

## **Exploring the relative effects of Selling Skills on customer satisfaction: A study on SMEs of IT Hardware Industry in Bangladesh**

<sup>1</sup>Muhaiminul Islam, <sup>2</sup>Shuvro Kumar Paul, <sup>3</sup>Sultana Nasira,  
<sup>4</sup>Sarker Towfiq Pritom, <sup>5</sup>Reza-E-Rabbi

<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>BBA, School of Management and Business Administration, Khulna University, Bangladesh

---

**Abstract:** *The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between salespersons selling skills and customer satisfaction. Those skills include interpersonal, salesmanship and technical skills. The research is designed by a model. The model replicates a relationship of selling skills and customer satisfaction. Cronbach Alpha is calculated to evaluate the reliability of the study. Sample data was collected through online and on spot survey. The findings show that there is a strong relationship between salespersons selling skills and customer satisfaction. Technical skills contributed more to the customer satisfaction. Moreover, customer is not satisfied with current condition of hardware market and selling skills scored very low. The study finally suggests SMEs of Khulna City to take steps for improving salespersons selling skills as those are related to customer satisfaction thus relates to organizational performance.*

**Keywords:** *SME, Customer Satisfaction. Selling Skills*

---

### **I. Introduction**

IT hardware industry is one of the most fast growing industries in Bangladesh. Most of the citizens in Bangladesh depend more on physical labor rather than technology. Moreover most of the people do not know about the efficient use of computer and other information technology products for their lives to increase their living standard.

Small medium enterprises (SMEs) in this sector is growing rapidly. More companies are entering to the market. But unskilled labor practices are still existing in Bangladesh. People are not getting much information from the salespersons, available in the market, in case of computer goods. Most of the customers perceive their buying behavior that is merely dependent on personal choices based on previous research. There are a lot of cases when a customer become frustrated from salesperson's behavior.

There are so many significant factors in the customer satisfaction relating to selling skills of the employees. (Crawford, 2012). Specific principles can sharpen a salesperson's ability to satisfy customers. Satisfaction can be considered as a minimum expectation from customer's point of view (Warden, 2010). Customer satisfaction is mostly related with selling skills. IT industry is growing in Bangladesh as more companies along with SMEs entering into the business thus creating a buzz in the international marketplace.

#### **Objectives of the study**

Therefore, based on the preliminary findings this research proposal mainly seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- Determine the selling skills for Salesperson's of SME's in IT hardware industry in Bangladesh.
- Identify the relationship between selling skills and customer satisfaction at SME firms of IT Hardware industry in Khulna
- Identify the gaps of the selling skills of the employees at SME firms

#### **Scope of the study**

The scope of the study will cover SMEs of IT hardware industries in Khulna City. It will mostly cover Jalil Tower-Khulna, New Market-Khulna and Other areas of Khulna having SME outlets. As the study is geographically concentrated it might be difficult to draw conclusion about the the actual population. Due to constraints and limitation of resources only one department will be assessed and observed. The area of which will focus of the selling skills including interpersonal skills, salesmanship and technical skills

### **II. Literature Review**

Success of SMEs is dependent on the performance of his business or his organization. In Khulna City, there are a growing number of SMEs. There are several factors dependent on the customer satisfaction. IT hardware industry is one of the most fast growing industries in Bangladesh. Most of the citizens in Bangladesh depend more on physical labor rather than technology. Moreover most of the people do not know about the efficient use of computer and other information technology products for their lives to increase their living standard.

### ***Demographics of Khulna City***

Khulna is the third-largest city in Bangladesh. It is the south-western divisional city & administrative seat of Khulna District and Khulna Division. More than 1.4 million people live here. (BBS, 2013). Khulna is situated between 21.38' and 23.1 north latitude and 88.58 east longitude and is 12 ft. above mean sea level (Palit, 2012). According to last survey, area of Khulna city is 59.57 km<sup>2</sup> (23.00 sq. mi) while the district itself is about 4394.46 km<sup>2</sup> (KCC, 2015). The literacy rate among the urban people of Khulna is 59.1%, which is higher than the national average of 56.5% (BBS, 2013). The city is in the northern part of the Khulna district, & is mainly an expansion of trade centers close to the Rupsha and Bhairab rivers. The Mayur River forms the western boundary of the metropolitan area of the city. The population density is 25,000 per square km or 65,000 per square mile (BBS, 2013). Khulna was declared as a City Corporation In 1990. The city is an old river port located on the Rupsha River. One of the most important hubs of Bangladeshi industry, & it hosts many renowned national companies. Monglaport is situated here, the second largest seaport in the country. It is also one of the two principal naval command centers of the Bangladesh Navy. The city is regarded as the gateway to the Sundarbans, which is the world's largest tidal forest and home of the Royal Bengal Tiger. Khulna is also situated north of the Historic Mosque City of Bagerhat that is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The jurisdiction of Khulna Sub-division was then extended over the present Khulna district and a great part of the present Bagerhat district. The boundary of present Khulna district is formed in 1984. A number of large scale industrial units were set up in this city during the period of 1950-70. These industrial units are located mainly in present Khulna City Corporation and its adjacent areas. Khulna Newsprint Mills Ltd, Khulna Hardboard Mills Ltd, Khulna Textile Mills Ltd, Khulna Power Station and seventeen jute mills were established by the bank of Bhairab River. Another important industrial unit -Khulna shipyard Ltd was established in 1957 (KCC, 2015). But now, Khulna Newsprint Mills, Textile Mills and a number of jute mills have already been closed as per government decision. On the other hand, Khulna shipyard Ltd was handed over to Bangladesh Navy for running its operation. Most of the people in Khulna are the Bengali people. Apart from them, there are people from the neighboring districts and from the greater Barisal & Faridpur regions of Bangladesh. A large number of people are from Comilla & Noakhali region also resides in the city. Khulna also has a significant number of Bihari populations. Most residents of Khulna speak Bengali, the national language. Islam is the major religion in Khulna, approximately 73.49% people are Muslim, and the others are: Hindu 25.74%, Christian 0.67%, Buddhist 0.04%, and Others 0.06% (BBS, 2013). Cricket and football are the two most popular sports in Khulna. Khulna first class team has its home ground in Khulna city. In domestic Twenty20 cricket, Khulna has a Bangladesh Premier League franchise known as Khulna Royal Bengals. In football, Khulna Abahani Club played in Bangladeshi top tier football league. Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium is the only international sports venue in Khulna city. It hosts Test cricket, One Day International and Twenty20 International. Khulna District Stadium is the venue for other domestic sporting events. Several local newspapers published regularly like The Daily Purbanchal, The Daily Janmabhumi, The Daily Probah, The Daily Tribune (English) etc. Bangladesh Betar Khulna 106.5fm, Radio Today 89.6fm, Radio Foorti 88.0fm Radio Khulna FM 88.8fm are the radio stations in the city.

### ***Demographics of Bangladesh***

Bangladesh, our country is the world's eighth-most populous country, it is one of the most densely populated countries and among countries with a population exceeding 10 million, it is the most densely populated. The population of Bangladesh as of 15 March 2011 is 142.3 million (census 2011 result), much less than recent (2007–2010) estimates of Bangladesh's population ranging from 150 to 170 million and it is the 8th most populous nation in the world. It forms part of the ethno-linguistic region of Bengal, along with the neighboring Indian states of West Bengal and Tripura. Our capital & largest city is Dhaka. People use Bengali as Official language here. The other main language is English. 98% people living here are Bengali, 2% belongs to other ethnics. Islam is the largest religion of Bangladesh, making up 90.4% of the population. Hinduism makes up 8.5% of the population, Buddhism 0.6% and Christianity 0.3%. Bangladesh is a unitary parliamentary republic with an elected parliament called the Jatiyo Sangshad (A2I, 2015). The native Bengalis form the country's largest ethnic group, along with indigenous peoples in northern and southeastern districts. Geographically, the country is dominated by the fertile Bengal delta, the world's largest delta. This also gives Bangladesh a unique name tag as "the land of rivers". Bangladesh has a rich heritage of ancient civilization. The Prime Minister is the head of government and is appointed by the President with the confidence of the majority in parliament. The Prime Minister is traditionally the Leader of the House and the single largest party; he or she heads the Cabinet which holds Executive power. The President is the head of state with key ceremonial duties. Bangladesh's foreign policy follows a principle of friendship to all and malice to none. Today, countries considered as Bangladesh's most important partners include India China, Japan, Russia, the United States, and the United Kingdom. During the Cold War, Bangladesh cultivated good relations with both the United States and the Soviet Union. The current strength of the army is around 300,000 including reservists, the air force 22,000, and navy 24,000.

The country is a founding member of SAARC, the Developing 8 Countries and BIMSTEC. It contributes one of the largest peacekeeping forces to the United Nations. It is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Non-Aligned Movement. In addition to traditional defense roles, the military has been called on to provide support to civil authorities for disaster relief and internal security during periods of political unrest. Bangladesh has consistently been the world's largest contributor to UN peacekeeping forces for many years. Bangladesh is divided into eight administrative divisions, each named after their respective divisional headquarters: Barisal, Chittagong, Dhaka, Khulna, Mymensingh, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Rangpur. Divisions are subdivided into districts (zila). There are 64 districts in Bangladesh, each further subdivided into upazila (sub districts) or thana. The area within each police station, except for those in metropolitan areas, is divided into several unions, with each union consisting of multiple villages. In the metropolitan areas, police stations are divided into wards, which are further divided into mahallas. Bangladesh is a Next Eleven developing nation with a US\$209 billion economy and a per capita income of US\$1,190. The Taka is the currency of Bangladesh. The central bank is the Bangladesh Bank. The service sector accounts for 51% of GDP, the industrial sector 30% and agriculture 18%. Between 2004 and 2014, Bangladesh averaged a GDP growth rate of 6%. The economy is increasingly led by export-oriented industrialization. The Bangladesh textile industry is the second-largest in the world. Other key sectors include pharmaceuticals, shipbuilding, ceramics, leather goods and electronics. Bangladesh has a primarily agrarian economy. Agriculture is the single largest producing sector of the economy since it comprises about 18.6% data released on November, 2010 of the country's GDP and employs around 45% of the total labor force. The performance of this sector has an overwhelming impact on major macroeconomic objectives like employment generation, poverty alleviation, human resources development and food security. A plurality of Bangladeshis earns their living from agriculture. Bangladesh has a large, often inefficient, public sector, including state owned utilities, banks and industries. Major industries include textiles, pharmaceuticals, shipbuilding, steel, electronics, telecommunications, energy, fertilizer, cement, leather, food processing and ceramics. The telecoms industry in Bangladesh is one of the fastest growing markets in the world, with 114 million cellphone subscribers in December the pharmaceutical industry meets 97% of domestic demand and exports to 52 countries. The shipbuilding industry has seen rapid growth in recent years. The steel industry in Bangladesh is concentrated in the port city of Chittagong. Transport is a major sector in the Bangladesh economy. The country has a 2,706 km rail network operated by the Bangladesh Railway. It has one of the largest inland waterway networks in the world with 8,046 km of navigable waterways. Bangladesh has a low literacy rate, estimated at 61.3% for males and 52.2% for females in 2010. The educational system in Bangladesh is three-tiered and highly subsidized. The government operates many schools in the primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels. It subsidizes parts of the funding for many private schools. In the tertiary education sector, the government funds more than 15 state universities through the University Grants Commission. Bengali has a rich literary heritage, which Bangladesh shares with the Indian state of West Bengal. The earliest literary text in Bengali is the 8th century Charyapada. Medieval Bengali literature was often either religious (for example, Chandidas), or adapted from other languages (for example, Alaol). Bengali literature reached its full expression in the 19th century. Our traditions, foods, festivals, architecture, crafts are some essential points of differences. Bangladesh is a Next Eleven emerging economy (Mantrañālaya, et al., 1994). It has achieved significant strides in human and social development since independence, including progress in gender equality, universal primary education, food production, health, and population control. However, Bangladesh continues to face numerous political, economic, social and environmental challenges, including political instability, corruption, poverty, overpopulation, and global warming (Central Intelligence Agency, 2002).

### ***Electronics Industry***

One of the fastest growing industries in Bangladesh is Electronics industry with great potential. Walton, Marcel, Vicon, My One, LK, Swan etc. are some popular electronics brand in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has been involved in the electronic industry for the last 30 years. The European and Asian electronic companies have recently collaborated with some Bangladeshi electronic industry to produce a variety of products. This is profitable for both sides as this sector of Bangladesh is expanding and the other party is getting the product at a cheaper price. Since 1990, advanced products like computers, cordless telephones, satellite TV signal receiving equipment etc. started to be assembled and some spare parts also began to be manufactured. By this time, a number of multinational companies have set up assembly and manufacturing plants in the country. Local companies in joint collaboration with foreign companies have established assembly and manufacturing plants. At present the total number of such companies is more than sixty (Ahmed, 2013). Since 1994, after Bangladesh's integration into the free market agreement, all kinds of commodities including electronic products began to be imported freely, which created a competitive environment. By the 2000s, few local companies began to export locally manufactured electronic home appliances abroad. Like most other industrial sectors, the electronic sector of Bangladesh also offers a highly skilled and cheap labor force.

Bangladesh can certainly contribute hugely in the 200 billion dollar worth electronics and semiconductor industry. In Bangladesh, semiconductor-manufacturing industries can be easily established. It has a high demand locally as well as worldwide and can be turned into a high profit generating industry (Ahmed, 2013). Due to the rapidly growing rate of users, Bangladesh is soon going to become one of the largest cellular phone using countries of South Asia. This will also create a huge market for cellular technology. As the population of Bangladesh is growing, demand for electrical home appliances is growing with it. These factors show that Bangladesh is a perfect place to invest in electronics. The electronic factories in Bangladesh generally produce televisions, refrigerators, radios, DVD players, CDs and DVDs, light bulb, fan, blender, air conditioner and many other such appliances. However, Bangladesh does not have any factories to produce computer parts or telecommunication equipment (BBS, 2013). The main advantage of investing in this industry is the comparatively cheaper workforce and the high quality of the goods produced. Bangladesh is producing about 75 types of electrical products. The low cost and high skill of labor in Bangladesh offers companies great investment returns. The Asian economy dominates the market for semi-conductors, and Bangladesh is a great choice for many companies for a number of economic & financial factors.

*Highlights in the Sector* (Anon., 2012)

- In the future Bangladesh will be one of the leading cell phone markets in South Asia
- In Bangladesh the home appliance market is rapidly growing
- Manufacturing of semi-conductors may become a market that stands alone
- The electronic industry is labor intensive
- Ability of Bangladesh to provide high skilled labor at a low cost

Bangladesh does not have any telecommunication equipment industries in the private sector. The present entrepreneurs do feel that there is a need for diversification and modernization. The government is willing to provide assistance in this area as well. For over two decades Bangladesh has been involved in electronics. In recent years they have had a technical collaboration with Asian and European electronic firms. They plan to produce electronic goods at competitive prices due to this collaboration. The potential for expansion is great. The main cost advantage of setting up an electronics industry in Bangladesh is easily trainable and low cost labor. There are some key issues that are attractive to investors. These include the growing domestic demand and the international market access. The electronic industry is being encouraged to shift their focus from low-end assembly operations to upstream higher value operations. Gainful strategies would include joint ventures and outward investments with Bangladesh. Substantial foreign investment is a must for this growth to continue and to be beneficial to Bangladesh.

### ***Hardware Industry***

The PC/Server market in Bangladesh is estimated at USD 129.4 million (2005). Springboard, a Singapore based Research Company revealed this in one of their recent research reports<sup>27</sup>. The report also said that the market growth rate in the first quarter of 2006 (Jan-Mar) was 23.8 per cent as compared to the first quarter of preceding year. The laptop market expanded 24.0 per cent in 2005 (MOFAD, 2006). During Q4 2005, 48,340 PCs were shipped from international locations to end-users in Bangladesh for a value of USD 37.7 million, up from 34,884 units in Q3 2005. For the full year (Jan-Dec), the PC shipments expanded 16.4 per cent to 162,400, generating a value of USD 129.4 million. Aggressive sales and marketing activities undertaken by MNCs have helped increase PC market growth. The large enterprises (companies with more than 500 employees) and government sectors collectively accounted for almost half of total PC/server shipments in 2005 (MOFAD, 2006). NGOs are also an important source of funding for IT investment in the country, but generally, spending is routed through the public sector. In the private enterprise market, banks and telecom companies are largest on IT spending (MOFAD, 2006). The consumer and SME markets represent significant long-term promise, but both segments are currently in the infancy stage. Locally assembled, often un-branded, machines continue to dominate the market, holding over 75 per cent of the PC shipment market shares. Most of the international giants also operate in the local market. In cases of brand equipment, the international giants usually rely on local distributors and dealers. IBM, HP and Dell all have local distributors in the country. The position of the technical support for PC/server hardware troubleshooting is at a satisfactory level. The vendors have enough technical knowledge to provide after sales support to their clients. Most large organisations<sup>29</sup> usually have an Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) with the vendors (NBBP, 2014). The AMC is customizable in accordance to the client's needs. In some instances, the larger users prefer having their own technical support team; however, the general support from the vendors is adequate for smaller organizations. The interviews with local hardware vendors revealed an interesting aspect regarding the after sales support (NBBP, 2014). They opined that, the local agreement of maintenance is much more effective than a international warranty agreement. Though, as agents of the international giants, the designated local distributors are legally bound to take in the complaints from the customer, however, they may not necessarily be bound to take the responsibility of

providing the technical support by themselves. They usually communicate with the regional office and hand over the responsibility to them. In case of a local agreement, the vendors would provide the support locally by using their own resources. In the latter case the support is more prompt and could be extended even to 24/7 support. Among international vendors, HP led the market with a 7.6 per cent share of the shipments in 2005, followed by Dell and Lenovo/IBM. A local brand, increasingly viewed as a viable alternative to international players, is Daffodil Computers (<http://www.daffodilbd.com>), which made several strategic announcements in the fourth quarter of the year(NBBP, 2014).

**Salesmanship and Skills and Customer Satisfaction**

Though many people consider selling as a synonymous term of marketing, but actually it is not. In fact it’s only one of many marketing components.

‘Selling refers to the personal communication of information to pursue a prospective customer to buy something, for example- a good, service, idea or something else. This is done to satisfy his/her need’ (Futrell, n.d.). To be highly efficient, a salesperson should have some unique characteristics. These are known as ‘Selling skills’. There are a lot of selling skills. Some are discussed below:

*Interpersonal Skills:*The type of *skills* which are used by a person to properly interact with others. In other words, this term is generally referred to an employee's capability to get along with others while getting the job done.*Salesmanship Skills:* Salesmanship skills refer to the skills and knowledge of the salespersons about how to sell the product.

As defined by Stroh, “Salesmanship skill is a direct, face-to-face, seller-to-buyer influence which can communicate the facts required for marketing a product; or it can be utilized by the psychology of persuasion to encourage the formation of a buying decision(Ghose, 2015).

*Technical Skills:* Technical skills are usually the knowledge and capabilities to perform particular tasks. Managers often need to have technical skills in order to communicate effectively with line workers and coordinate efforts. Technical skillsinclude salesperson's knowledge of product features and benefits, engineering skills, and the procedures required by company policies. A technical skill is defined as a learned capacity in just about any given field of work, study, or even play (Management, 2015).

*Customer satisfaction:* It refers to the measurement of how well the expectations of a customer regarding a product or service provided by a company have been met. Customer satisfaction is an abstract concept (Futrell, n.d.).

**III. Methodology**

**Research Model**

Researchers have conducted different study on customer satisfaction. Such researches have been reviewed as a part of this study. Most studies are related to relationship marketing. Selling skills are very important for getting customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is often seen as a way to success for a particular company and also for long term customer retention (Olannye, 2014). As a human being people seek to get himself or herself in control of their lives and also to get attached with others. People also thrive for love and status(Kiesler, 1996). Different selling skills play a significant role in creating a relationship with customers. The relationship between consumer and the organization has been seen as culture dependent (Ambler & Styles, n.d.). Service quality is important for any organizations performance that route to customer satisfaction.According to Zemke (1990), “Nothing is as common today as the organization committed more to lip service than customer service; more interested in advertising than action” (Zemke & Bell, 1990).

There is a positive relationship between selling skills and sales performance (Weitz, 1981). Moreover the previous researches conclude that there is a significant relationship between selling skills and sales performance thus business performance (Rentz, et al., 2002). Recent study proves that interpersonal skills, salesmanship skills and technical skills have a positive relationship with sales and business performance (Basir, et al., 2010).

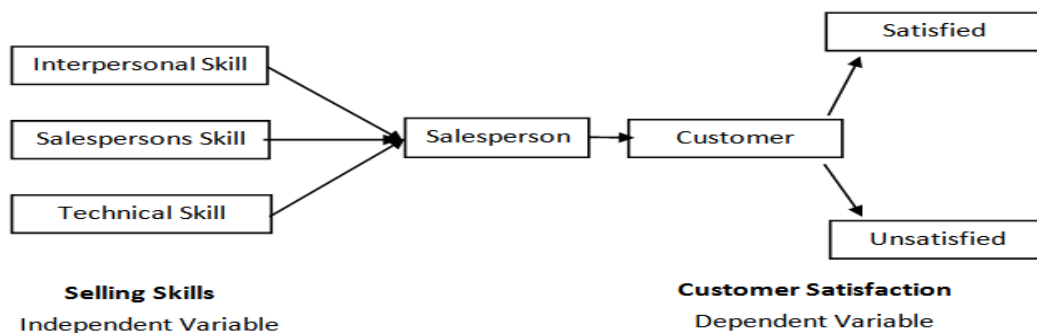


Figure 1: Research Model

And Sales performance has a positive relationship with customer satisfaction ( WIELE, et al., 2001). So, it can be drawn from the discussion that there is a relationship between Selling Skills and Customer Satisfaction. So, the research model of this paper is:

Three important selling skills of the salesperson has a relationship with customer satisfaction. And this study is based on the research and findings of previous researches as well. Independent and dependent variables are drawn on the basis of previous researches.

#### ***Interpersonal Skills and Customer Satisfaction***

Interpersonal Skills refers to mental communication and interaction with the customers. The main dimensions of interpersonal skills are listening, empathy, optimism, observation skills (Rentz, et al., 2002). (Comer & Drollinger, 1999); (Castleberry & Shepherd, 1993); (Ramsey & Ravipreet, 1997) have argued that effective listening is an important communication skill for a successful salesperson and for customer satisfaction. But (Comer & Drollinger, 1999) argued that empathetic skills contribute to salesperson performance thus contribute to customer satisfaction. Previous studies have shown a positive relationship between salespersons interpersonal skills and salespersons performance that terms to customer satisfaction. Hence, it can be hypothesized that a similar relationship will occur in this study. Thus the first hypothesis is:

*H1: There is a significant relationship between Salespersons interpersonal skills and customer satisfaction.*

#### ***Salesmanship Skills and Customer Satisfaction***

Salesmanship skills can be categorized into several subcategories. Some of them are adaptability of the salesman, consultative selling, negotiation ability, open probing and salesperson cues. Previous researches about the topic has invented different dimensions to visualize salesmanship skills in salespersons performance (Rentz, et al., 2002). Adaptive selling is one of the important characteristic of a salesperson. It is the ability to change the sales behavior when interacting with customers in different situations (Weitz, 1981). Negotiation is another aspect of selling skills (Futrell, 2006).

Negotiation skills of a salesperson terms his or her success in sales career(Goolsby & Hoog, 1992). Previous researchers found 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(3). So, any conscious effort on the part of the salesperson in order to make adjustment in the sales environment make the seller comfortable and confident in terms of salespersons performance. The positive sales performance terms to customer satisfaction. So, the discussion concludes the second hypothesis of the study that is:

*H2: There is a significant relationship between salespersons salesmanship skills and customer satisfaction.*

#### ***Technical Skills and Customer Satisfaction***

Technical skills are the skills of salesperson that demonstrates his or her knowledge about the product he or she is selling. It is the knowledge of product features and benefits, engineering skills, and the procedures required by company policies (Walker, et al., 1977). Technical knowledge refers to salespersons skills in providing information about design and specification of products and the applications and functions of both products and services (Olannye, 2014). Salespersons possess knowledge of his company and his competitor's products, strengths, weaknesses, key technical terminologies, product and service specifications (Behrman & Perreault, 1982). These skills improve sales performance that terms to customer satisfaction. Sales performance is influenced by interrelated knowledge of organization structure and product line. A positive relationship empirically supports that the use of technical knowledge results in higher salesperson performance (Babakus, et al., 1996). So, we can conclude that there can be a relationship between technical knowledge and sales performance therefore customer satisfaction. So, from the above discussion the findings conclude the third hypothesis of the study which is:

*H3: There is a significant relationship between Salespersons technical skills and customer satisfaction.*

#### ***Research Design***

The research was designed as a survey type to test the hypotheses which intended to scrutinize the relationship between salespersons selling skills and customer satisfaction. The research data was collected from customers who have purchased computer hardware products from Jalil Tower in Khulna City using a structured survey questionnaire. The questions of the questionnaire were adopted from previous literature and re-written according to this research paper topic.

A convenience sampling method was used to collect the data from the customers from Khulna City. It is the population for the study. Questionnaires are distributed online for the survey and one specific question mentioning whether the respondent was eligible enough to be a sample or not is preserved. The question was "Have you recently purchased any computer hardware from Jalil Tower, Khulna?". If the answer is 'no' then he or she would not be able to submit main liker scale format questions adopted for independent and dependent variables. So, his or her responses will not be counted. In this Internet-based survey, the questionnaire was taken to the places to get the survey on the spot in Jalil Tower.

In social media networking the questionnaire was posted to get the survey results. One single user can submit only one response for the quality of the survey data. Because there is a login panel for the respondents so that one cannot submit more than one response.

The items used to measure selling skills are taken from Rentz, Et. al. (2002) and Smith (2015). Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with several statements on a five point Likert scale from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.

To determine the customer satisfaction 24 statements have been generated on the relevance of previous researches. Equivalently 8 statements were given to a single independent variable. There are 6 statements that measures the customer satisfaction which is dependent variable of this study. Reliability test was performed to analyze the internal consistency and validate the variables. For the reliability of the data the Cronbach alpha was obtained. The Cronbach alpha obtained for all of the measures.

This research consists of 250 samples of the respondents where each person is identified as a recent purchaser of the computer hardware from Jalil Tower in Khulna City. The respondents participated voluntarily in the research. So, only 112 samples are collected online and on the spot for the research. The demographic profile of the respondents are shown in the Table 1 to 5 (Appendix).

#### IV. Findings and Analysis

##### Reliability Test

Reliability statistics of the variables are shown in the Appendix Table 1. It has been seen that 4 variables has reliable statistics. When the variables are validated then it is ready to have the internal consistency test. The test was implemented to determine the extent of agreement between the respondents in case of each dimensions. Cronbach's Alpha of more than 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) is reliable. The lowest alpha in this study has been found is 0.956 which is way ahead of the qualification line. The measures were 0.962 for technical skills, .956 for interpersonal skills, .965 for salesmanship skills and 0.956 for customer satisfaction.

Table 1: Reliability Test Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Interpersonal Skills	0.965
Salesmanship Skills	0.956
Technical Skills	0.962
Customer Satisfaction	0.956

##### Respondent Profile Analysis

Of 111 samples most of them are over 21 years aged. 73 percent of the respondents are male. More than 95 Percent of the people are educated and passed their higher secondary level. It can be a good indicator of perfect sampling. 49.5 respondents had mentioned that their purpose of use is education. The profile of respondents are shown in the appendix table.

##### Descriptive Analysis

Main items representing their underlying factors were aggregated. The mean is applied as a measure of central tendency, which indicated that all values were near about in the mid-point in the Likert Scale of 1 to 5 where 1 represents strongly disagree and 5 represents strongly agree. It indicates that customer satisfaction is not that much high. The lowest value was 2.5822 for interpersonal skills. That means salespeople do not have the required interpersonal skills. Moreover, the customer satisfaction is very low. It terms to only 2.65 which is very low. So, it can be concluded that the customers are not satisfied with the salespersons performance or selling skills.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Interpersonal_Skills	111	1.13	5.00	2.5822	1.26620
Salesmanship_Skills	111	1.00	4.88	2.5845	1.20123
Technical_Skills	111	1.25	4.88	2.7072	1.21385
Customer_Satisfaction	111	1.00	5.00	2.6502	1.21230
Valid N (listwise)	111				

##### Correlation and Regression

Two-tailed regression analysis had been implemented to assess the predictive validity of the variables. All independent variables in this study was found to be correlated with dependent variable. It is positively related with the dependent variable. The correlation between three independent variables and the dependent variable is near about perfectly strong.

Table 3: Correlation Table

Variables	Interpersonal	Salesmanship	Technical	Customer Satis.
Customer Satisfaction	1.000	.917	.935	.933
Interpersonal Skills	.917	1.000	.944	.925
Salesmanship Skills	.935	.944	1.000	.943
Technical Skills	.933	.925	.943	1.000

The model summary of the regression analysis shows how much of the variance in dependent variable is explained by the independent variable. In this study the value of R is 0.950. That indicates that 95 percent of the variance of Customer Satisfaction is explained by the model (three independent variables).

Each of the independent variables included in the model contributes different percentages of the dependent variable. Coefficient table explains the Beta coefficients of the independent variables. In this study the largest beta is 0.408 of the technical skills. This means that salespersons technical skills contribute more to customer satisfaction according to the sample statistics. The lowest beta is for interpersonal skills which is .187 which indicates less contribution to customer satisfaction.

Table 4: Coefficient Table

Independent Variable	Beta	Sig
Interpersonal Skills	0.187	0.057
Salesmanship Skills	0.373	0.001
Technical Skills	0.408	0.000

The column sig tells us whether the variable is making a statistically unique contribution to the equation or not. If the sig value is less than 0.05 then it is providing statistically unique contribution to the equation. In this study the variables are less than 0.05 and moreover equal to 0.05. So, all the independent variables are contributing. But interpersonal skills are providing less uniqueness.

## V. Discussion

In order to analyze the customer satisfaction, analysis has been done to evaluate the relationship between salespersons selling skills and customer satisfaction in computer hardware industries in Khulna city. The analysis has been done in the samples of customers recently purchased products from Jalil tower in Khulna City. Results of the study shows that there is a positive relation between customer satisfaction and selling skills of the salespersons. Salespersons are not that much skilled. More improvement and training is needed for the development of the sales persons selling skills in Khulna City.

Technical skills are very important for any salespeople to sell a product and satisfy a customer according to the needs. In this study, it is seen that respondents considered technical skills more important than interpersonal and salesmanship skills. Moreover, interpersonal skills have a significant impact in the customer satisfaction. On the other hand, salesmanship skills are regarded as a second best contributor to customer satisfaction. More salesmanship training should be provided to the salespersons.

Finally, the current research also articulated that the three major selling skills has strongly correlated with customer's satisfaction. SMEs of Khulna city must look into this. Because more over customer is not satisfied with the performance of the salespersons. SMEs should include more trained salespeople to improve the performance of their enterprise. Improvement in selling skills will generate more customer satisfaction which will finally contribute to more customer retention. Relationship marketing should come into the process. New procedures should be implemented for selling. People are not that much illiterate now. Generation Z, people are very much concerned about product utilization. They look for specifications before reaching to the salesperson. So, salesperson must have interpersonal and salesmanship skills to convince those customers. Training programs should be implemented in this purpose. So, we can conclude that the research findings are positive about the relationship between salespersons selling skills and customer satisfaction regardless of the limitations.

## VI. Conclusion

This study articulates some underlying facts about the customer's perception about salespersons selling attitude and selling skills. In Khulna city, customers want more interaction with salesperson and more demand for including the relationship based selling and buying. The study finds a particular relationship between customer satisfaction and selling skills where selling skills were independent variables and customer satisfaction was dependent variable. The results show that the customer satisfaction can be defined strongly through selling skills. More salespeople are engaged in traditional selling process which lacks the core selling skills. The



research fails to agree that the selling skill is good or fair enough as respondents are not agreeing that salespersons have selling skills. As the study articulates that there is a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and selling skills, the SMEs should improve their salespersons selling skills through training and education for the development of their organization. More emphasis should be on relationship marketing. Finally, lack of interest can be the cause of low selling skills. Lack of interest to train people among the SMEs are common here in Khulna City. It should be removed and SMEs should rethink about the improvement of their sales team to improve the performance.

### References

- [1] WIELE, T. V. D., PAUL, B. & HESSELINK, M., 2001. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE RELATION BETWEEN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND BUSINESS PERFORMANCE. *ERIM REPORT SERIES RESEARCH IN MANAGEMENT*, p. 19.
- [2] A2I, 2015. *Bangladesh.gov.bd*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.bangladesh.gov.bd/> [Accessed 2015].
- [3] Ahmed, H., 2013. "Business | Bangladesh can tap potential in electronics, ICT sectors", s.l.: The Daily Sun.
- [4] Ambler, T. & Styles, C., n.d. The Future of Relationship Research in International Marketing: Constructs and Conducts. *International Marketing Review*, pp. 492-508.
- [5] Anon., 2012. *Business Bangladesh*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.businessbangladesh.net/index.php/potential-sectors-for-investment/electronics-in-bangladesh>
- [6] Babakus, E., Cravens, D., Kent, G. & Ingram, T., 1996. Investigating the Relationships Among Sales, Management Control, Sales Territory Design, Salesperson Performance, and Sales Organizational Effectiveness. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, pp. 345-363.
- [7] Basir, M. S., Ahmad, S. Z. & Kitchen, P. J., 2010. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SALES SKILLS AND SALESPERSON PERFORMANCE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN THE MALAYSIA TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANY. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING RESEARCH*, 3(1), pp. 51-73.
- [8] BBS, 2013. *Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics*. [Online] Available at: [http://203.112.218.66/WebTestApplication/userfiles/Image/SubjectMatterDataIndex/GDP\\_2005-06\\_Based.pdf](http://203.112.218.66/WebTestApplication/userfiles/Image/SubjectMatterDataIndex/GDP_2005-06_Based.pdf)
- [9] Behrman, D. & Perreault, W., 1982. Measuring the Performance of Industrial Salespersons. *Journal of Business Research*, pp. 355-370.
- [10] Castleberry, S. & Shepherd, C., 1993. Effective Interpersonal Listening and Personal Selling. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, pp. 35-49.
- [11] Central Intelligence Agency, 2002. CIA World Fact Book. *CIA World Fact Book*.
- [12] Comer, L. & Drollinger, T., 1999. Active Empathetic Listening and Selling Success: A Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, pp. 15-30.
- [13] Crawford, A., 2012. Hospitality Operators' understands Of Service: A qualitative approach. *International journal Of Contemporary Hospitality Management*.
- [14] Futrell, C., 2006. *Fundamental of Selling: Customer for Life Through Services*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- [15] Futrell, C. M., n.d. *Fundamentals of Selling*. s.l.:s.n.
- [16] Ghose, S., 2015. *Salesmanship: Definition, Importance, Duties and Types*. [Online] [Accessed 2015].
- [17] Goolsby, J. & Hoog, G., 1992. Psychological Adaptiveness and Sales Performance. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*.
- [18] KCC, 2015. *Khulna City*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.khulnacity.org/> [Accessed 2015].
- [19] Kiesler, D., 1996. *Contemporary Interpersonal Theory and Research*. s.l.:John Wiley and Sons: New York.
- [20] Management, B., 2015. *Technical Skills of Successful Managers*. [Online].
- [21] Mantrañālaya, Tathya and Anubibhāga & Bahiḥ Pracāra, 1994. Bangladesh towards 21st century. *External Publicity Wing, Ministry of Information, Govt. of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*.
- [22] MOFAD, 2006. *BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE IT AND TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY - BANGLADESH*, Asiatick Plads: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

- [23] NBBP, 2014. *ICT Sector Study Bangladesh*, s.l.: Nyenrode Business Universiteit.
- [24] Nunnally, J. & Bernstein, I., 1994. *Psychometric Theory*. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- [25] Olannye, A. P., 2014. The Effect of Interpersonal Relationship on Marketing Performance in the Nigerian Hotel Industry. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, p. 206.
- [26] Palit, T., 2012. "Khulna City Corporation". In Sirajul Islam and Ahmed A. Jamal. *Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*.
- [27] Ramsey, R. & Ravipreet, S., 1997. Listening to Your Customers: The Impact of Perceived Salesperson Listening Behavior on Relationship Outcomes. *Academy of Marketing Journal*, pp. 127-137.
- [28] Rentz, J. et al., 2002. A Measure of Selling Skill: Scale Development and Validation. *The Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, pp. 13-21.
- [29] Walker, O. C., Churchill, G. A. & Ford, N. M., 1977. Motivation and Performance in Industrial Selling: Present Knowledge and Needed Research. *Journal of Marketing Research*, pp. 156-168.
- [30] Warden, 2010. *CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SKILLS*. s.l.:s.n.
- [31] Weitz, B., 1981. Effective in Sales Interactions: Effective in Sales Interactions. *Journal of Marketing*.
- [32] Zemke, R. & Bell, C., 1990. *Service Wisdom; creating and maintaining the customer service edge*. Minneapolis: Lakewood Books.
- [33] A2I, 2015. *Bangladesh.gov.bd*. [Online]  
Available at: <http://www.bangladesh.gov.bd/>  
[Accessed 2015].

### Appendix 1

Table 1:Age of The respondent

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 to 21	18	16.2	16.2
	Over 21	88	79.3	95.5
	Under 18	5	4.5	100.0
	Total	111	100.0	100.0

Table 2: Sex of the respondent

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	30	27.0	27.0
	Male	81	73.0	100.0
	Total	111	100.0	100.0

Table 3: Educational Qualification

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Graduate	51	45.9	45.9
	HSC Pass	34	30.6	76.6
	Post Graduate	23	20.7	97.3
	SSC Pass	3	2.7	100.0
	Total	111	100.0	100.0

Table 4: Purpose of Purchasing

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Education	55	49.5	49.5	49.5
Gaming	14	12.6	12.6	62.2
Lab Work	3	2.7	2.7	64.9
Valid Multimedia Editing	6	5.4	5.4	70.3
Office Work	27	24.3	24.3	94.6
Other	6	5.4	5.4	100.0
Total	111	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: How frequently the responder purchases

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Half Yearly	28	25.2	25.2	25.2
Monthly	34	30.6	30.6	55.9
Valid Quaterly	28	25.2	25.2	81.1
Yearly	21	18.9	18.9	100.0
Total	111	100.0	100.0	

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Interpersonal_Skills	111	1.13	5.00	2.5822	1.26620
Salesmanship_Skills	111	1.00	4.88	2.5845	1.20123
Technical_Skills	111	1.25	4.88	2.7072	1.21385
Customer_Satisfaction	111	1.00	5.00	2.6502	1.21230
Valid N (listwise)	111				

Table 7: Coefficient Table

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>														
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF	
1	(Constant)	.110	.090		1.220	.225	-.069	.289						
	Interpersonal_Skills	.179	.093	.187	1.926	.057	-.005	.364	.917	.183	.058	.097	10.289	
	Salesmanship_Skills	.377	.111	.373	3.384	.001	.156	.597	.935	.311	.103	.075	13.258	
	Technical_Skills	.408	.096	.408	4.257	.000	.218	.598	.933	.381	.129	.100	10.018	

a. Dependent Variable: Customer\_Satisfaction

Table 8: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.950 <sup>a</sup>	.902	.899	.38519

a. Predictors: (Constant), Technical\_Skills, Interpersonal\_Skills, Salesmanship\_Skills

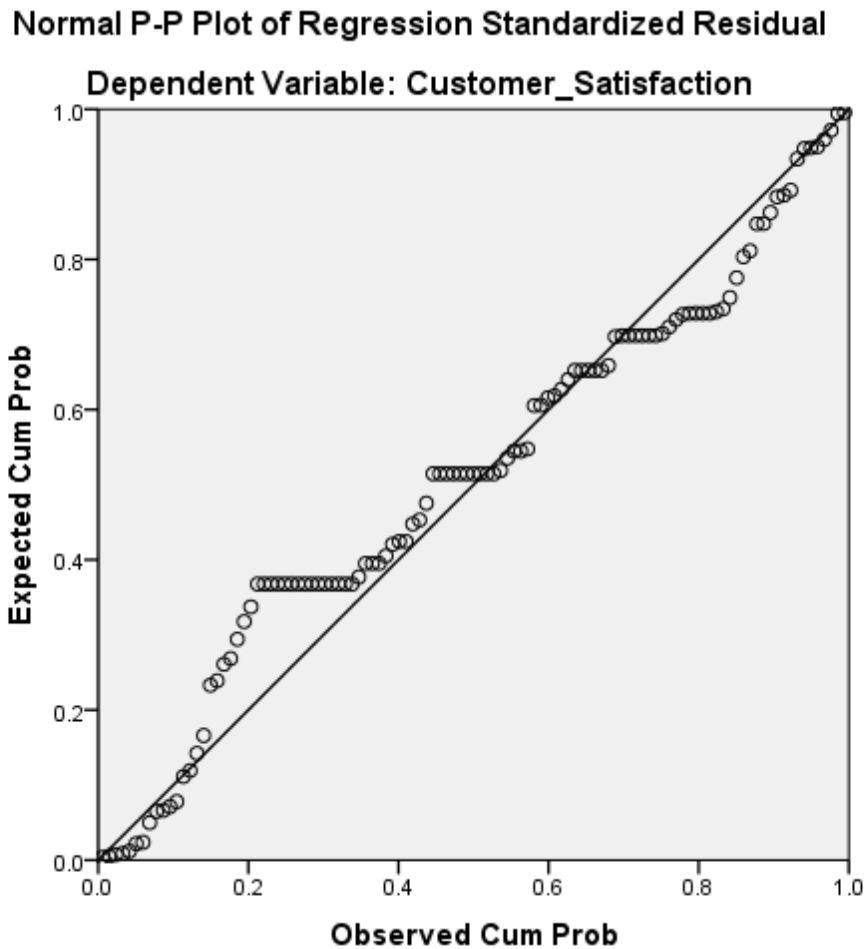
b. Dependent Variable: Customer\_Satisfaction

Table 9: Correlation Matrix

		Correlations			
		Interpersona l_Skills	Salesmanshi p_Skills	Technical_S kills	Customer_S atisfaction
Interpersonal_Skills	Pearson	1	.944**	.925**	.917**
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	111	111	111	111
Salesmanship_Skill s	Pearson	.944**	1	.943**	.935**
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	111	111	111	111
Technical_Skills	Pearson	.925**	.943**	1	.933**
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	111	111	111	111
Customer_Satisfacti on	Pearson	.917**	.935**	.933**	1
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	111	111	111	111

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

Figure 1:



**Appendix 2**

**Exploring the relative effects of Selling Skills on customer satisfaction: A study on SMEs of IT Hardware Industry in Khulna City**  
(A Research under Business Administration Discipline, Khulna University)

**Part A: Introductory**

1.Name of the Respondent

\_\_\_\_\_

2.Age of the Respondent

\_\_\_ Under 18

\_\_\_ 18 to 21

\_\_\_ Over 21

3.Sex

\_\_\_ Male

\_\_\_ Female

4.Educational Qualification

\_\_\_ SSC Pass

\_\_\_ HSC Pass

\_\_\_ Graduate

\_\_\_ Post Graduate

**Part B: Elementary Questions**

This part will allow us to determine the effectiveness of your participation on our research.

5.Have you recently purchased any computer hardware from Jalil Tower, Khulna?

\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_ No

6. In what purpose you use computer?

\_\_\_ Gaming

\_\_\_ Education

\_\_\_ Office Work

\_\_\_ Multimedia Work

\_\_\_ Lab Work

\_\_\_ Other

7. How Often you visit a computer hardware store?

\_\_\_ Monthly

\_\_\_ Quarterly

\_\_\_ Half Yearly

\_\_\_ Yearly

**PART C: Simple Statements**

This part of the questionnaire is designed to explore the relative effects of Selling Skills on customer satisfaction. You will find a number of general statements with a set of possible responses below such as: Strongly disagree (1) disagree (2) Neutral (3) Agree (4) Strongly Agree (5)

	Statements	Likert Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
	<b>Interpersonal Skills</b>					
	Salesman is very expressive in non verbal terms					
	Salesmen have good communication skills with the customer					
	Salesman can understand what I am trying to express					
	Salesman can understand the emotional aspect					
	Salesperson is very much social and cooperative					

	Salesperson provides proper suggestions about my product and choice					
	Salesperson listen to my words then provides me suggestion about my products					
	Salesperson is very much familiar and ready to help					
	<b>Salesmanship Skills</b>					
	Salespersons can judge me whether I will buy or not					
	Salesperson has potential to help me about my target product					
	Salespersons are very much familiar with non regular buyers also					
	He or She is positive in closing the negotiation					
	Salesperson expresses the desire to help the customers					
	Salesperson remembered me					
	Salespersons are very much aware of my choices					
	Salespersons do not forces me to buy other brand products apart from my choice					
	Salesperson is very much aware of the product					
	<b>Technical Skills</b>					
	Salesperson knows about his company or store					
	Salesperson is concerned about the company policies					
	Salesperson is aware of his competitors product					
	Salesperson modifies the product offerings according to my technical needs					
	Salesperson is aware about the product storage and positioning					
	Salesperson has the knowledge about the whole product line					
	Salesperson knows the technical names of the products					
	<b>Customer Satisfaction (Dependent Variable)</b>					
	I am impressed with the technical knowledge of the salesperson					
	I am satisfied with the hospitality the salespersons have provided with					
	I am satisfied with the overall communication quality of the salesperson					
	I am ready to buy again because they are so much familiar and helpful					
	I am ready to buy again because they have the perfect technical knowledge that I want					
	I am ready to purchase from here soon					

### References

- [1] Rentz, J. O., Winter 2002. A Measure of Selling Skills: Scale Development and Validation. The journal of personal selling and sales management , 22(1).
- [2] Smith, S. M., 2015. Qualtrics - Customer Survey Questions. [Online]