%
Professional, scientific, and technical activities	3%
Administrative and support service activities	1%
Other service activities	1%
Number of employees within the business units	
<10	10%
10–24	14%
25–49	23%
50–99	12%
100–199	11%
200–499	13%
>499	16%
Annual revenue of the business units	
<5 million €	8%
5 million €–<10 million €	9%
10 million €–<15 million €	8%
15 million €–<20 million €	7%
20 million €–<50 million €	23%
50 million €–<100 million €	11%
100 million €–<150 million €	10%
>150 million €	22%
Tenure of the key respondents within the firm	
<2 years	9%
2–4 years	24%
5–9 years	14%
10–19	29%
20–29	19%
>29	5%

4.3. Measurement

In line with standard scale development procedures (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988), we first extensively reviewed the relevant literature for designing the survey questionnaires and then developed all items by adapting established scales and assessing these scales in a pretest. We used 7-point Likert scales to measure most items (Jarvis, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2003) and distributed both questionnaires to 10 academic experts in marketing and sales management and representatives of 23 firms from different industries. To improve the questionnaires, we adjusted the scale items in line with their comments.

4.3.1. Organizational cross-selling structures

In line with our conceptualization, we used two types of variables to measure organizational cross-selling structures: reflective constructs and formative indexes. Specifically, all organizational cross-selling structures encompass multiple aspects. Mechanistic cross-selling structures are a composite of guidelines on cross-selling-related behavior and guidelines on cross-selling-related processes toward customers. Management commitment, management appreciation, and management support are facets of cross-selling promotion by management. Finally, a cross-selling-supportive organizational culture is a composite of cross-business-unit orientation, one-firm orientation, customer orientation of the business unit, and long-term sales orientation.

With regard to the measurement, mechanistic cross-selling structures and a cross-selling-supportive organizational culture fulfill the requirements for a formative construct measurement: indicator collinearity and external validity (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001). To test for indicator collinearity, we analyze the highest squared correlation of the reflective constructs that form mechanistic cross-selling structures and cross-selling-supportive organizational culture. The low values of 0.15 ($p < .01$) and 0.29 ($p < .01$) indicate that the formative indices contain no redundant information (Homburg, Jensen et al., 2012). We assess external validity by correlating the reflective constructs of each formative index with an external variable that logically relates to the reflective constructs. As we expect mechanistic cross-selling structures to be related to cross-selling ability, we correlate both first-order reflective constructs with this variable. Assuming that a cross-selling-supportive organizational culture increases employees' motivation for cross-selling, we correlate all first-order components of this index with cross-selling motivation. All correlations are highly significant ($p < .01$), indicating external validity (Dillon, 2001).

By contrast, the three aspects of cross-selling promotion by management—management commitment, management appreciation, and management support—are conceptually more closely related and thus represent a reflective construct (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2018). Accordingly, the items measuring cross-selling promotion by management highly correlate, and their item loadings, average variances extracted (AVEs), and composite reliability surpass common thresholds (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). Thus, we specify this variable as a reflective construct and measure it with 12 items adapted from Churchill, Ford, and Walker (1974).

4.3.2. Steering instruments

Consistent with our conceptualization and prior research, we apply reflective construct measurement for the variables cross-selling training (Lytle, Hom, & Mokwa, 1998), systematic job rotation (Jansen, Van Den Bosch, & Volberda, 2005), and cross-selling incentives (Schmitz, Lee, & Lilien, 2014). To assess cross-selling training, we adjusted four items from the scale of Lytle, Hom, and Mokwa (1998). We measured systematic job rotation with four items from the scale of Jansen, Van Den Bosch, and Volberda (2005). To measure cross-selling incentives, we extended the scale from Schmitz, Lee, and Lilien (2014) to four items.

4.3.3. Dependent variables and controls

We measured cross-selling performance as a reflective construct with four items adapted from Schmitz, Lee, and Lilien (2014). Moreover, we collected firm EBITDA from a financial database.

With regard to controls, we measured the salesperson-related variables cross-selling motivation (Sujan, Weitz, & Kumar, 1994), cross-selling ability (Schmitz, 2013), and customer orientation of the salesperson (Saxe & Weitz, 1982) as reflective constructs with four items each. We further measured the market-related controls demand instability, competitive intensity, and technological turbulence as reflective constructs with three items each (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). Moreover, as a binary firm-related control variable, we included whether the business units had a key account management structure and also used metric variables measuring the number of employees and the sales share of products (vs. service). Finally, we controlled for industry effects by means of objective information on the respective firm's industry, which we collected from a financial database.

4.3.4. Assessment of reflective measures

We conducted a confirmatory factor analysis using STATA 15 and computed goodness-of-fit measures for all reflective constructs. The results show that nearly all standardized item loadings are above the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Bagozzi & Baumgartner, 1994) (Web Appendix B).³ In addition, all our constructs meet the common thresholds for Cronbach's alpha (>0.70), composite reliability (>0.70), and AVE (>0.50) (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012) (Table 3). Finally, the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion supports discriminant validity for all constructs (Table 3).

³ The constructs guidelines on cross-selling-related processes, demand instability, competitive intensity, and customer orientation of the salesperson each have one item that provides a standardized item loading between 0.62 and 0.69. We regard these small deviations as still acceptable, considering that all other goodness-of-fit measures are well above the common threshold.

Table 3
Descriptive statistics and correlations.

Variable	M	SD	CR	AVE	CA	AD _M	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. Firm EBITDA ^{a, c}	106.00	118.89	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.																
2. CS performance	3.04	1.22	0.94	0.80	0.94	1.05	−0.23**	0.89															
3. Mechanistic CS structures ^b	3.56	1.19	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	0.92	−0.09	0.40**	N.A.														
4. CS promotion by management	3.53	1.66	0.98	0.81	0.98	1.48	−0.21**	0.51**	0.45**	0.90													
5. CS supportive org. culture ^b	5.70	0.80	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	0.60	−0.04	0.30**	0.33**	0.47**	N.A.												
6. CS training	3.20	1.63	0.96	0.85	0.96	1.18	−0.34**	0.57**	0.53**	0.63**	0.30**	0.92											
7. Systematic job-rotation	2.72	1.39	0.89	0.67	0.89	1.21	0.14	0.17*	0.19**	0.27**	0.05	0.17*	0.82										
8. CS incentives	2.15	1.44	0.92	0.74	0.92	1.09	−0.23**	0.41**	0.45**	0.52**	0.23**	0.58**	0.25**	0.86									
9. Demand instability	3.96	1.20	0.79	0.56	0.79	1.06	−0.12	0.15*	0.15*	0.11	0.13	0.14*	0.04	0.14*	0.75								
10. Competitive intensity	5.68	1.09	0.85	0.66	0.83	1.05	−0.25**	0.04	0.17*	0.16*	0.17*	0.13	0.00	0.07	0.39**	0.81							
11. Technological turbulence	4.30	1.49	0.85	0.66	0.85	1.15	−0.33**	0.08	0.07	0.12	0.08	0.23**	0.16*	0.25**	0.25**	0.15*	0.81						
12. CS motivation of the salesperson	4.10	1.46	0.89	0.67	0.89	1.26	−0.22**	0.54**	0.44**	0.60**	0.58**	0.55**	0.19**	0.46**	0.10	0.09	0.13	0.82					
13. CS ability of the salesperson	3.13	1.46	0.94	0.78	0.93	1.38	−0.29**	0.57**	0.47**	0.56**	0.41**	0.56**	0.18*	0.55**	0.16*	0.05	0.22**	0.73**	0.88				
14. Customer orientation of the salesperson	6.00	0.69	0.89	0.61	0.89	0.68	0.18*	0.11	0.22**	0.18**	0.47**	0.10	−0.09	0.16*	0.09	0.10	0.00	0.34**	0.26**	0.78			
15. Sales share of products (vs. services) ^a	76.20	31.10	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	0.40**	−0.23**	0.01	−0.20**	−0.15*	−0.15*	0.01	−0.21**	−0.18**	−0.08	−0.26**	−0.18*	−0.21**	−0.07	N.A.		
16. Number of employees BU ^d	8.70	40.95	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	−0.09	−0.11	−0.05	−0.06	−0.12	0.06	−0.02	0.00	−0.08	−0.08	0.08	−0.02	−0.07	0.00	0.00	N.A.	
17. Number of employees firm ^{a, e}	39.15	66.95	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	0.66**	−0.09	0.03	0.03	0.06	−0.14*	0.17*	−0.09	0.07	0.16*	0.04	−0.08	−0.13	0.12	0.10	0.05	N.A.

CS = cross-selling, M = Mean, SD = standard deviation, CR = composite reliability, CA = Cronbach's alpha, AD_M = second respondents' average deviation from the mean: AD_M ≤ 1.2 indicates high agreement (Burke & Dunlap, 2002), N.A. = not applicable.

The square roots of the AVE are on the diagonal.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

^a Single item.

^b Formative construct measurement.

^c In €10,000,000.

^d In 100s.

^e In 1000s.

Table 4

Hypotheses testing: relationships of organizational cross-selling structures and steering instruments with cross-selling performance.

	DV: Cross-selling performance				
	Model 1	p-Value	Model 2	p-Value	
Constant	3.12***	.00	3.37***	.00	
Main effects					
Mechanistic CS structures			0.17**	.01	
CS promotion by management			0.06	.16	
CS supportive organizational culture			−0.07	.27	
CS training			0.17***	.00	
Systematic job rotation			−0.01	.42	
CS incentives			0.20***	.00	
Interaction effects					
Mechanistic CS structures × CS training			0.22***	.00	H1 ✓
Mechanistic CS structures × systematic job rotation			0.11**	.01	
CS promotion by management × CS training			−0.09***	.00	H2a ✓
CS promotion by management × systematic job rotation			−0.12***	.00	
CS supportive organizational culture × CS training			−0.12*	.05	H2b (✓)
CS supportive organizational culture × systematic job rotation			0.10*	.07	
Mechanistic CS structures × CS incentives			−0.25***	.00	H3 ✓
CS promotion by management × CS incentives			−0.04	.21	H4a (ns)
CS supportive organizational culture × CS incentives			0.18**	.04	H4b ✓
Controls					
CS motivation of the salesperson	0.23***	.00	0.08	.12	
CS ability of the salesperson	0.31***	.00	0.20***	.00	
Customer orientation of the salesperson	−0.18*	.06	−0.13	.13	
Demand instability	0.06	.17	0.07	.11	
Competitive intensity	−0.01	.44	−0.08	.12	
Technological turbulence	−0.04	.24	−0.10**	.02	
Number of employees	−0.00	.16	−0.00**	.02	
Sales share of products (vs. services)	−0.01***	.01	−0.01***	.00	
Industry effects ^a					
Wholesalers	−0.05	.38	−0.19	.11	
Information, communication, and financial act.	−0.55	.06	−0.79**	.01	
Professional, scientific, and technical act.	−0.57	.08	−0.25	.24	
Administrative and support service act.	−1.01	.08	−0.92*	.07	
Other service activities	0.10	.45	0.18	.39	
Key account management structure	Included		Included		
Observations	204		204		
R ²	40.38%		62.05%		
Adjusted R ²	35.96%		55.72%		

DV = dependent variable; CS = cross-selling; one-tailed *p*-values.

H ✓ = supported hypothesis, H (✓) = partially supported hypothesis; H (ns) = hypothesis not supported.

^a Manufacturing is the baseline.*** *p* < .01.** *p* < .05.* *p* < .10.

5. Results

5.1. Analytical procedure

In line with prior research (Hayati, Atefi, & Ahearne, 2018), we divided our empirical investigations into two analyses. First, we investigated the interaction of organizational structures and steering instruments with cross-selling performance at the business-unit level. Second, we switched the level of analysis and examined the relationship between business-unit cross-selling performance and firm EBITDA.

To test our hypotheses, we conducted ordinary least squares⁴ (OLS) regressions using STATA 15. We mean-centered all predictor variables to facilitate interpretation of the results (Hofmann, 1997). We first estimated Model 1, which examines the relationship between the control variables and the dependent variable cross-selling performance. We then estimated Model 2, which includes organizational structures and steering instruments and their interaction effects (i.e., the product of the mean-centered interacting variables), along with the control variables. In Model 3, we investigated the relationship between business-unit

⁴ To assess whether OLS is the appropriate estimator, we tested standard OLS assumptions (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2018). The results reveal no indications of heteroskedasticity, multicollinearity, or model specification errors. We elaborate on the test results in Web Appendix C.

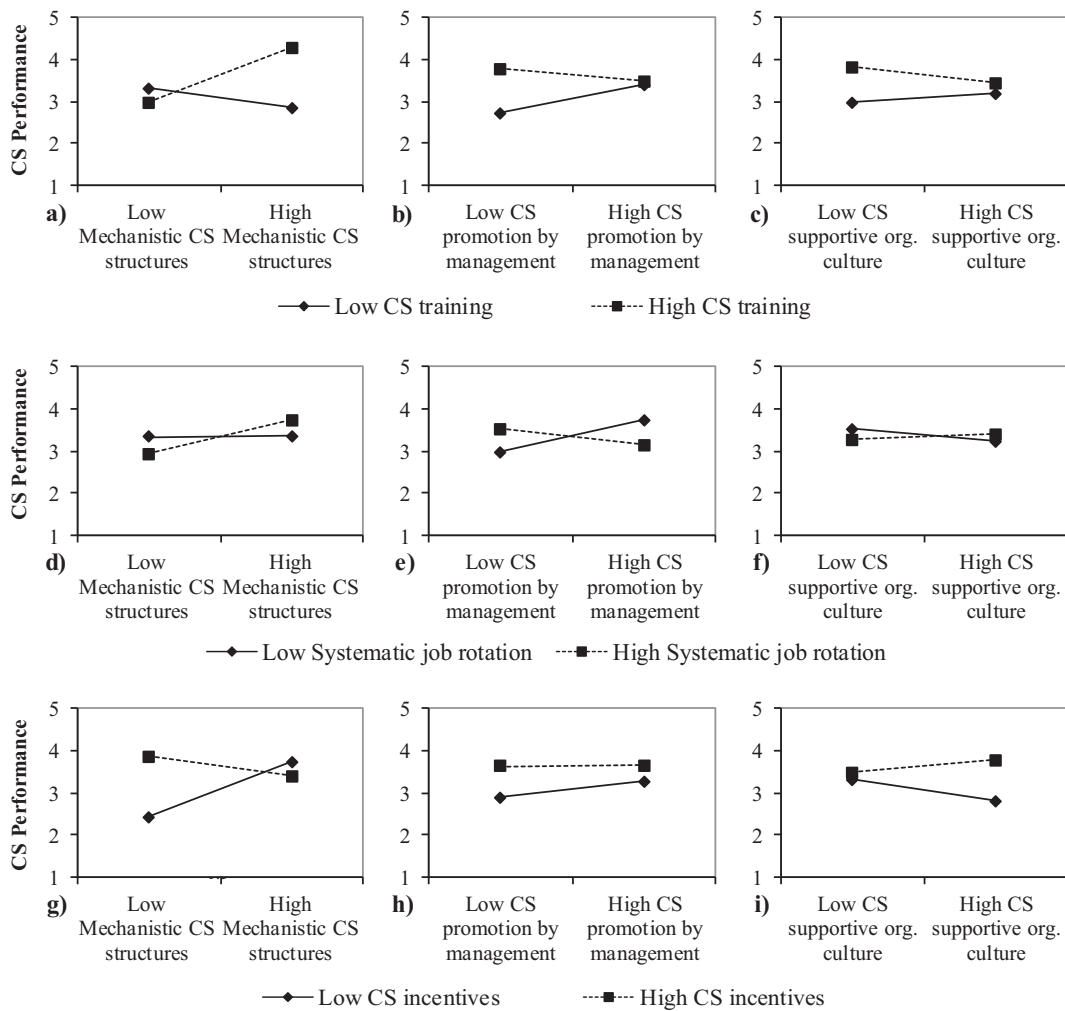


Fig. 2. Interactions of organizational cross-selling structures and steering instruments.

cross-selling performance and firm EBITDA and again included market- and firm-specific controls. Web Appendix D shows the detailed model specifications.

5.2. Hypotheses testing

The results reveal support for the hypothesized relationships (Table 4 and Fig. 2). Specifically, we hypothesized that the interaction of non-financial and financial steering instruments with organizational structures would be significantly related to cross-selling performance and that cross-selling performance would be related to firm EBITDA.

Regarding non-financial steering instruments, the results show that the interactions between mechanistic cross-selling structures and cross-selling training ($\beta_7 = 0.22, p < .01$) and systematic job rotation ($\beta_8 = 0.11, p < .05$) are positively related to cross-selling performance (Fig. 2a and d). These results provide support for H1. By contrast, the interactions of both cross-selling training ($\beta_9 = -0.09, p < .01$) and systematic job rotation ($\beta_{10} = -0.12, p < .01$) with cross-selling promotion by management are negatively linked to cross-selling performance (Fig. 2b and e). Thus, H2a is supported. We further assumed that the interaction between non-financial steering instruments and the second organic dimension, cross-selling-supportive organizational culture, would have a negative relationship to cross-selling performance (H2b). The results show partial support for this hypothesis. Specifically, H2b is supported with regard to cross-selling training ($\beta_{11} = -0.12, p < .10$) (Fig. 2c), but the results reveal a positive interaction of systematic job rotation and a cross-selling-supportive organizational culture with cross-selling performance ($\beta_{12} = 0.10, p < .10$) (Fig. 2f). This result may occur because systematic job rotation gives sales forces impressions of many areas of responsibilities but does not steer them toward explicit cross-selling behavior. Thus, sales forces stay autonomous, which is in line with the cross-selling-increasing mechanism of a cross-selling-supportive organizational culture.

Regarding the financial steering instrument, results indicate a significant negative association of the interaction of mechanistic cross-selling structures and cross-selling incentives with cross-selling performance ($\beta_{13} = -0.25, p < .01$), in support of H3

Table 5

Hypotheses testing: relationship between cross-selling performance and firm EBITDA.

	DV: Firm EBITDA	
	Model 3	p-Value
Constant	112.52***	.00
Cross-selling performance	−59.98***	.00
Cross-selling performance ²	8.69***	.00
Controls		
Demand instability	1.51	.35
Competitive intensity	−10.55**	.01
Technological turbulence	−8.49***	.00
Number of employees	0.00***	.00
Sales share of products (vs. services)	1.71***	.00
Industry effects ^a		
Wholesalers	42.70	.23
Information, communication, and financial activities	−85.82***	.00
Professional, scientific, and technical activities	49.20**	.03
Administrative and support service activities	−46.72**	.04
Other service activities	−7.49*	.45
Observations	199	
R ²	79.46%	
Adjusted R ²	78.13%	

DV = dependent variable; Firm EBITDA in €10,000,000.

^a Manufacturing is the baseline.*** $p < .01$.** $p < .05$.* $p < .10$.

(Fig. 2g). Consistent with H4b, we find a positive link between the interaction of a cross-selling-supportive organizational culture and cross-selling incentives with cross-selling performance ($\beta_{15} = 0.18$, $p < .05$) (Fig. 2i). Although we expected a positive relationship between the interaction of cross-selling incentives and cross-selling promotion by management with cross-selling performance (H4a), our results reveal no support for this hypothesis ($\beta_{14} = -0.04$) (Fig. 2h). Thus, sales forces' identification with cross-selling related to cross-selling promotion by management may not be target-oriented enough to be strengthened by cross-selling incentives.

Finally, we expected a U-shaped relationship between cross-selling performance and firm EBITDA (Table 5). To test this relationship, we follow the three-step process of Haans, Pieters, and He (2016). First, a significant, negative relationship between cross-selling performance and firm EBITDA (β_1) must be accompanied by a significant, positive relationship between the squared term of cross-selling performance and firm EBITDA (β_2). Our results reveal these relationships ($\beta_1 = -59.98$, $p < .01$; $\beta_2 = 8.69$, $p < .01$). Second, the slope at the lower bound of the cross-selling performance range must be negative and significant while the slope at the upper bound must be positive and significant. Again, our results show support for these relationships. Specifically, using the Fieller (1954) method, we find a slope of -42.60 ($p < .01$) at the lower bound and a slope of 44.29 ($p < .01$) at the upper bound. Third, the turning point of the relationship needs to be located within the cross-selling performance range. Setting the first derivative of the model equation to zero confirms this requirement. Specifically, the equation's turning point is located at $-\beta_1/2\beta_2$, which is 3.45 (the 90% Fieller interval for this turning point is between 3.12 and 3.86). Because we measured cross-selling performance on a 7-point scale, this turning point lies well within the data range. In addition, the overall Fieller test

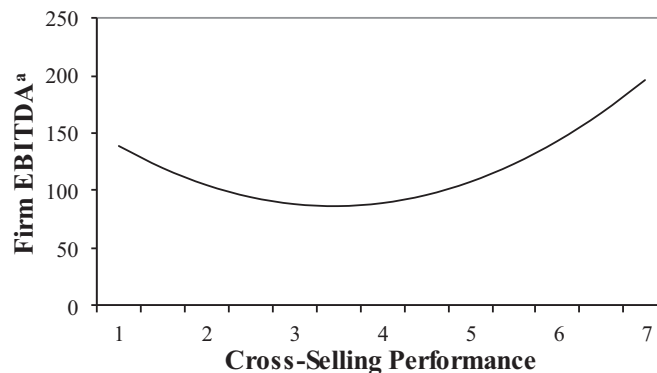
**Fig. 3.** U-shaped relationship between cross-selling performance and firm EBITDA. ^aFirm EBITDA in €10,000,000.

Table 6

Post hoc analyses: dependence of cross-selling performance on configurations of organizational cross-selling structures and steering instruments.

				Org. Structure	Column									
				MEC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
				MT	1	1	h	h	l	l	h	h	Standard error	Highest vs. smallest value in percentage
				CUL	1	h	l	h	l	h	l	h		
Row	Steering instruments													
	TR	JR	INC											
1	l	l	l		2.2	1.7	3.6	3.2	2.2	1.8	3.6	3.2	0.14	212
2	l	l	h		3.4	3.8	4.5	4.9	1.7	2.1	2.7	3.1	0.19	288
3	l	h	l		2.1	2.1	2.4	2.4	2.9	2.9	3.2	3.2	0.15	152
4	l	h	h		3.3	4.1	3.3	4.1	2.4	3.2	2.3	3.1	0.18	178
5	h	l	l		2.7	1.6	3.1	2.1	4.4	3.4	4.9	3.8	0.17	306
6	h	l	h		3.9	3.7	4.0	3.7	3.9	3.7	4.0	3.7	0.17	108
7	h	h	l		2.6	2.0	1.9	1.3	5.1	4.5	4.4	3.8	0.18	392
8	h	h	h		3.8	4.0	2.8	3.0	4.6	4.8	3.5	3.8	0.17	171
9	Standard Error				0.15	0.20	0.17	0.17	0.16	0.19	0.18	0.15		
10	Highest vs. smallest value in percentage				186	256	237	377	300	267	213	123		

Notes: Numbers represent cross-selling performance levels estimated from the results of Model 2 (see Web Appendix E for an example calculation).

MEC = mechanistic cross-selling structures; MT = cross-selling promotion by management; CUL = cross-selling-supportive organizational culture; TR = cross-selling training; JR = systematic job rotation; INC = cross-selling incentives; l = low (one SD below the mean); h = high (one SD above the mean); Gray cell: value higher than average cross-selling performance; white cell: value lower than average cross-selling performance; bold letters: lowest/highest value of the table.

provides support for the expected relationship ($p < .01$). In summary, our analyses confirm a U-shaped relationship between cross-selling performance and firm EBITDA, in support of H5. Fig. 3 shows the plot of this U-shaped relationship and illustrates that only high levels of cross-selling performance will outperform firms' EBITDA for no or very low cross-selling performance (i.e., cross-selling performance has a value of 1).

5.3. Industry-specific results

To test our hypotheses, we included dummy variables for each industry (Table 4). As the results show, only two service industries (i.e., information, communication, and financial activities and administrative and support service activities) are associated with cross-selling performance. Specifically, both of these service industries are negatively associated with cross-selling performance compared to manufacturing, which is the baseline industry ($\beta = -0.79$, $p < .05$ and $\beta = -0.92$, $p < .10$). A potential reason for this observation could be that services cross-selling can be harder for salespeople. For instance, because service provision is often closely connected with the service representative him-/herself, cross-selling of services may require additional in-depth knowledge, not only of the portfolio but also of the responsible employee (Spiro, Rich, & Stanton, 2008).

5.4. Post hoc analysis

To illustrate how organizational cross-selling structures and steering instruments should be aligned for a high cross-selling performance, we conducted a post hoc analysis (Table 6). Specifically, we used the estimated coefficients from Model 2 to calculate cross-selling performance for low and high values of organizational cross-selling structures and steering instruments (Samaha, Beck, & Palmatier, 2014).

For low (high) values, we used the respective variable's mean value decreased (increased) by one standard deviation (for an example calculation, see Web Appendix E). Because we mean-centered all independent variables, all means equal 0. Table 6 shows values of cross-selling performance for all possible combinations of organizational cross-selling structures and steering instruments to illustrate the substantial leverage of systematically organizing for cross-selling (Samaha, Beck, & Palmatier, 2014). For example, the cross-selling performance of an organization employing low mechanistic but high organic cross-selling structures will be nearly 300 percentage points higher if it employs a financial steering instrument to a high degree and non-financial steering instruments to a low degree versus the opposite (Table 6: column 4, rows 2 and 7). By contrast, if mechanistic cross-selling structures are most prevalent while cross-selling promotion by management and cross-selling-supportive organizational culture are at a low level, managers should focus on cross-selling training and systematic job rotation. In this case cross-selling performance is >200 percentage points higher than the worst case configuration (Table 6: column 5, rows 2 and 7). These results indicate that small adjustments of individual organizational structures and steering instruments are linked to a substantial increase in cross-selling performance.

6. Discussion

This study investigates the relationships of organizational mechanistic and organic cross-selling structures, financial and non-financial steering instruments, and, importantly, their interactions on cross-selling performance. In addition, it examines how cross-selling performance relates to firm EBITDA.

The findings reveal complex insights that fall into two categories. First, with respect to the antecedents of cross-selling performance, the results show that while organizational structures and steering instruments are positively related to cross-selling performance, their overall effectiveness depends on their interactions. In other words, high mechanistic cross-selling structures and low organic cross-selling structures work particularly well in combination with a high level of training and job rotation (i.e., non-financial steering instruments). By contrast, the same organizational structures are related to low cross-selling performance if the financial steering instrument cross-selling incentives is applied to a great extent. These findings indicate that various combinations of cross-selling structures and steering instruments can be associated with high or low cross-selling performance and that the configuration's overall effectiveness depends strongly on the compatibility of these aspects.

Second, with respect to cross-selling performance and firm EBITDA, the results reveal a U-shaped relationship. This finding is important because it indicates that the relationship between cross-selling performance and firm EBITDA depends on the level of cross-selling performance: low cross-selling performance is negatively associated with firm EBITDA. However, after a certain threshold, an increase in cross-selling performance is strongly related to an increase in firm EBITDA. This finding has clear and important implications for managers aiming to improve their firm's cross-selling performance.

6.1. Implications for research

This study's analyses and results advance prior research in several ways. First, when examining cross-selling performance antecedents, prior investigations have largely focused on the team and salesperson levels (Schmitz, 2013; Schmitz, Lee, & Lilien, 2014). Thus far, research has neglected to examine cross-selling determinants at the organizational level. In addressing this void, this study focuses on identifying cross-selling success factors at the organizational level and thereby responds to the call for sales research at the organizational level—an important response⁵ as probably <5% of all sales research studies examine this level (Cron, 2017). This dearth is problematic because “defining the role of the sales force collectively and the management structure to support it is fundamental...to the long-term performance and viability of the firm” (Cron, 2017, p. 188).

This study empirically demonstrates the relevance of considering the organizational level when addressing successful cross-selling management. The results reveal that when organizational cross-selling structures and steering instruments and their interactions are added to a model containing only individual salesperson factors (i.e., cross-selling motivation, cross-selling ability, and general customer orientation) and important controls, the proportion of variance explained (i.e., the adjusted R^2) of cross-selling performance increases by 19.8 percentage points (Table 4). This finding advances previous work significantly, as it provides firms with new actionable levers at the organizational level to manage cross-selling.

Second, this study is the first cross-sectional B2B study to identify cross-selling determinants. Specifically, by examining 204 business units from various firms of different sizes, legal forms, and industries, this study provides compelling evidence for the generalizability of its findings. In addition, because this study includes some relationships investigated by previous single-firm B2B studies on cross-selling (e.g., the link between cross-selling incentives or cross-selling motivation with cross-selling performance), it emphasizes the generalizability of prior work's findings (Schmitz, 2013; Schmitz, Lee, & Lilien, 2014). These advancements represent important contributions, as a large gap exists between the economic value of B2B transactions and the examination of the B2B context in academic research (Lilien, 2016). By dedicating this work to cross-selling in the B2B context, we help close this general gap in academic research.

Third, this study draws on the structural perspective of organization theory to investigate interactions between organizational cross-selling structures and steering instruments and their relationship with cross-selling performance. Our empirical results strongly support the use of non-financial steering instruments by organizations employing mechanistic cross-selling structures to a high degree. By contrast, organizations with a high level of organic cross-selling structures should employ a financial steering instrument. These insights advance prior sales literature by illustrating the relevance of choosing an organizational perspective on cross-selling management. Specifically, according to other team- or individual-level theories, different configurations of structures and steering instruments would likely result in positive or negative cross-selling performance.

For example, drawing on self-determination theory, which is an individual-level motivation theory (Gagné & Deci, 2005), we would expect “soft structures” (i.e., organic structures) and “soft instruments” (i.e., non-financial steering instruments) to be a good fit because both factors aim to strengthen individuals' basic need for autonomy and therefore could prompt the same motivational drivers to conduct cross-selling (Hohenberg & Homburg, 2016). By contrast, from this study's organizational perspective (i.e., the structural perspective of organization theory), we assume and find strong support that non-financial steering instruments undermine the positive relationship between organic cross-selling structures and cross-selling performance. Thus, although other theories for the configurations of organizational structures and steering instruments exist, our findings support hypotheses derived from the structural perspective of organization theory.

⁵ Accessing organizational-level respondents and ensuring a sufficient sample size is particularly challenging (Cron, 2017), as getting information on the overall organization requires respondents to be at the senior management level. However, gaining access to senior managers is difficult because fewer employees at that level exist, they have limited time, and contact information is hard to obtain.

Fourth, this study examines firm profits (i.e., firm EBITDA) as the ultimate dependent variable of the framework and finds a U-shaped relationship between cross-selling performance and firm EBITDA. By contrast, prior cross-selling research has focused on cross-selling performance as the ultimate dependent variable (e.g., Patterson, Yu, & Kimpakorn, 2014; Schmitz, 2013; Schmitz, Lee, & Lilien, 2014). This study's analyses and results therefore advance existing knowledge on cross-selling because they show that increases in cross-selling performance can have both positive and negative relationships with firm profits. In other words, we demonstrate that improvements in cross-selling performance yield higher firm EBITDA only when the cross-selling performance rises to a very high level. If cross-selling performance is at a medium level or lower, improvements in cross-selling performance can actually result in a reduced firm EBITDA. Therefore, in contrast with previous work that (implicitly) claims that increasing cross-selling performance is desirable, we provide a more nuanced perspective: if cross-selling efforts do not result in a very high cross-selling performance, firms will likely be more profitable if they do not engage in cross-selling initiatives at all.

6.2. Managerial implications

This study's findings have important implications for practitioners. First, on the basis of the study's results, we recommend *managing cross-selling systematically* at the organizational level. Specifically, the results reveal that cross-selling performance is determined to a high degree by organizational cross-selling structures and steering instruments and their interactions. The results further show that more or less beneficial configurations of organizational cross-selling structures and steering instruments exist. For example, an organization with a high level of mechanistic cross-selling structures will have a cross-selling performance above average only if it offers cross-selling training to a great extent. By contrast, organizations with a high level of organic cross-selling structures should apply cross-selling incentives. Thus, we advise managers to thoughtfully apply these organizational measures.

Second, we recommend that managers make small adjustments to their steering instruments to realize *quick gains* in their organizations' cross-selling performance. Training, job rotation, and cross-selling incentives are steering instruments that support existing organizational structures (Lassk, Ingram, Kraus, & Mascio, 2012; Ortega, 2001; Zoltners, Sinha, & Lorimer, 2012). For example, cross-selling training can be implemented relatively quickly to support the realization of established cross-selling guidelines (i.e., mechanistic cross-selling structures). Thus, depending on their current level of organizational cross-selling structures and steering instruments, organizations can manage their cross-selling performance through small alignments in their steering instruments. As an example, if an organization with high mechanistic and low organic cross-selling structures implements all cross-selling steering instruments to a low extent (Table 6: column 5, row 1), the organization can double its cross-selling performance by only implementing cross-selling training (Table 6: column 5, row 5).

Third, to optimally manage cross-selling performance, we recommend that managers use a *comprehensive approach* and simultaneously configure organizational cross-selling structures and steering instruments. Our analyses show that for the highest cross-selling performance, organizations should employ both mechanistic cross-selling structures and non-financial steering instruments to a high degree (Table 6: column 5, row 7). In such a scenario, mechanistic cross-selling structures ensure a sales force's focus on cross-selling, cross-selling training reinforces knowledge about these guidelines and their application, and systematic job rotation help sales force members gather extensive knowledge about many areas of responsibility to enhance their ability to apply cross-selling guidelines. In line with these recommendations, our results show that cross-selling performance will more than double if all organizational cross-selling structures and steering instruments are at a low level (Table 6: column 1, row 1) and will quadruple the worst-case scenario (Table 6: column 4, row 7). These results emphasize that the comprehensive alignment of organizational cross-selling determinants is important for leveraging cross-selling.

Fourth, to avoid negative profit implications, managers should consider the firm's current cross-selling performance level before setting up cross-selling initiatives. If the level is low, the program's scope should represent a comprehensive approach to achieve cross-selling performance that is positively related to profit. However, if the level is already high, even small increases are linked to substantial firm EBITDA increases.

6.3. Future research and limitations

This study has some limitations that offer guidance for future research. First, given the different measurement levels (i.e., business-unit vs. firm level), this study investigates the relationships of cross-selling determinants with cross-selling performance and of cross-selling performance with firm EBITDA in two separate models. This approach is consistent with recommendations in multi-level literature (Hox, Moerbeek, & Van de Schoot, 2017) and with previous empirical multi-level research that examines ultimate dependent variables at the higher level (Hayati, Atefi, & Ahearne, 2018). However, another promising avenue would be to examine the overall effects of cross-selling structures and steering instruments on profits to disentangle their various cost implications. Researchers could investigate cross-selling determinants, cross-selling performance, and profit outcomes on the same measurement level, which would allow for a one-model investigation.

Second, although this study is based on data collected in two separate waves, it investigates independent and dependent variables in the same period. Thus, the found associations only relate to the short run. As full implementation of organizational structures requires considerable time (Burns & Stalker, 1961), we believe that the results are robust to a mid- to long-term time horizon. However, we suggest that future research focus on changes in organizational cross-selling structures and steering instruments and their performance effects in both the short and long run. A field-experiment approach would be most appropriate to examine this research question. While this study's survey research approach allowed us to compare business units of different

sizes and industries in the B2B segment and find results that are generalizable across different firms and industries, an experimental approach would help disentangle and compare causal effects of the various determinants.

Third, this study examines three steering instruments—cross-selling training, systematic job rotation, and cross-selling incentives—that are closely derived from the study's overarching theory. However, examination of other actionable organizational instruments, such as resources (budgets) and sales contests, could also generate valuable results that may amend this study's insights. Thus, we recommend that in their investigations cross-selling researchers consider other steering instruments to further clarify their relationship to cross-selling performance and their interaction with organizational structures.

Fourth, we employed a systematic approach to reduce common threats to survey research, such as common method bias (e.g., different data sources, temporal separation of predictor and dependent variables) or key informant bias (e.g., two respondents per business unit). In our sample, we identified 3898 firms representing the survey population. However, because no demographic information was available at the business-unit level (e.g., size, financials), we could not compare the survey population and the final sample. Thus, to assess potential non-response bias, we closely followed the procedures suggested by methodological research on this issue (Armstrong & Overton, 1977) and prior research in related fields (Homburg, Jensen et al., 2012) (see Web Appendix C). Still, problems due to structural differences between non-respondents and respondents can never be completely ruled out (Armstrong & Overton, 1977). Thus, although we tested our analysis for potential non-response bias and found no indications of such, future studies could replicate our findings with different samples.

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