Social learning boosts drug rep performance, finds study

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[Research in the *International Journal of Business Innovation and Research*](#) has looked at the role of social learning with respect to the professional performance of medical representatives in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Daniel Kisahwan of PT. Eisai Indonesia in Jakarta, Alex Winarno of Telkom University in Bandung, and Deni Hermana of the University of Indonesia in Jawa Barat, Indonesia, drew on implicit and [social learning](#) theories to explore how social environments affected engagement and success among medical representatives.

Medical representatives, colloquially known as drug reps, are pharmaceutical sales professionals who promote [medical products](#) and pharmaceuticals to health care workers. Their results shed new light on the factors influencing that drug rep performance during the [pandemic](#) and might help us understand what happens in a future pandemic and how the [pharmaceutical industry](#) might better respond during such a crisis.

The team surveyed more than 200 drug reps in the major cities of Indonesia cities. They found a significant correlation between the social context and the performance of these professionals. Social context, in this sense, refers to the relationships, dynamics, and influences within the professional networks and social circles of the drug reps.

The findings suggest that social learning played a crucial role in shaping how they operated and their successes and failures during this period. Role models within a drug rep's social circles might guide how they operate in their job and whether or not they endeavored to work to the best of their abilities during challenging times, such as the pandemic period.

The study also highlights differences in social learning processes among experienced and inexperienced medical representatives, underlining the importance of individual attributes in determining how well they perform in their jobs.

The paper highlights a distinguishing feature of this research in that it involved the development of a framework through which the team could elucidate how work engagement and performance were influenced by social learning within pharmaceutical companies.

This framework, based on the experiences and perspectives of those working in these environments, offers insights into human resource practices such as social learning, education, and training. The same framework might also find application beyond the pharmaceutical sector.