

**THE EFFECT OF SALES SKILLS ON SELLING
PERFORMANCE: THE CASE OF ETHIO-TELECOM,
HAWASSA DISTRICT**



**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO HAWASSA UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING MANAGEMENT IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF MASTERS OF ARTS
DEGREE IN MARKETING MANAGEMENT**

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**THE THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO DEPARTMENT OF
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SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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This is to certify that the thesis entitled the effect of sales skill on selling performance the case of ethio telcom Hawassa district submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters of art in Marketing management the Graduat program of the Department of Management and has been carried out by Meaza Tefera Id No GPMAW/0027/2014 under our supervision. Therefore, we recommended that the student has fulfilled the requirements and hence here by can submit the final thesis to the department of Management.

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Final approval and acceptance of the thesis is contingent upon the submission of the final three copy of the thesis to School of Graduate Studies (SGS) through the Department Committee (DC) of the candidate's department acknowledgements.

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DECLARATION

I, Meaza Tefera, declare that this research entitled " The effect of sales skill on selling performance: the case of Ethio Telecom Hawassa district" is my original work, prepared under the guidance of Dr. Legese. All sources of materials used for this research have been dulyacknowledged.

I also confirmed that this research has not been submitted either in part or in full to any other higher learning institution for the purpose of earning any degree. It is offered for the partial fulfillment of the MA degree in Marketing Management.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS

B2B - Business to business

TS - Technical skill

IS - Interpersonal skill MK - Marketing skill SS - Salesmanship skill

SP - Sales Person performance

ABSTRACT

*This study is conducted with an objective of identifying effect of sales skills on selling performance in Ethio telecom Hawassa district. Technical, interpersonal, marketing and salesmanship skills were used as dimension of sales skills. This study is conducted by using both descriptive and explanatory research designs. The purposive sampling technique was used. The total target population of the study was 801 and from the total target population 267 employees of the company were purposively selected and participated in the study by providing their responses about their sales skills and sales performance through questionnaire. Yamane (1967:886) sampling size technique was employed. The data collected with questionnaire was analysed by using both descriptive and explanatory analysis methods. Frequencies, percentiles, mean and standard deviation were used as descriptive methods. Correlation and multivariate linear regression methods were used to answer research questions. The finding of the study identified that selling skills have significant effect on sales performance. **The major findings are;** Among the dimensions of selling skills used in the study, marketing skill has no statistically significant effect on selling performance. But technical, interpersonal and salesmanship skills have positive significant effect on selling performance of the company. The most important and significant selling skill that affect selling performance is salesmanship skills with the highest mean value of 4.0 Based on this finding it is recommended to increase technical, interpersonal and salesmanship skills to increase selling performance.*

Key words: *selling skills, selling performance, technical skill, interpersonal skill, marketing skill, salesmanship skills.*

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

4.2 1.1 Background of the Study

This chapter covers an overview of the entire thesis. It contains background of the study, statement of the problem, research question, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitations of the study, operational definition of terms and finally organization of the study.

In order for an organization to meet continued success in this competitive and dynamic world, sales must occur continuously. Selling products or services is the most important component of a business. With respect to this, sales groups are forced to work harder in order to provide the revenue streams that support business activities. Therefore, sales groups are perhaps the most important individuals in the firm's marketing communication process since selling occupy a boundary position within the organization. They represent the organization to customers, interact with them, underpin transactions, and serve as a mechanism to scan and monitor the external environment (Sohi, 1996).

For many companies, selling skills are the most important marketing tools in the interface between the companies and their customers. Operating at the interface between the organization and its environment, selling skills perform important boundary spanning roles (Baldauf&Cravens,2002). Good selling skills may offer substantial performance improvements in today's increasingly competitive business environment. A top-quality selling skill maximizes revenues from current existing customers and systematically identifies and manages new prospects well will allow a business entity to grow faster than its competitors (Futrell, 2006). Considering the pivotal role played by selling skills in ensuring continued growth of sales, therefore, hiring highly skilled sales personnel organizations becomes critical (Churchill, Gilbert A. Jr.,

Neil M. Ford, Mark W. Johnson, & Orville C. Walker, Jr. (2000); Ingram, Thomson N., LaForge, Raymond W., Avila, Ramon A., Schwepker Jr. Charles H., & Williams, Michael R. (2004); Futrell, 2006).

With regard to this, although these sales skills dimensions have long been recognized as predictors of selling performance, there have been so far no empirical researches conducted to ascertain the individual - level skills factors that contribute to the selling performance. Furthermore, most previous studies examining the influence of sales skills dimensions on selling performance have been conducted in advanced western economies. Therefore, this is the first study in Ethio telecom Hawassa District, that attempts to explore this particular relationship.

Background of the company: The study will be conducted in Sidama regional state capital City in Hawassa. The lake city of Hawassa is situated at an altitude of 1,685 meters above sea level in the great rift valley region of east Africa, 275 kilo meter away from Addis Ababa and 1125 kilometres North of Nairobi. Hawassa is the largest city in Ethiopia Rift valley, supporting a population of around 359,650 (Philip Briggs, 2005).

The strategic locations and the natural attractions enabled the city to be a home for diversified social entity. This by itself has made the city, one of the most prime tourist destination sites in the southern edge of the Country. Hawass City is found in 1952 E.C during the period of Emperor Haylesilase. Hawassa means wide in Sidamigna which is one of widely spoken language in the area. Geographically the city lays between 6 ° 55'0" to 7 ° 6'0" latitude north and 25° 0'0" to 38° 34'0" longitude east. The city has warm temperature which varies between 30 °c in the winter and 10 ° c in the summer, Mean annual rainfall of 1200mm (HCAFEDO, 2019).

Hawassa city was bounded by lake Hawassa in the west, Oromia region in the north, Wondogenet woreda in the East and Shebedino woreda in the South. The city administration has an area of 157.2 (sq.kms), divided in to 8 sub-cities and 32 kebelles. These 8 sub-cities are HaykDare, Menhareya, Tabor, Misrak, Bahhil Adarash, AdisKetema, Hawela-Tula and Mehalketema sub-city (HCAFEDO, 2019).

Ethio-telecom is a state-owned enterprise in the industry of Telecommunications. Ethio-telecom served the whole Ethiopian geographic area, with different service of Mobile, fixed line, Broadband and Tele birr. Ethio –telecom headquarters is in Addis Ababa have a total of 310,131 employees. Its revenue increased with 101 % and rise in revenues to 75.8 billion birrs for the financial year 2022/2023 (Ethio-monitor report 2023).

4.3 1.2 Statement of the problem

In today's complex times, the sales professional cannot meet all customer needs for information, customization or general support. The sales culture engages and empowers all organizational members to contribute their expertise to sale campaign. Therefore, it makes sense to explore important sales skills. This paper tries to identify and discuss the important sales skills in four dimensions. Sales professionals must master an essential set of sales skills in order to build lasting relationships with customers and to close sale.

Previous researchers have emphasized the importance of selling skill levels in relation to their performance (Churchill, Gilbert A., Neil M. Ford, Steven W. Hartley, and Orville C. Walker, Jr. (1985); Rentz et al., 2002 as cited in Ahmad, S.Z., Basir, M.S & Kitchen, P.J (2010) Ford, Walker, Churchill, and Hartley 1988); and Ahmed et.al., (2010) also argued that beside aptitude, role perception, motivation, personality and organizational factors, selling skills affects a selling persons' performance. The dimension of sales skills is adopted.

From Ahmed et al., (2010) who intern adopted it from different studies. The three dimensions; interpersonal, salesmanship and technical from Rentz et al ., (2002); which are found to be useful predictors of sales performance. And the fourth-dimension marketing skills is adopted from Aherne and Schilleweart (2000). Although these sales skills dimensions have long been recognized as predictors of sales performance, the majority of the previous studies had been conducted in advanced countries.

In a sales-oriented company selling products and service is very important. Even it is important in highly complex industry like Ethio telecom because by nature in this industry customer knowledge and confidence on the product and services is in the middle position that sales people role in this regard is critical to the success of the company. The importance of selling skill is greater in the business-to-business marketing.

As the researcher visit the company and revise the company's sales report, selling skill is important in selling performance of the factory. Even if selling skill' is important in Ethio telecom Hawassa District gives less emphasis on this. As to the researcher's search, this study is the first of its kind in the in the company. It doesn't have a clear picture on what skills its sales people should acquire, what are selling skill key success factors in the company, what type of training is needed and what kind of selling skill strategy to follow to enhance selling performance.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to assess the effect of selling skills; which is explained by variables; technical skills, interpersonal skills, marketing skills and salesmanship skills; on selling performance of Ethio telecom Hawassa District company's business to business sales force.

4.4 1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 General objective

The general objective of the study is assessing the effect of sales skills on selling performance.

1.3.2 Specific Objective of the study

- ✓ To find out the effect of selling skills on selling performance.
- ✓ To examine the most important selling skills factor that affect selling performance.
- ✓ To find out the dimensions how the selling skills affect the selling performance.

4.5 1.4 Research Questions

1. How selling skills affect selling performance of Ethio- telecom, in the study area?
2. What are the effects of selling skills on selling performance?
3. What are the major selling skills that affect the selling performance in the study area?

4.6 1.5 Significance of the Study

The study is important for the company, for academicians and for the researcher. For the company it has many uses. This research helps to identify the effect of selling skill that is highly relevant for the company. In addition to this it helps to identify training need areas for the selling skills and selling management.

And finally, the significance of this study is for the student. This research paper is requirement for the partial fulfillment of Masters of Art in Marketing Management and also it will give an opportunity for the researcher to apply theoretical knowledge acquired through the entire courses.

4.7 1.6 Scope of the study

So as to make the study manageable, it is necessary to define the delimitation of the study. The study will be delimited geographically, conceptually, and methodologically. Thus, geographically, the study is delimited to single company specifically Ethio telecom, Hawassa district. The study is delimited itself to the effect of selling skills on selling performance of the company's products which found in Hawassa district.

Conceptually, the study has limited itself on assessing only the effect of selling skills on selling performance. But the selling performance is affected by many other variables including personality factors, role variables, motivation, aptitude and organizational factors. This study excludes other factors and focus only on selling skills that affect selling performance.

The three dimensions of selling skill i.e. interpersonal, salesmanship and technical are adopted from Rentz et.al., (2002); which are found to be useful predictors of selling performance. And the fourth-dimension marketing skills is adopted from Aherne and Schilleweart (2000).

Methodologically, the study is delimited to descriptive research approach and quantitative research design. Particularly it utilizes co relational research design in investigating the relationship between selling skills (Technical, Interpersonal, Marketing and Salesmanship) and sales performance of personal selling by using questionnaires.

4.8 1.7 Limitation of the study

It is good to discuss some limitations of this research paper. First, the selection of the respondents i.e. the employees of Ethio telecom, Hawassa district, as evaluator of all selling skills dimensions may impose some limitations. It is better different groups should evaluate selling performance. Moreover, the argument can be made that the selling skills are fronting and dealing with customers, it is suggested that selling skill is best assessed by customers. Customers could rate the selling skill better on those aspects that impact customers' attitudes and their purchase.

Furthermore, evaluation from customers may add more meaningful and convincing results. Secondly, the instrument used is structured questioner. This restricts the respondents from freely express their feeling. Finally, the respondents are the employees of the company themselves. Therefore, the results of the present study are exposed to some degree of biases and should be interpreted carefully.

4.9 1.8 Operation of Terms

Technical Knowledge: refers to sales person skill in proceeding information about design and specification of products and the applications and functions of both the products and services (Ahmed et al., 2010).

Marketing skill: refers to knowledge about the industry and trends in general such as customers, markets and products; competitors' products, services, sales policies; knowledge of competitors' products lines, and knowledge of customer operations (Behrman and Perreault, 1982 as cited Ahmed et al., 2010).

Salesmanship skill: refers to adoptability, consultative selling, negotiation and questioning and sales person's cues and communication style skills.

Performance: Performance has been defined in two distinct ways, Campbell (1991) defined performance as behavior relevant to the organization's goals. He also suggested that when behavior is not observable, performance can only be known by its effects, that is sales. Alternatively, Kane (1986, p.137) defined performance as "the record of outcomes achieved in carrying out the job function during the specified period." Whereas Campbell emphasized behaviors, Kane emphasized outcomes. In selling situation, sales volume is compatible with both definitions. Thus, behavior of sales person and their sales volume should be interrelated.

Outcome measures: outcome measures are most useful when the performance output of the job can be accurately measured. Sales volume is the most frequently used outcome measured of sales person performance (Weitz 1981; Peck 1982). Sales volume has also been used extensively in academic research as a performance measure (Comer and Dubinsky 1985; Churchill et.al. 1985). However, a major caveat exists when using sales volume to evaluate retail salespeople. When sales people's performance is compared, sales volume must be adjusted for product sold, external environment, time period, and seasonality.

4.10 1.9 Organization of the Study

The study is composed of five chapters. The first chapter covers the introduction part and the second chapter reviews related literatures. The third and the fourth chapter discusses the research design and methodology, and data analysis, result and discussion respectively. The final chapter is about summary, conclusion and recommendation.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

An effort has been made to review relevant literature. This chapter contains theoretical review, empirical review and conceptual frame work of the study.

2.1.1 Selling

Philip Kotler on his book “The Principle of Marketing”, argue selling as one of the oldest professions in the world. The people who do the selling are goes by many names such as salespeople, sales representative, account executive, sales consultant, sales engineers, agents, district managers, and account development representatives.

However, according to Pederson, Wright, & Weitz, 1988, theory of selling that influence and persuasion is only a part of selling. Selling is also involves helping customer identify the problems, supplying information on potential solutions, and proving after-the-sales-service to ensure long term satisfaction. Thus, the selling itself it is not only just create a sale or make customer making a purchase but selling is also the process of understanding customer main problem, help them to understand those problem, solve the problem with the product or service which we offer, and also maintaining the relationship forlong term valuable relation.

Jobber & Lancaster, 2009 Selling is the simplest way to think of nature function to make a sale. Selling is often very complex process to make a sale, involving the use of a whole set of principle, technique and substantial personal skill, and covering a wide range of different types of selling task. Selling is a conceptual approach to the simplest “how it is done” approach which has mean to understand the way to finish the selling activity by making a deal as a success of selling process. Some companies spend large sums of money to train their salesperson in order to master the art of selling, that’s why selling become the most important link within the company and customer.

Selling is the activity that performs by a company or organization with using a work force which is called a sales people, sales force, or salesperson to do both selling function and organizational function (Marshall & Johnston, Relationship Selling and Sales Management, 2005).

2.1.2 Sales performance

There are immediate difficulties in defining sales performance, which has meant different things to different researchers and practitioners. Performance, which in a literal sense means the way that something functions, or the results of activity over time, is measured differently in different organizations. Sweet, C; Sweet, T; Beth, R; Heritage, V & Turner, M. (2007). It is important to discuss defining characteristics of sales performance.

Anderson and Oliver (1987) as cited in Zallocco, R; Pullins, E & Mallin, L. (2009) conceptualized sales performance as the evaluation of salespeople based on what they produce (i.e. sales outcomes) as well as what they do (i.e. sales behaviours). Anderson and Oliver (1987) explained that, sales support and planning are, as elements of salesperson behaviour performance. Other dimensions of behaviour performance are technical knowledge, adaptive selling, teamwork and sales presentations. The consequences of salespeople's efforts and skills are outcomes (results) such as sales volumes, market share, customer retention, and new customers. These consequences comprise salesperson outcome/sales performance.

Piercy, Cravens and Morgan (1997) describe that, sales force performance is relates to the work behaviour of salespeople and the results they achieve. while high sales force performance is expected to contribute to the effectiveness of the sales organization.

As Churchill et al, (1985) definition, Salesperson performance is evaluation of the behaviour of the salesperson. (i.e. the tasks consuming effort while working), since behaviour contributes to the achievement of the organization's objectives.

Anderson and Oliver (1987) conceptualization, in suggesting that it is potentially insightful to evaluate salesperson performance both in what they do (e.g. sales results) that are attributed to them. This view of performance suggest that salesperson performance can be studied both as behaviour performance and as outcome performance.

Ken Grant, David W. Cravens (1999) sales force performance is an evaluation of the activities and strategies of salespeople in carrying out their job assignments and responsibilities, The focus is on what salespeople do rather than outcomes.

2.1.3 Determinants of Sales performance

Due to its vital importance to both the firm and to individual sales people, improving sales performance is of a great interest to both managers and researchers (Johilke, 2006). Sweet et al, (2007) in their work —Developing a benchmarking for company wide sales capability identified five drivers of salesperformance:

- ✓ Leadership including strategy,decision making, attitudes
- ✓ towardlearning, improving, coaching.
- ✓ Motivation, including goal orientation and
- ✓ discipline, enthusiasm,planning, attitudes.
- ✓ Skills including communication, negotiation, customer relationships, presentation.
- ✓ Process including company's sales systems,
- ✓ information, records,preparation, follow through and delivery.
- ✓ Marketplace including understanding of the needs of customers, the market, their own products and those of their competitors.

Several studies have identified a great number of independent variables that influence salesperson performance (e.g. Churchill et al, 1985; Baldauf & Cravens 1999; Piercey, Cravens, & Morgan,1997; Babakus, Cravens Grant, Ingram, & Laforge, 1996; Baldauf & Cravens, 2002; Rentz et al., 2002; Johlke, 2006). These independent variables are such as aptitude, personal characteristics, skill levels, role perceptions, motivation, background and experience, current status and lifestyle, and demographic and physical characteristics.

However, Churchill et al. (1985) found that:

1. in terms of the average size of their association with salesperson performance, the determinants were ordered as follows: role variables, sales skills, motivation, personal factors, aptitude, and organizational factors and
2. when ordered according to real variation (i.e., not attributable to sampling error), the determinants were ranked: personal factors, selling skills, role variables, aptitude, motivation, and the organizational/environmental factors.

The Results of Churchill's et al. (1985) research indicated that sales skills were the second most important of the five variables, both in terms of average size association with performance and in terms of real variation. Nevertheless, Churchill et al. (1985) and Rentz et al. (2002) observed that fewer studies on individuals' characteristics related to sales skills dimensions of salespersons had been conducted before Churchill's et al. (1985) meta-analysis studies. Nonetheless, since the remarkable meta-analysis studies, a considerable amount of research had focused on specific aspects or micro - skill stream of sales skill which focused on individual sales skills (Rentz et al., 2002). These micro- stream sales skills could be divided into three dimension which are: interpersonal, salesmanship and technical skills. With respect to this, the present research attempts to continue from Churchill's et al. (1985) remarkable work to examine the effect of sales skill on salesperson performance. Specifically, the present study investigates the effect of four sales skill dimension namely interpersonal skills, salesmanship skills, and technical skills were adopted from Ford et al. 1988; cited in Churchill et al., 2000), and the other dimension namely marketing skill was adopted from Ahearne and Schillewaert (2000). Hence, hereafter, the remainder of the literature discussion will just focus on these four sales skill dimensions.

Moreover, many researchers have emphasized the importance of salesperson's skills level on salesperson performance. (Churchill, Gilbert A., Neil M. Ford, Steven W. Hartley, and Orville C. Walker, Jr. (1985); Churchill et. al., 2000; Rentz, J. C., Shepherd, D., Armen, Tashchian, A., Dabholkar, P. A., Ladd, R. T. (2002) ;).

Salespersons' selling skills have long been identified as a determinant of salesperson performance (Churchill et al., 1985; 2000 and Ford, Walker, Churchill, and Hartley 1988) who are credited with seminal work in this area found that besides aptitude, role perception, motivation, personality and organizational factors, sales skills also affect salesperson performance. Moreover, in another study, Rentz et al. (2002) categorized selling skills into three dimensions namely interpersonal skills, salesmanship skills and technical skills. These sales skills dimensions had been found to be useful predictors of salesperson performance. Furthermore, Ahearne and Schillewaert (2000) introduced marketing skills as other predictors to a salesperson performance.

2.1.4 Quantitative Measure

It is convincing to rely on quantitative company data (such as dollar or unit sales or contribution to profit over some time period) as a logical criterion measure of salesperson performance, moreover, these measures have been widely used in past research yet there can be problems with quantitative measures for example, Forrester has persuasively described the dynamics of industrial markets, and how this volatility is reflected in dramatic swings in volume inequality across different territories, product lines, or customer accounts often exist. Thus, sometimes quantitative company data that appear to be objective may suggest differences in performance among salespersons that may be attributable to factors beyond the control of the individual. Such uncontrollable factors can sometime be taken into account by considering performance relative to quotas, or by statistically partial ling out the impact of uncontrollable factors. Even with such adjustments, quantitative measures may be problematic when team selling, missionary selling, or long selling cycles are an issue. The one-dimensional focus of quantitative measure of sales person performance may not be appropriate for sales research purposes. However, to the extent that a number of relevant, but dissimilar, quantitative measures (sales, new accounts, conversion rates, expenses, etc). are available on each salesperson, it is possible to develop composite performance measuresfor each salesperson.

4.11 2.2 Empirical Review

Sales skills and Sales performance: Many researchers have emphasized the importance of sales persons skill levels in relation to their performance (Churchill et al., 1985; Rentz et al., 2002 as cited in Ahmad et al., 2010). Churchill et al., (1985), Ford et al., (1988) and Ahmed et.al., (2010) also argued that beside aptitude, role perception, motivation, personality and organizational factors, sales skills also affect a sales person's performance.

A) Technical skill and Sales performance

Technical Skill - technical knowledge refers to salesperson's skill in providing information about design and specification of products and the applications and functions of both products and services. (Ahmad et al., 2010, p.188). Many researchers have found a significant and positive relationship between technical skills and salespersons performance (Baldauf et al., 2001; Grants and Cravens, 1999; Baldauf and Cravens, 1999; Katisheck and Skermeas, 2003; Baldauf and Cravens, 2002). A positive relationship empirically supports that the use of technical knowledge results in higher salesperson performance (Babakus et al., 1996; Cravens, D.W., Ingram, T., LaForge, R.W. and Yong, C.E. 1993; Baldauf and Cravens, 2002). Likewise, Dariane, J.C., Tucci, L.A. and Wiman, A.R. (2001) and Makinen (2004) found that salesperson's product knowledge is important. Complementing the two studies, Ingram et al., (2004) added and reiterated that the knowledge that a salesperson should possess include product benefits, applications, competitive strengths, and limitations. The first hypothesis emanates from this literature.

H1: There is a positive relationship between technical skill and selling' performance.

B) Marketing Skill and Sales performance

Selling skill also possess knowledge about the industry and trends in general such as customers, markets and products; competitors' products, services, sales policies; knowledge of competitor's product lines, and knowledge of customer operations (Behrman and Perreault, 1982, as cited in Baldauf and Cravens, 2002; Futrell, 2006). These constitute the marketing skills of a salesperson.

This knowledge assets refer to the level of understanding a salesperson has about the business in which he or she operates. An extensive knowledge base is important for a salesperson since it allows them to cope with the complex market environment. Moreover, Churchill et al., (2000), Schoemaker and Johlke (2002), and Ingram et al., (2004) revealed that knowledge of external and organizational environmental issues is crucial for salespersons to perform their selling tasks. Researchers have also identified that customer knowledge is critical for salesperson performance (Donath, 1993; Smith and Owens, 1995). Ingram et al., (2004); and Pettijohn and Pettijohn (1994) supported this when they found that customer knowledge is an important topic for salesperson training. It is also recognized that effective salespersons possess richer and more interrelated knowledge structures about their customers than those that are less effective (Sujan, H., Mita, S. & Bettman, J.R. (1988). Moreover, Weitz (1978) posited that there is a significant positive relationship between performance and strategy formulation capabilities (i.e. which requires extensive knowledge of the market, competitors, products etc). Additionally, Ahearne and Schillewaert (2000) confirmed that marketing skills also influence salesperson performance. Thus, the second hypothesis is derived from this literature.

H2: There is a positive relationship between marketing skill and selling skill performance.

C) Interpersonal Skill and Sales performance

Interpersonal skills refer to mental and communication algorithms applied during social communication and interaction to achieve certain effects and results. According to Rentz et al., (2002), the dimensions of interpersonal skills are listening, empathy, optimism and perceived observation skills. These dimensions were operational and empirically tested independently to represent interpersonal skills measures in predicting salesperson performance. Thus, these dimensions are likely to collectively realize effective interpersonal skills, and, in turn, salesperson performance for achieving high sales performance leading to the requirement that salespeople have or develop strong interpersonal skills.

Comer and Drollinger (1999); Castleberry and Shepherd (1993); Ramsey and Sohi (1997), and Shepherd, C.D., Castleberry, S.B. and Ridnour, R.E. (1997) found that effective listening skills are a valuable communication skill for successful salespersons. Meanwhile, Comer and Drollinger (1999) pointed out that empathetic skills contribute to salesperson performance. McBane (1995), Pilling and Eroglu (1994), and Plank, R.E., Minton, A.P. and Reid, D. (1996) support this. Additionally, Rich and Smith (2000) found that individuals possessing high responsive characteristics seem to have greater identification or perceptive observation skills concerning the social style of others, which are critical traits for successful salespersons. Jane and Dawn (2003) also suggested that empathy and perception of others' emotions could explain salesperson performance. Rapisarda (2002) in her research on the impact of emotional intelligence on work performance reaffirmed that empathic competency strongly correlated with performance. In sum, previous empirical studies demonstrated a positive relationship between the four dimensions of interpersonal skills on salesperson performance. Hence, it can be hypothesized that a similar relationship will occur in this study.

H3: There is a positive relationship between interpersonal skill and selling performance.

D) Salesmanship Skill and Sales performance

The dimensions of salesmanship skills can be generally categorized into five subcategories namely: adaptability, consultative selling, negotiation and questioning, and salesperson cues and communication style skills. (Ahmad et al., 2010). Previous studies had utilized each dimension independently to represent salesmanship skills in testing its relationship with salesperson performance (Rentz et al., 2002). Adaptive selling is defined as the salesperson's ability to alter her/his sales behaviour when interacting with customers (Weitz, 1981) and is important because it shows the amount of customization a salesperson is utilizes. Babakus et al., (1996) found a positive association between adaptive selling and salesperson performance, and sales organizational effectiveness measures.

Negotiation is another important process of selling (Futrell, 2006; Ingram et al., 2004). Schuster and Danes (1986) posited that negotiation skills possessed by a salesperson contributed to the salesperson's success. Meanwhile, Morgan and Stoltman (1990) found that there was a positive relationship between adaptive personal selling and questioning, listening, and non-verbal behavior. They stated that a salesperson's perceptual abilities, including probing, asking questions, listening, and detecting verbal and nonverbal clues, provide the basis for adaptive selling. Goolsby, J., Lagrace, R. and Boorom, M. (1992) and Schuster and Danes (1986) confirmed these findings when they posited that negotiation and questioning ability possessed by a salesperson contributed to the salesperson's success. Additionally, communication style plays a critical influence on a salesperson's ability to close sales (Stafford, 1996; Whittler, 1994; Williams, K.C., Spiro, R.L. and Fine, L.M. 1990; Futrell, 2006). Williams and Spiro (1985) found that successful salespersons are those who can adapt their communication styles appropriately to interact with customers.

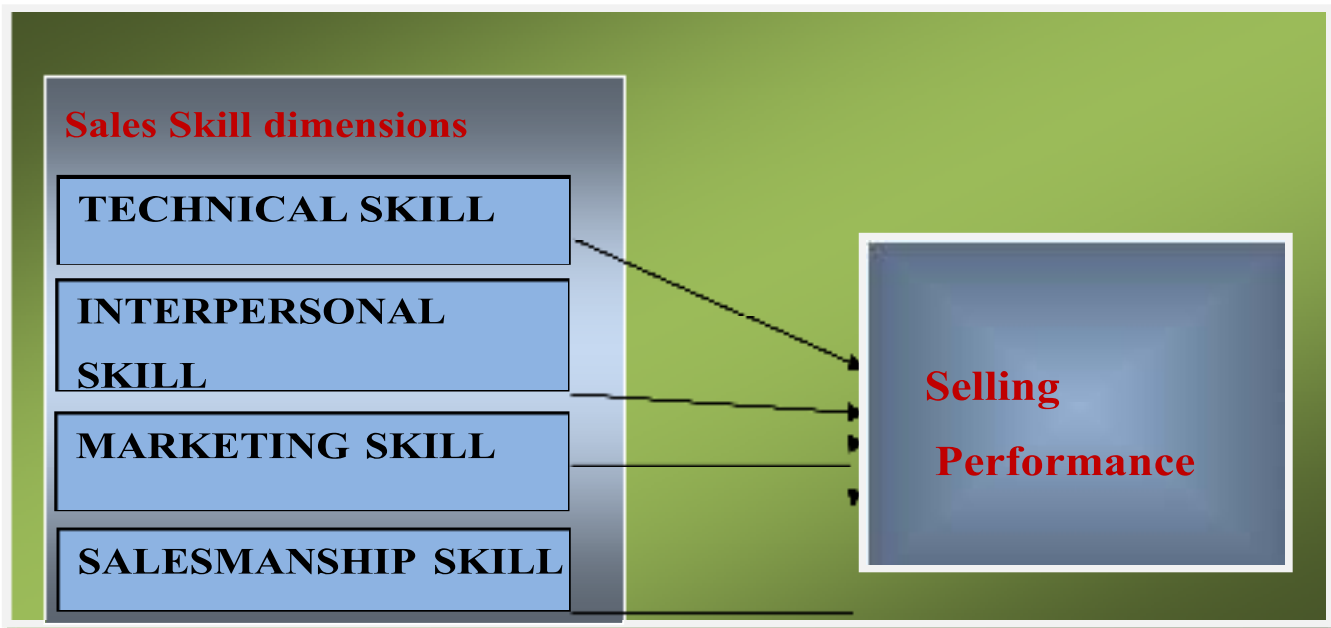
Similarly, William et. al., (1990) also suggested that salespersons who vary their communication styles in relation to the customers will significantly increase the potential to close the sale. Furthermore, a person's nonverbal cues could influence others behavior (Cho, 2001). Salesperson's nonverbal cues have emerged as a critical component of successful selling (Leigh and Summers, 2002; Futrell, 2006; Stafford, 1996; Whittler, 1994; Williams, K.C., Spiro, R.L. and Fine, L.M. (1990). William et al., (1990) posited that employing four nonverbal symbolic expressions such as voice qualities, nonverbal vocalization, body movement, and spatial distances might result in the likelihood of a sale. Likewise, Peterson, R.A., Cannito, M.P. and Brown, S.P. (1995); Schul and Lamb (1982); and Gabbot and Hogg (2000) found that certain voice characteristics correlated highly with output sales performance. Consultative skills are another aspect of salesmanship which influences salesperson performance (DeCormier and Jobber, 1993; Goolsby et al., 1992).

Therefore, any conscious effort on the part of the salesperson to adjust the sales environment, based on cues from the buyer, and coupled with other complementary salesmanship skills, namely, consultative selling practices, ability to be an excellent negotiator, skill in probing and questioning customer needs, and possessing commendable communication skills, either verbal or nonverbal; should give the seller a positive feeling in terms of their performance as a salesperson. Therefore, the discussion above suggests the fourth hypothesis is:

H4: There is a positive relationship between salesmanship skill and salespersons performance.

4.12 2.3 Conceptual Frame Work

As indicated on the review of related literature many research has indicated a



positive effect of sales skill on sales persons performance. This is summarized as follow:

Source: adopted from M. S. Basir, S. Z. Ahmad, P. J. Kitchen 2010

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the study

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Description of the study

This section explains the research methodology used in this research. It contains description of the study, research approach, design of the study, population and sample, data source and type, data collection procedures, ethical consideration and data analysis

This study was done to investigate the relationship between selling skill and selling performance. The method used to find out the effect of sales skill on the performance of sales.

3.2 Research Approach

The research approach which is used in this study is a descriptive and explanatory study. A descriptive study is aimed to establish associations between variables and to create an accurate profile of persons, events, or situations (Agbor, 2011). The research describes the sales skills that affect the performance of selling. It investigates and assesses the strength of relationship between dependent variable and independent variable, and it also ensures the internal validity of the research, not only the statistical procedures used to analyze the data obtained from the design. Moreover, it utilizes correlation research in investigating the relationship between sales skills (Technical, Interpersonal, Marketing and Salesmanship) and sales performance by using questionnaires. In order to test the hypotheses developed for this study, regression was also used. The predictor or independent variables (Interpersonal Skills, Salesmanship skills, technical Skills and Marketing Skills) entered into regression model predicting dependentvariable (selling performance).

3.3 Design of the Study

Research designs are plans and the procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis (Creswell 2007). Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures. Data typically collected in the participant's setting. Data analysis was inductively built from particulars to general themes and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure. Those who engage in this form of inquiry support a way of looking at research that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation (adapted from Creswell. 2007).

Quantitative research is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables in turn, can be measured typically on instruments so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures. The final written report has a set structure consisting of introduction, literature and theory, methods, results and discussion (Creswell 2008). Like qualitative researchers, those who engage in this form of inquiry have assumptions about testing theories deductively building in protections against bias controlling for alternative explanations and being able to generalize and replicate the findings.

Mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms. It involves philosophical assumptions, the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the mixing of both approaches in a study. Thus, it is more than simply collecting and analyzing both kinds of data. It also involves the use of both approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of a study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research (Creswell & Plano Clark. 2007).

Based on the above explanation, this study has used quantitative research design to examine the relationship among sales skill and sales performance.

3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

3.4.1 Sampling Technique

Here, the researcher used the purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling refers to a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which units are selected because they have characteristics that you need in your sample. In other words, units are selected “on purpose” in purposive sampling. It is also judgmental sampling, this sampling method relies on the researcher’s judgment when identifying and selecting the individuals, cases, or events that can provide the best information to achieve the study objectives. Purposive sampling is common in qualitative research and mixed methods research.

3.4.2 Sample Size

The sample size is the number of items that are selected from the whole population(universe) to form a sample. It should not be excessively large or too small. An optimum sample is representative and reliable of the universe. A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole (Webster, 1985). According to Cooper and Schindler, (2001) cited on Njambi (2014) some of the principles which influence sample size comprise: the greater the dispersion or variance within the population, the larger the sample must be to provide estimation precision, the greater the desired precision of the estimate, the larger the sample must be, the narrower the interval range, the larger the sample must be, the higher the confidence level in the estimate, the larger the sample must be, the greater the number of subgroups of interest within a sample, the greater the sample size must be, as each sub group must meet minimum sample size requirements, and if the calculated sample size exceeds five percent of the population, sample size may be reduced without sacrificing precision. Yamane (1967:886) (cited by Israel 2013) provides a simplified formula to calculate sample sizes.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + \frac{N(e)^2}{4}}$$

Where: n = Sample size

N = Total Population

e = Sampling Error

Based on this formula, the total sample size of the study is determined as follows.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{801}{1 + 801(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 267$$

Therefore, using this formula a sample size of **267** was selected.

3.5 Types and Sources Data

Data is obtained from existing sources or from surveys and experimental studies designed to collect new data (Anderson E.W. and M.W. Sullivan (1993)). The data sources used in this study were primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was collected from responses of sales persons, by administering questioners. The questioners to be used are structured as it is the case in quantitative research design and organized as five-point likert scale from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Secondary data will be collected from different sources that includes mainly past studies, books, researches, published literatures and company annual report that could support the study from empirical & conceptual backgrounds.

3.6 Tools for Data Collection

The measurement was developed after a rigorous survey of a literature relevant to sales skill and pre-validated measuring instrument. The instruments that will be used to collect data from respondent in this study is questionnaire, interview, and surveys. To measure all the variables the researcher will directly took up measurements from different researchers which are organized in to one by Ahmed et al (2010). Very slight modification will be made on the questions to fit the existing condition in the industry. The researcher was tried to make questionnaire to facilitate the collection of the data needed to answer the research questions and to be user friendly and convenient as possible for the respondent.

Further, sample of the survey instrument was distributed to academicians and practitioners for evaluation prior to the pilot test and final survey was conducted. Pretesting of the questionnaire was conducted on a random sample of 4(four) the company's employees to enhance the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The pretest is also conducted to obtain feedback on the content of the questions, instructions, clarity, and the layout of the questionnaire. In addition, briefings on the questionnaire will be given for the company's employees who are respondents of the questionnaire. The final questionnaires will be produced incorporating the comment and feedback from the pilot test. Then the questionnaires were given to the rest of company's employees to collect the last data.

These survey questionnaires were administered personally by visiting the office of the company's employees working in Hawassa district. The questioners that are going to be used are structured as it is the case in quantitative research design with a five-point likert type scale ranging from 1(being strongly disagree) to 5 (five being strongly agree) and consist 22- items. No need of translating the questioners from English to the local language Amharic because the company's employees are Diploma, BA holders and above.

3.7 Methods of Data Collection

Data collection method depends on the research question being addressed, the type of data needed, and the resources and time available. The data collection method was categorized in to two: primary methods of data collection (interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaires); and secondary methods of data collection (written materials like book, internet, magazines.). Primary methods of data collection can be divided in to two categories: quantitative method and qualitative method. Therefore, the researcher employed both primary and secondary methods of data collection.

3.8 Data Analysis

Different quantitative methods were used in the study. After the desired data is gathered carefully the analysis were done with SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) software. The quantitative data was processed and analyzed precisely using frequencies and percentage. To test all the hypothesis multivariate regression analysis was utilized and presented in tabular form. In addition, descriptive statistical tools like frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to further indicate the relation.

3.8.1 Methods of Data Analysis

Data which was collected through questionnaire was coded, entered, edited and analyzed using SPSS software version 21. Descriptive statistical analysis such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation was used. Inferential statistics such as correlation analysis was employed to examine the relationship between independent variables and customer attitude and multiple linear regression was used to examine the effects of selling skill on selling performance.

3.8.2 Model Specification

The models that the study was used to examine the effect of selling skills on the selling performance of the company using multiple linear regression model. The researcher was used linear regression since the dependent variable customer attitude was manipulated as a continuous variable. Multiple regression is a model in which one dependent variable depends on two or more explanatory variables (Gujarati, 2003). Diagnostic Tests for Model such as Normality test, Linearity test, Multicollinearity test, and Validity Test Reliability was used in the study.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

The respondents were assured that the information they provide is confidential and used for exclusively for academic purpose. This will help to collect bias free response and allow respondents to express their idea with full freedom.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents finding and analysis, interpretation and discussion of result of data collected. Both descriptive and explanatory results are presented.

Total 267 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents of the company (Ethio telecom Hawassa district) and there is no missing value to the study. The return rates of the questionnaires were 100%.

4.13 4.1 Demographic information about respondents

Demographic analysis of the respondents is presented in the Table 4.1 below. This table gives information about the sex, age, education, and work experience of respondents.

Table 1 Demographic information about respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	163	67.45
	Female	104	40.55
Age	Below 25	38	8.3
	26 – 35	89	50.0
	36 – 45	127	29.2
	Above 45	13	12.5
Education	Master's degree	54	34.2
	Bachelor degree	213	65.8
	Diploma	-	-
Experience	Below 5	128	48
	5-10	90	34
	11-15	45	17
	Above 15	4	1

Source: Survey, 2024

As it is presented in the tables 2 above, 70.8% of the respondents are males and remaining 29.2% of the respondents are females. The survey results show that majority of the respondents are male.

Table 2 items 2 shows that in regards to the age category of the respondents, only 8.3% of the respondents' age is less than 25 years. The majority (50%) of the respondents has age between 26 years and 35 years. The second highest age category is age between 36 years and 45years. 29.2% of the respondents are at this age range. These two age ranges comprise 79.2% of the total respondents. 12.5% of the respondents are above 45 years old. The survey results show that majority of the respondents young.

Regarding the educational background, 65.8% of the respondents have masters' degree and 34.2% of the respondents have bachelors' degree. But none of the respondents have educational qualification of diploma. This implies that majority of the respondents are highly educated and they easily able to give information about the study issues.

In regards to work experience of the employer 48% and 34% of the respondents have a work experience below 5 years and between 5 to 10 years respectively and 17% of respondents were 11 up 15 years work experience. This shows that the company has stable work force regarding the turnover.

4.14 Descriptive Analysis

This analysis is conducted to identify skills of sales and sales performance of the sales by using the opinion of the respondents. This analysis is conducting the statistical measures of mean and standard deviation.

4.2.1. Technical Skills

Table 2 Descriptive Analysis technical skills

Statements		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	My knowledge concern how the company's products were developed helped me to sell more.	267	3.62	.875
2	Skill and knowledge concerning the performance data on the company's products is useful to sell the product.	267	3.58	.830
3	Skill and knowledge about the delivery process of the company's product assist to sell the product.	267	3.58	.881
4	My knowledge about products features helps me to close sell.	267	3.63	.875
5	My knowledge about products benefits helps me to close sell.	267	3.50	.834
6	Ability to understand product general specifications of the company's products are important to close a sell.	267	3.71	.999
Technical skills		267	3.6042	.84386

Source: Survey, 2024

Table above 3 presents the technical skills of the sales persons based on their responses and measured with their agreement level. As it is indicated with mean value of 3.62, the knowledge of the sales persons (company employees) for how the company's products were developed helped them to sell more. Standard deviation for this statement is 0.875 suggesting that there is no significant variation from mean response. This shows that sales person's company employees) are helped from the knowledge concerning how the company's products were developed to sell the product. Mean value for responses of about the statement that 'skill and knowledge concerning the performance data on the company's products is useful to sell the product' is 3.58 suggesting that salespersons (company employees) used their skills and knowledge about the performance of the product to sell. And respective standard deviation of 0.83 indicates that all salespersons have similar skill to sell more.

As it is confirmed by mean value of 3.58 about the delivery process of the product helped the sales persons to sale more. Knowledge about the products features also helped to sale the product as it is indicated with mean value of 3.63 and standard deviation of 0.875. Responses with mean values of 3.5 and 3.71 indicate that knowledge about products benefits and general specification helped to close sell respectively. Overall mean of 3.6 and standard deviation of 0.84 about technical skill which is computed statistically by using mean values suggests that sales persons (company employees) have good technical skills to support sales performance of the sales persons. This shows that the data are clustered around the mean which showed the reliability of the data.

4.2.2. Interpersonal Skills

Table 3 Descriptive Analysis Interpersonal skills

Item	Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Ability to express oneself non-verbally (Message without words such as through facial expression, professional appearance, handshake, posture and body movement, eye contact, etc.) helps you in your day-to-day activity.	267	3.17	.868
2	Ability in general speaking skills (such as effective use of words, voice quality or characteristics for example speech rate, loudness and articulation: vocal clarity, and verbal expression, etc.) is useful to close a sell.	267	3.21	.833
3	My awareness and understanding the non- verbal communication of others (such as facial expression, professional appearance, handshake, posture and body movement, and eye contact, etc.) help me to close a sell.	267	2.9	1.018
4	I have an ability to control and regulate non-verbal displays of emotion (such as anger, anxiety, joy, and delight, etc.)	267	3.57	.584
5	I have an ability to exercise influence over others.	267	3.50	.933
Interpersonal skills		267	3.2750	.70726

Source: Survey, 2024

The survey results show that mean value for response for the statement that ability to express oneself non-verbally helps in day to day is 3.17 suggesting that their agreement is moderate for the statement. Its standard deviation is 0.868 suggesting that there is similar agreement about the statement. All responses for interpersonal skill have similar result except the about the statement of awareness and understanding the non-verbal communication of others helps to close a sell. Its mean value is 2.92 suggesting that the respondents dis-agree that awareness and understanding the non-verbal communication of others helps to close a sell. Its standard deviation is 1.02 suggesting that there is high variation with agreement for the statement. Overall mean for responses of interpersonal skill is 3.28 and its standard deviation is 0.71. The survey result shows that the data are clustered around the mean which showed the reliability of the data.

4.2.3. Marketing Skill

Table 4 Descriptive Analysis marketing skill

Items	Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I always have real time information about changes in customers' needs.	267	3.75	.676
2	I have a lot of information about industry trends.	267	3.67	.637
3	I am well informed about important events in our industry.	267	3.33	.702
4	I am able to look at sales opportunity.	267	3.67	.816
	Marketing skill	267	3.6	.53118

Source: Survey, 2024

Results in the table suggest that salespersons have real time information about changes in customers' needs, industry trends, events in our industry, and sales opportunity. An overall mean for marketing skills is 3.6 suggesting that the sales persons have marketing skill. The standard deviation is 0.53 suggesting there is no significant variation from mean response.

4.2.4. Salesmanship skills

Table 5 Descriptive Analysis Salesmanship skills

Items	Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I have an ability to get buy-in from customers	267	3.50	.780
2	I am able to communicate the sales presentation clearly and consistently	267	4.25	.897
3	I am efficient in negotiation.	267	4.25	.897
4	I can make collaborative environment.	267	4.21	.884
5	I have an ability to service customers' account.	267	4.17	.868
	Salesmanship skills	267	4.0	.75484

Source: Survey, 2024

Descriptive analysis for salesmanship skills is presented in the table 6 above. The results indicate that salesperson (employees of ethio telecom Hawassa district) have ability to get buy-in from customers, communicate the sales presentation clearly and consistently, efficiency in negotiation, make the environment collaborative and service customers' account. The respondents agree that they have salesmanship skill with overall mean value of 4.08 and standard deviation of 0.75.

4.2.5. Sales Performance

Table 6 Descriptive Analysis for Sales performance

Items	Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I am effective in generating high level of sales revenues.	267	3.62	.875
2	I am effective in exceeding annual Sales target and objectives.	267	3.17	.868
3	I establish long lasting relationship with customers.	267	3.75	.676
4	I am effective in contributing to company's market share.	267	3.50	.780
	Sales performance	267	3.5104	.31691

Source: Survey, 2024

The results about sales performance indicate that salespersons (employees of Ethio telecom Hawassa district) are effective in generating high level of sales revenues, exceeding annual sales target and objectives, establish long lasting relationship with customers, and effective in contributing to the company's market share. Overall mean of 3.5 and standard deviation of 0.32 suggests that salespersons (employees of Ethio telecom Hawassa district) have good sales performance.

4.15 4. 3 Multiple linear Regression Model Result

4.3.1 Reliability and Validity tests results

Triangulation is primarily a way of assuring the validity of research results through the use of different research methods and approaches. According to Creswell (2007) the strategies which are used for ensuring the trustworthiness of the study are credibility and dependability. Credibility refers to methodological procedure used to keep arrangement between what study participants said and what researcher presents about them. In view of this, in order to increase credibility, the above-mentioned methodological triangulation procedure was strictly followed. In other words, triangulation is a key for ensuring validity and reliability of findings of this research. As one method of ensuring the trustworthiness of this study, triangulation techniques have employed. The term triangulation is defined by Harper and Marcus (2003) as a technique of finding out where something is, by looking on it from two or more places. As it is indicated in the table 8 below, all Cronbach 's alpha indexes are above 0.7 suggesting that the variables are consistent to measure relationship between sales skills and sales performance. The results of Cronbach's alpha were 0.86. This shows that there is very good level and there is no problems of validity and reliability.

Table 7 Reliability and validity results

	No	No of questions	Cronbach's alpha
1	Technical skills	.980	7
2	Interpersonal skill	.881	6
3	Marketing skill	.736	5
4	Salesmanship skill	.921	6
	Sales performance	.812	5

Source, survey result,202

4.3.2 Normality Tests

This study used bivariate correlation analysis through Pearson and multivariate linear regression method to identify the relationship between sales skills and sales performance. These two methods assume normal distribution of data for both dependent and independent variables. Before analyzing the data in these methods, the researcher conducted normality test by using Shapiro-Wilk test with null hypothesis of normal distribution of the data. Since all variables are insignificant at significance levels of both 0.05 and 0.01, the researcher could not reject the null hypothesis implying that the data used for the study is normally distributed.

Table 8 Tests of Normality

Variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
SP	.154	267	.148	.933	267	.113
TS	.165	267	.121	.995	267	.122
IS	.105	267	.160	.997	267	.128
MS	.125	267	.133	.958	267	.123
SS	.194	267	.090	.944	267	.119

Source: Own computations, 2024

4.3.3 Linearity Test

This test is conducted to identify linear relationship between dependent variable and independent variables with null hypothesis of linear relationship. Table 11 below presents the result of linearity test.

Table 9 Linearity Test

Variable	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
TS	.816	5	.163	2.565	.066
IS	.728	6	.121	2.478	.069
MS	.732	5	.146	1.603	.213
SS	.168	6	.028	.347	.901

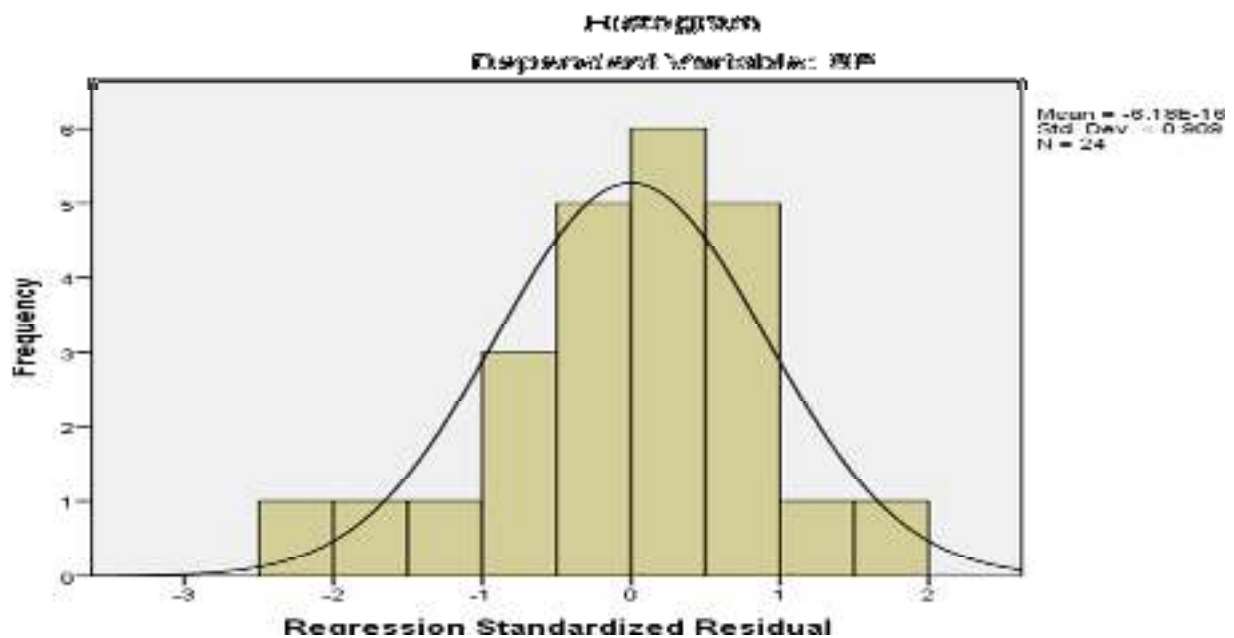
Source: Own computations, 2024

All variables are insignificant at both significance level of 0.05 and 0.01. Since the linearity between study variables is insignificant, the researcher cannot reject null hypothesis instead accepts null hypothesis of dependent and independent variables are linearly related. This implies that sales skills and sales performance have linear relationship.

4.3.4 Residual Normality Test

One of the classical linear regression models' assumptions is the error term should be normally distributed or expected value of the error term should be normally distributed or expected value of the error's terms should be zero ($E(UT) = 0$). The researcher used histogram to identify normal distribution of residuals and the result indicates that standard residuals are a little bit far away from the curve, many of the residuals are fairly close more to the curve and the histogram is bell shaped. This implies that the majority of scores lie around the center of the distribution (so the largest bars on the histogram are all around the central value). Therefore, this indicates that the residuals are normally distributed.

Figure 2: Residual Normality Test



Source: own computation, 2024

4.3.5 Correlation Analysis

The result of correlation analysis is presented in the table 11 below. This study used both descriptive and explanatory designs to answer research questions. Correlation analysis is one of explanatory design that is intended to identify the relationship between independent variable, sales skills, and dependent variable, sales performance. Pearson correlation method is used to conduct the correlation analysis.

Table 10 Correlation Analysis

	SP	TS	IS	MS	SS
SP	1				
TS	.423*	1			
IS	.588**	-.203	1		
MS	.106	-.365	.418*	1	
SS	.605**	.137	.357	-.178	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation coefficient of relationship between technical skills and salesman's performance is 0.423 and it is statistically significant at significance level of 0.05. This suggests that developing technical skills improves performance of the salesman significantly. Interpersonal skills and performance of salesman is positively correlated with the correlation coefficient of 0.588. Their relationship is statistically significant at significance level of 0.01 indicating very strong relationship between them. This suggests that interpersonal skill the salesperson possesses is positively contributing to the performance of the salesman. Although the marketing skill and salesman's performance is positively correlated, their relationship is weak. The salesmanship skill has highest correlation coefficient with salesman's performance from all independent variables used. The correlation coefficient of relationship between salesmanship skill and performance of the salesman is 0.605 and significant at significance level of 0.01 indicating their very strong relationship. This suggests that salesmanship skill of the salespersons in the company is highly related with their performance. The employees that have better salesmanship skill are performing better in sales.

4.3.6 Model Summary

Table 11 Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.873	0.762	0.712	0.16996

Source: Own computations, 2024

The study model summary is presented in table 11 above. The researcher used adjusted R-squared to summarize the model. As it is shown in the table, adjusted R squared is 0.712 suggesting that 71.2% variation in dependent variable is explained by independent variables used in the model. This implies that 71.2% variation in sales performance of (employees of Ethio telecom Hawassa district) is affected by variation of sales skills dimensions.

4.3.7 ANOVA Results

Table 12 ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1.761	4	0.44	15.2672	0
Residual	0.549	19	0.029		
Total	2.31	23			

Source: Own computations, 2024

ANOVA is presented in table 12. This analysis is used to address the general objective of the study. In addition, this analysis is used to identify appropriateness of the model in estimating relationship between sales skills and selling performance.

The researcher used multivariate linear regression method to run regression analysis. F-statistic is significant at 0.01 indicating that the model used is appropriate to explain the relationship between sales skills and selling performance. This implies that sales skills and selling performance have statistically significant relationship. Therefore, the researcher cannot accept null hypothesis of sales skills have no effect on sales performance instead rejects null hypothesis and accepts alternative hypothesis that sales skills have significant positive effect on sales performance. This study has identified similar finding to (Churchill et al., 1985; Ahmad et al., 2010) that sales skills affect a selling performance.

The relationship of individual dimension of sales skills with selling performance is presented in the table 13 below. The researcher used unstandardized coefficients and their sign to analyze the relationship between sales skills and selling performance. The specific objectives are addressed based on this analysis.

4.3.8 Coefficients Results

Table 13 Coefficients

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.064	.416		2.558	.019
TS	.198	.046	.528	4.356	.000
IS	.219	.063	.489	3.454	.003
MS	.098	.082	.163	1.186	.250
SS	.163	.055	.387	2.964	.008

Source: Own computations, 2024

Coefficient of technical skill is positive and statistically significant at significance level of 0.01 suggesting that technical skill have very strong relationship with selling performance. Value of t-statistic is highest from all variables with the value of 4.356 suggesting that technical skill has the highest relationship with selling performance when compared to the other sales skills.

Based on this finding, the researcher cannot accept null hypothesis of interpersonal skill has no effect on selling performance instead rejects null hypothesis and accepts alternative hypothesis of interpersonal skill have positive significant relationship with sales performance. This study has identified similar with findings of Baldauf et al., 2001; Grants & Cravens, 1999; Baldauf & Cravens, 1999; Katisheck & Skermeas, 2003; Baldauf & Cravens, 2002) that the use of technical knowledge results in higher selling performance and employee's product knowledge is important.

Interpersonal skill is statistically significant at significance level of 0.01 suggesting that it has strong relationship with sales performance. Its coefficient is positive that indicates improving the interpersonal skill improves sales performance and vice versa. When strength of its relationship with sales performance is compared to other variables, it is the second strongest skill of sales in affecting the sales performance with t-statistics of 3.454 next to technical skill. Since interpersonal skill is statistically significant in affecting the sales performance, the researcher cannot accept null hypothesis of interpersonal skill has no effect on sellin skill instead rejects null hypothesis and accepts alternative hypothesis of interpersonal skill have significant positive effect on selling performance.

It increases sales performance through mental and communication algorithms which is important for social communication and interaction. Listening, empathy, optimism and perceived observation skills results on better communication with purchasers that enables better sales. Thus, these dimensions are likely to collectively realize effective interpersonal skills, and, in turn, salesperson performance for achieving high sales performance leading to the requirement that salespeople have or develop strong interpersonal skills. This finding coincides with findings of Comer & Drollinger (1999); Castleberry & Shepherd (1993); Ramsey and Sohi (1997), and Shepherd, C.D., Castleberry, S.B. & Ridnour, R.E. (1997) that effective interpersonal skills are valuable skills for successful salespersons. Marketing skill has statistically weak relationship with selling performance. Therefore, the researcher accepts null hypothesis of marketing skill has no effect on selling performance.

Salesmanship is statistically significant in affecting sales performance at significant level of 0.01 suggesting that it has strong effect on selling performance. The direction of the relationship is positive indicating that sales persons with higher salesmanship have higher sales performance and vice versa. Therefore, the researcher cannot accept null hypothesis of salesmanship has no effect on performance of selling instead rejects null hypothesis and accepts alternative hypothesis of salesmanship has significant positive effect on performance of selling. This finding is parallel to findings of Ahmad et al., (2010), Babakus et al., (1996), Futrell, (2006); Ingram et al., (2004) and Schuster & Danes (1986) that salesmanship skills adjust the sales environment, based on cues from the buyer, and coupled with other complementary salesmanship skills, namely, consultative selling practices, ability to be an excellent negotiator, skill in probing and questioning customer needs, and possessing commendable communication skills, either verbal or nonverbal; give the seller a positive feeling in terms of their selling performance and results on strong sales performance of the company.

4.3.9 Summary of Hypotheses

Table 14 Summary of Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Decision
H1: Technical skills and selling performance are significantly and positively related.	Accepted
H2: Interpersonal skills and sales selling performance are significantly and positively related	Accepted
H3: Marketing skills and selling performance are significantly and positively related.	Rejected
H4: Salesmanship skills and selling performance	Accepted
are significantly and positively related.	

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction: This section presents conclusion and recommendations based on result obtained for the research questions of what the effect on is technical, interpersonal, marketing and salesmanship skills on sales performance.

4.16 5.1. Summary of Major Finding

This study was conducted with an objective of identifying the effect of sales skill on selling performance. To achieve this objective the researcher conceptualized four sales skill dimensions; technical skill, interpersonal skill, marketing skill, and salesmanship skill. The researcher identified positive and significant effect of technical skill on selling performance at significance level of 0.01. Interpersonal skill has significant effect on their selling performance at significance level of 0.01. Marketing skill is statistically insignificant in affecting the selling performance. Salesmanship has significant positive effect on selling performance at significance level of 0.01. Sales skills have significant effect on selling performance at significance level of 0.01.

4.17 5.2 Conclusions

This study has identified the effect of sales skills on selling performance in ethio telecom Hawassa district. Technical skills, interpersonal skills, marketing skills, and salesmanship skills were used as independent variables were used to measure sales skill. The effects are tested by using statistical tools. Bases on the findings the researcher provides following conclusions.

- ✓ Technical skill and selling performance are significantly and positively related. It is concluded that technical skill is the predictor of selling performance.

So Technical skill is the predictor of sales success in Ethio telecom Hawassa district.

- ✓ Effect of interpersonal skills is positive and significant on the selling performance of the company. Interpersonal skills enabled them to increase their selling performance in the company.

Salesmanship skill is positive and significant in affecting selling performance. Therefore, it is concluded that the salesmanship skill is supporting the selling performance in Ethio telecom Hawassa district.

4.18 5.3 Recommendations

Bases on the conclusions drawn the researcher provides following recommendations.

- ✓ Since the technical skill has the most significant effect on selling performance of the company than other sales skill, it is recommended to improve technical skill about product development, performance, delivery, features, benefits and specifications by giving trainings and workshops for the existing employees or by hiring sales person who have marketing knowledge and train them the technical detail of the product and train them how to sale to develop the necessary sales skill.
- ✓ Interpersonal skill has significant positive effect on sales performance of the company. Therefore, it is recommended to improve this skill by improving both verbal and non-verbal communication through training and workshop.
- ✓ Since salesmanship has significant effect, the researcher recommends that salesmanship skill has to be improved further through on the job and off the job training to getting buy-in from customers, clear sales presentation, negotiation, collaboration and giving care for customers.

4.19 5.4 Research limitation and areas for future research

With regards to the limitations of the paper, several limitations of the present study suggest potential direction for future research. First, the present study was confined to employees of single organization (Ethio telecom Hawassa district).

Although these were suitable for testing the framework, the use of sample from single organization restricts the generalizability of the findings. A comparative study involving multiple organizations or sample from multiple organizations of similar company would be useful to test the framework, and thus provide better generalizability of the findings.

Second, the dimensions of selling performance in the present research confined to four dimensions which are interpersonal, salesmanship, technical, and marketing skills. Future research should investigate the possibility of adding additional dimensions to selling skills that may also influence selling performance that have been left out such as personal skill, relational skill and professional skills.

Finally, the choice of the respondents, as evaluator of all sales skill's dimensions may also imply some limitations. Ideally, a more diverse group should evaluate selling performance.

Moreover, the argument can be made that, since selling performance are fronting and dealing with customers,

it is suggested that selling performance is best assessed by customers. Customers could rate the s selling performance better on those aspects that impact customers' attitudes and their purchase. Furthermore, evaluation from customers may add more meaningful and convincing results.

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Hawassa University Masters of Art in Marketing Management
A questioner to be filled by employees of Ethio telecom Hawassa District

This questionnaire is designed to be filled by employees of Ethio telecom Hawassa District. It is prepared to examine the relationship between sales skill and selling performance. Your response will be treated confidential and used for only academic purpose. In this regard, your kind and serious cooperation will have significant effect on the result of the study.

Note: - No need to write your name

1. Sex ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Age ☐ Below 25 ☐ 25-35 ☐ 35-45 ☐ Above 45

3. Educational level ☐ Master's Degree ☐ Bachelor Degree
☐ Diploma ☐ High school completed

Experience ☐ Less than 5 years ☐ 5 -10 years

50

Part II - Personal Selling Skills and Performance

In your opinion, how does your sales skill affect your performance in terms of sales skill dimensions listed in the table below? Use from 1 to 5 to rate your answer; were,

Table 15 1-Strongly Disagree 2 - Disagree 3 - Neutral 4 - Agree and 5 - Strongly Agree

Statements		Level of score				
		1	2	3	4	5
TS-1	My knowledge concerning how the company's products were developed helped me to sell more.					
TS-2	Skill and knowledge concerning the performance data on the company's products is useful to sell the product.					
TS-3	Skill and knowledge about the delivery process of the company's product assist to sell the product.					
TS-4	My knowledge about products features helps me to close sell.					
TS-5	My knowledge about products benefits helps me to close sell.					
TS-6	Ability to understand product general specifications of the company's products is important to close a sell.					
IS-1	Ability to express oneself non-verbally (message					
	without words such as through facial expression, professional appearance, handshake, posture and body movement, eye contact, etc.) helps you in your day-to-day activity.					
IS-2	Ability in general speaking skills (such as effective use of words, voice quality or characteristics for example speech rate, loudness and articulation: vocal clarity, and verbal expression, etc.) is useful to close a sell.					
IS-3	My awareness and understanding the non-verbal communication of others (such as facial expression, professional appearance, handshake, posture and body movement, and eye contact, etc.) help me to close a sell.					
IS-4	I have an ability to control and regulate non-verbal displays of emotion (such as anger, anxiety, joy, and delight, etc.)					

IS-5	I have an ability to exercise influence over others.					
MS-1	I always have real time information about changes in customers' needs.					
MS-2	I have a lot of information about industry trends.					
MS-3	I am well informed about important events in our industry.					
MS-4	I am able to look at sales opportunity.					
SS-1	I have an ability to get buy-in from customers.					
SS-2	I am able to communicate the sales presentation clearly and consistently					
SS-3	I am efficient in negotiation.					
SS-4	I can make collaborative environment.					
SS-5	I have an ability to service customers' account.					
SP-1	I am effective in generating high level of sales revenues.					
SP-2	I am effective in exceeding annual sales target and objectives.					
SP-3	I establish long lasting relationship with customers.					
SP-4	I am effective in contributing to the company's market share.					

APPENDIX - TWO - SPSS RESULT

Table 16 Sex of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	CumulativePercent
	MALE	17	70.8	70.8	70.8
Valid	FEMALE	7	29.2	29.2	100.0
	Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Table 17 Age of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	CumulativePercent
	BELOW 25	2	8.3	8.3	8.3
	25 – 35	12	50.0	50.0	58.3
Valid	35 – 45	7	29.2	29.2	87.5
	ABOVE 45	3	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Table 18 Educational Level of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	CumulativePercent
MASTERS DEGREE	1	4.2	4.2	4.2
BACHELOR DEGREE	9	37.5	37.5	41.7
Valid				
DIPLOMA	14	58.3	58.3	100.0
Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Table 19 Work Experience of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	CumulativePercent
LESS THAN FIVE YEARS	7	29.2	29.2	29.2
FIVE TO TEN YEARS	5	20.8	20.8	50.0
TEN TO FIFTEEN YEARS	8	33.3	33.3	83.3
Valid GREATER THAN FIFTEEN YEARS	4	16.7	16.7	100.0
Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Table 20 My knowledge concerning how the company's products were developed helped me to sell more.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	CumulativePercent
	DISAGREE	4	16.7	16.7	16.7
	NEUTRAL	3	12.5	12.5	29.2
Valid	AGREE	15	62.5	62.5	91.7
	STRONGLY AGREE	2	8.3	8.3	100.0

Total 24 100.0 100.0

Table 21 Skill and knowledge concerning the performance data on the company's products is useful to sell the product

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	DISAGREE	4	16.7	16.7	16.7
	NEUTRAL	3	12.5	12.5	29.2
Valid	AGREE	16	66.7	66.7	95.8
	STRONGLY AGREE	1	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	100.0	

Table 22 Skill and knowledge about the delivery process of the company's product assist to sell the product

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	DISAGREE	4	16.7	16.7	16.7
	NEUTRAL	4	16.7	16.7	33.3
Valid	AGREE	14	58.3	58.3	91.7
	STRONGLY AGREE	2	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	100.0	

Table 23 My knowledge about products features helps me to close sell

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	DISAGREE	4	16.7	16.7	16.7
	NEUTRAL	3	12.5	12.5	29.2
Valid	AGREE	15	62.5	62.5	91.7
	STRONGLY AGREE	2	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Table 24 My knowledge about products benefits helps me to close sell

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	DISAGREE	4	16.7	16.7	16.7
	NEUTRAL	5	20.8	20.8	37.5
Valid	AGREE	14	58.3	58.3	95.8
	STRONGLY AGREE	1	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Ability to understand product general specifications of the company's products is important to close a sell.

Ability to express oneself non-verbally (message without words such as through facial expression, professional appearance, handshake, posture and body movement, eye contact, etc.) helps you in your day-to-day activity.

Ability in general speaking skills (such as effective use of words, voice quality or characteristics for example speech rate, loudness and articulation: vocal clarity, and verbal expression, etc.) is useful to close a sell.

My awareness and understanding the non-verbal communication of others (such as facial expression, professional appearance, handshake, posture and body movement, and eye contact, etc.) help me to close a sell.

I have an ability to control and regulate non-verbal displays of emotion (such as anger, anxiety, joy, and delight, etc).

Table 25 have an ability to exercise influence over others.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
STRONGLY DISAGREE	1	4.2	4.2	4.2
DISAGREE	3	12.5	12.5	16.7
NEUTRAL	4	16.7	16.7	33.3
Valid				
AGREE	15	62.5	62.5	95.8
STRONGLY AGREE	1	4.2	4.2	100.0
Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Table 26I always have real time information about changes in customers' needs

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
NEUTRAL	9	37.5	37.5	37.5
AGREE	12	50.0	50.0	87.5
Valid				
STRONGLY AGREE	3	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Table 27I have a lot of information about industry trends

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
NEUTRAL	10	41.7	41.7	41.7
AGREE	12	50.0	50.0	91.7
Valid				
STRONGLY AGREE	2	8.3	8.3	100.0
Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Table 28I am well informed about important events in our industry.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
DISAGREE	1	4.2	4.2	4.2
NEUTRAL	16	66.7	66.7	70.8
Valid AGREE	5	20.8	20.8	91.7
STRONGLY AGREE	2	8.3	8.3	100.0
Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Table 29 I am well informed about important events in our industry

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
NEUTRAL	13	54.2	54.2	54.2
AGREE	6	25.0	25.0	79.2
Valid				
STRONGLY AGREE	5	20.8	20.8	100.0
Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Table 30 I am able to look at sales opportunity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	DISAGREE	3	12.5	12.5	12.5
	NEUTRAL	7	29.2	29.2	41.7
Valid	AGREE	13	54.2	54.2	95.8
	STRONGLY AGREE	1	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Table 31 I have an ability to get buy-in from customers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	DISAGREE	2	8.3	8.3	8.3
	NEUTRAL	1	4.2	4.2	12.5
Valid	AGREE	10	41.7	41.7	54.2
	STRONGLY AGREE	11	45.8	45.8	100.0
	Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Table 32 I am able to communicate the sales presentation clearly and consistently

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	DISAGREE	2	8.3	8.3	8.3
	NEUTRAL	1	4.2	4.2	12.5
Valid	AGREE	10	41.7	41.7	54.2
	STRONGLY AGREE	11	45.8	45.8	100.0
	Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Table 33 I am efficient in negotiation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	DISAGREE	2	8.3	8.3	8.3
	NEUTRAL	1	4.2	4.2	12.5
Valid	AGREE	11	45.8	45.8	58.3
	STRONGLY AGREE	10	41.7	41.7	100.0
	Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Table 34I can make collaborative environment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	DISAGREE	2	8.3	8.3	8.3
	NEUTRAL	1	4.2	4.2	12.5
Valid	AGREE	12	50.0	50.0	62.5
	STRONGLY AGREE	9	37.5	37.5	100.0
	Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Table 35 I have an ability to service customers' account

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	DISAGREE	4	16.7	16.7	16.7
	NEUTRAL	3	12.5	12.5	29.2
Valid	AGREE	15	62.5	62.5	91.7
	STRONGLY AGREE	2	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Table 36 I am effective in generating high level of sales revenues

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	DISAGREE	6	25.0	25.0	25.0
	NEUTRAL	9	37.5	37.5	62.5
Valid	AGREE	8	33.3	33.3	95.8
	STRONGLY AGREE	1	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Table 37 I am effective in exceeding annual sales target and objectives

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	NEUTRAL	9	37.5	37.5	37.5
	AGREE	12	50.0	50.0	87.5
Valid					
	STRONGLY AGREE	3	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Table 38 I establish long lasting relationship with customers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	DISAGREE	3	12.5	12.5	12.5
	NEUTRAL	7	29.2	29.2	41.7
Valid	AGREE	13	54.2	54.2	95.8
	STRONGLY AGREE	1	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	267	100.0	100.0	

Table 39 Correlations

		SP	TS	IS	MS	SS
	Pearson Correlation	1	.423 [*]	.588 ^{**}	.106	.605 ^{**}
SP	Sig. (2-tailed)		.040	.003	.621	.002
	N	267	267	267	267	267
	Pearson Correlation	.423 [*]	1	-.203	-.365	.137
TS	Sig. (2-tailed)	.040		.341	.080	.522
	N	267	267	267	267	267
	Pearson Correlation	.588 ^{**}	-.203	1	.418 [*]	.357
IS	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.341		.042	.087
	N	267	267	267	267	267
	Pearson Correlation	.106	-.365	.418 [*]	1	-.178
MS	Sig. (2-tailed)	.621	.080	.042		.406
	N	267	267	267	267	267
	Pearson Correlation	.605 ^{**}	.137	.357	-.178	1
SS	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.522	.087	.406	
	N	267	267	267	267	267

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 40 Case Processing Summary

		N	%
	Valid	267	100.0
Cases	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	267	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 41 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.980	6

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.881	5

Table 42 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.736	4

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha ^a	N of Items
.812	4

Table 43 Coefficients^a

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
TS	.851	1.176
IS	.625	1.600
1		
MS	.658	1.519
SS	.732	1.367

Table 44 a. Dependent Variable: SP

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions				
				(Constant)	TS	IS	MS	SS
	1	4.886	1.000	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
	2	.063	8.835	.00	.43	.11	.02	.00
1	3	.030	12.828	.01	.02	.04	.16	.42
	4	.017	16.953	.05	.31	.77	.05	.28
	5	.005	32.302	.94	.23	.08	.76	.30

