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## SCHOOL OF COMMERCE

### **THE EFFECT OF SALES SKILLS ON PERSONAL SELLING PERFORMANCE: THE CASE OF CHORA GAS AND CHEMICAL PRODUCTS FACTORY**

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*By: Beza Lebeta*

*Advisor: Dr. Mesfin Workineh*

*A Thesis Submitted To Addis Ababa University School of Commerce in Partial  
Fulfillment of Masters of Arts Degree in Marketing Management*

June, 2018

Addis Ababa

Ethiopia

**ADDIS ABEBA UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF COMMERCE GRADUATE STUDIES**  
**MA PROGRAM**

**The effect of sales skill on personal selling performance: The case of  
Chora as and Chemical Products Factory**

By: - Beza Lebeta

**APPROVED BY BOARD OF EXAMINERS**

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**Advisor**

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## **Letter of Certification**

This is to certify that Beza Lebeta carried out her project on the topic entitled “The effect of sales skill on personal selling performance: The case of Chora Gas and Chemical products factory”.

This work is original in nature and is suitable for submission for the award of Master of Arts in Marketing Management.

---

Dr. Mesfin Workineh  
(The Project Advisor)

## **DECLARATION**

I, Beza Lebeta, declare that this research entitled " The effect of sales skill on personal selling performance: the case of Chora Gas and Chemical products factory" is my original work, prepared under the guidance of Mesfin Workineh (PhD). All sources of materials used for this research have been duly acknowledged.

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.

Beza Lebeta \_\_\_\_\_

June, 2018

## **Table of Contents**

Acknowledgement .....	i
List of Tables.....	ii
List of figure.....	iii
List of Acronomy.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
CHAPTER ONE .....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the problem .....	3
1.3 Research Question .....	5
1.4 Aim and Objectives of the study .....	5
1.4.1 Aim of the study.....	5
1.4.2 Objectives of the study .....	5
1.5 Significance of the Study .....	6
1.6 Scope of the study.....	6
1.7 Limitation of the study. ....	7
1.8 Definition of Terms.....	7
1.9 Organization of the Study.....	9
CHAPTER TWO .....	100
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	100
2.1 Theoretical Review.....	10
2.1.1 Selling.....	10
2.1.2 Personal Selling.....	14

2.1.3 B2B Personal Selling.....	21
2.1.4 Sales performance.....	21
2.1.5 Determinants of Sales performance.....	22
2.1.6 Quantitative Measure .....	25
2.2 Empirical Review.....	26
2.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK.....	31
CHAPTER THREE .....	32
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	32
3.1 Description of the study .....	32
3.2 Research Approach .....	32
3.3 Design of the Study.....	33
3.4 Population and Sample .....	34
3.5 Data source and Type.....	34
3.6 Data Collection Procedures.....	34
3.7 Ethical Consideration.....	35
3.8 Data Analysis .....	36
CHAPTER FOUR .....	37
DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	
4.1 Demographic information about respondents .....	37
4.2 Descriptive Analysis .....	38
4.2.1 Technical Skills .....	39
4.2.2 Interpersonal skills .....	40
4.2.3 Marketing skill.....	42
4.2.4 Salesmanship skills.....	42
4.2.5 Sales performance.....	43

4.3 Validity, Reliability and other tests .....	44
4.3.1 Validity test.....	44
4.3.2 Reliability test.....	44
4.3.3 Normality Tests .....	45
4.3.4 Multicollinearity Test.....	46
4.3.5 Linearity Test .....	46
4.3.6 Residual Normality Test.....	47
4.3.7 Correlation analysis .....	48
4.3.8 Regression Analysis .....	50
CHAPTER FIVE .....	55
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	55
5.1 Summary of finding.....	55
5.2 Conclusion .....	55
5.3 Recommendation .....	56
5.4 Research limitation and Areas for future research .....	57
REFERENCES.....	58
APPENDICES .....	vi
Appendix 1: Research instrument.....	vi
Appendix 2: SPSS Results.....	x

## **Acknowledgement**

First and foremost, my inner and deepest gratitude goes to the almighty GOD. Because it was impossible to pass those obstacles and realize my wish without the support of him.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my advisor Mesfin Workineh (PhD) for his unreserved follow up, invaluable comments and constructive guidance throughout conducting this research.

I am grateful to my family and friends for all the encouragements they gave to me during this study and who has been providing different information on the preparation of this research.

I deeply thank CGCPF management and staffs who had helped me in responding the questioner timely and those who gave extra support in making my work have a better quality.

The last but not the least, my kids, Beemnet and Dagim, you are my inspiration. I am lucky and feel proud to have you in my life. You always make me strong. I love you my boys.

### List of Tables

Table 1: Strength and weakness of personal selling .....	18
Table 2: Demographic information about respondents .....	37
Table 3: Descriptive Analysis technical skills .....	39
Table 4: Descriptive Analysis Interpersonal skills	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> 40
Table 5: Descriptive Analysis marketing skill .....	42
Table 6: Descriptive Analysis Salesmanship skills.....	42
Table 7: Descriptive Analysis for Sales performance.....	43
Table 8: Reliability Test.....	45
Table 9: Tests of Normality.....	45
Table 10: Multicollinearity Test.....	46
Table 11: Linearity Test .....	47
Table 12: Correlation Analysis .....	49
Table 13: Model Summary .....	50
Table 14: ANOVA .....	50
Table 15: Coefficients.....	51
Table 16: Summary of Hypothesis .....	54

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1: Conceptual Frame Work .....	31
Figure 2: Residual Normality Test .....	48

## **Acronomy**

B2B - Business to business

CGCPF- Chora Gas and Chemical Products Factory

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 sales performance of salesperson in Chora Gas and Chemical Factory. Technical, interpersonal, marketing and salesmanship skills were used as dimensions of sales skills. This study is conducted by using both descriptive and explanatory research designs. 24 salespersons of the company participated in the study by providing their responses about their sales skills and sales performance through questionnaire. The data collected with questionnaire was analyzed 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 study has identified that sales skills have significant effect on sales performance of the salespersons. Among the dimensions of sales skills used in the study, marketing skill has no statistically significant effect on sales performance of the sales persons. But technical, interpersonal and salesmanship skills have positive significant effect on sales performance of the salesperson in the company. based on this finding it is recommended to increase technical, interpersonal and salesmanship skills to increase sales performance.*

**Key words:** sales skills, sales performance, Technical skill, interpersonal skill, marketing skill , salesmanship skills

**APPENDIX - ONE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

**Addis Ababa University School of Commerce,**

**Masters of Art in Marketing Management**

**A questioner to be filled by CGCPF sales persons**

Dear respondents,

This questionnaire is designed to be filled by sales persons who work in Chora Gas and Chemical Products Factory. It is prepared to examine the relationship between sales skill and sales persons 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.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and if you need more information don't hesitate to call me on +251911828719 or mail through E-mail [lovelymother1624@gmail.com](mailto:lovelymother1624@gmail.com)

Note:-

No need to write your name

Please tick the appropriate box for your answers.

Part I: Demographic Data

1. Sex                     Male                     Female
2. Age                     Below 25                 25-35                 35-45                 Above 45
3. Educational level     Masters Degree                 Bachelor Degree
- Diploma                     High school completed
4. Work Experience     Less than 5 years                 5 -10 years
- 10 - 15 Years                 Greater than 15 Years

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; where,

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

### SEX OF RESPONDENTS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
MALE	17	70.8	70.8	70.8
Valid FEMALE	7	29.2	29.2	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

### AGE OF RESPONDENS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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	24	100.0	100.0	

### EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF ESPONDENTS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
MASTERS DEGREE	1	4.2	4.2	4.2
Valid BACHELOR DEGREE	9	37.5	37.5	41.7
DIPLOMA	14	58.3	58.3	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

### WORK EXPERIENCE OF RESPONDENTS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
LESS THAN FIVE YEARS	7	29.2	29.2	29.2
FIVE TO TEN YEARS	5	20.8	20.8	50.0
Valid TEN TO FIFTEEN YEARS	8	33.3	33.3	83.3
GREATER THAN FIFTEEN YEARS	4	16.7	16.7	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

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

	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	24	100.0	100.0	

**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	

**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	

**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	24	100.0	100.0	

**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	24	100.0	100.0	

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

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
DISAGREE	4	16.7	16.7	16.7
NEUTRAL	4	16.7	16.7	33.3
Valid AGREE	11	45.8	45.8	79.2
STRONGLY AGREE	5	20.8	20.8	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

**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.**

	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	24	100.0	100.0	

**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.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
DISAGREE	5	20.8	20.8	20.8
NEUTRAL	10	41.7	41.7	62.5
Valid AGREE	8	33.3	33.3	95.8
STRONGLY AGREE	1	4.2	4.2	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

**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.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
STRONGLY DISAGREE	1	4.2	4.2	4.2
DISAGREE	9	37.5	37.5	41.7
NEUTRAL	6	25.0	25.0	66.7
Valid AGREE	7	29.2	29.2	95.8
STRONGLY AGREE	1	4.2	4.2	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

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

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid NEUTRAL	11	45.8	45.8	45.8
Valid AGREE	12	50.0	50.0	95.8
Valid STRONGLY AGREE	1	4.2	4.2	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

**have an ability to exercise influence over others.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid STRONGLY DISAGREE	1	4.2	4.2	4.2
Valid DISAGREE	3	12.5	12.5	16.7
Valid NEUTRAL	4	16.7	16.7	33.3
Valid AGREE	15	62.5	62.5	95.8
Valid STRONGLY AGREE	1	4.2	4.2	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

**I always have real time information about changes in customers' needs.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid NEUTRAL	9	37.5	37.5	37.5
Valid AGREE	12	50.0	50.0	87.5
Valid STRONGLY AGREE	3	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

**I have a lot of information about industry trends.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid NEUTRAL	10	41.7	41.7	41.7
Valid AGREE	12	50.0	50.0	91.7
Valid STRONGLY AGREE	2	8.3	8.3	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

**I 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	24	100.0	100.0	

**I am well informed about important events in our industry.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
NEUTRAL	13	54.2	54.2	54.2
Valid AGREE	6	25.0	25.0	79.2
STRONGLY AGREE	5	20.8	20.8	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

**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	24	100.0	100.0	

**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	24	100.0	100.0	

**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	24	100.0	100.0	

**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	24	100.0	100.0	

**I 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	24	100.0	100.0	

**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	24	100.0	100.0	

**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	24	100.0	100.0	

**I am effective in exceeding annual sales target and objectives.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
NEUTRAL	9	37.5	37.5	37.5
Valid AGREE	12	50.0	50.0	87.5
STRONGLY AGREE	3	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

**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	24	100.0	100.0	

**Correlations**

		SP	TS	IS	MS	SS
SP	Pearson Correlation	1	.423*	.588**	.106	.605**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.040	.003	.621	.002
	N	24	24	24	24	24
TS	Pearson Correlation	.423*	1	-.203	-.365	.137
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.040		.341	.080	.522
	N	24	24	24	24	24
IS	Pearson Correlation	.588**	-.203	1	.418*	.357
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.341		.042	.087
	N	24	24	24	24	24
MS	Pearson Correlation	.106	-.365	.418*	1	-.178
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.621	.080	.042		.406
	N	24	24	24	24	24
SS	Pearson Correlation	.605**	.137	.357	-.178	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.522	.087	.406	
	N	24	24	24	24	24

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

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

**Case Processing Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	24	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	24	100.0

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

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.980	6

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.881	5

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.736	4

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.921	5

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha <sup>a</sup>	N of Items
.812	4

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

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

a. Dependent Variable: SP

**Collinearity Diagnostics<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions				
				(Constant)	TS	IS	MS	SS
1	1	4.886	1.000	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
	2	.063	8.835	.00	.43	.11	.02	.00
	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

a. Dependent Variable: SP

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter covers an overview of the entire thesis. It contains background of the study, statement of the problem, research question, aim and 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.

#### **1.1 Background 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, salespersons in sales groups are perhaps the most important individuals in the firm's marketing communication process since salespersons 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, salespersons 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, salespersons perform important boundary spanning roles (Baldauf & Cravens, 2002). Good salespersons may offer substantial performance improvements in today's increasingly competitive business environment. A top quality salesperson who 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 salesperson 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 salesperson performance, there have been so far no empirical researches conducted to ascertain the individual - level skills factors that contribute to the performance of salespersons. Furthermore, most previous studies examining the influence of sales skills dimensions on salesperson performance have been conducted in advanced western economies. Therefore, this is the first study in Chora Gas & Chemical Products Factory, that attempts to explore this particular relationship.

#### Background of the company

Chora Gas & Chemical products Factory is established in 1942 in Addis Ababa - Ethiopia. It is a sister company of AMAGA Plc, specializing in producing gas and chemical products. Chora Gas and Chemical Products Factory (CGCPF) is registered and licensed by Ministry of Trade and Industry under the law of Ethiopia. From the perspective of value based organization and to be a world class company, the company now is certified by integrating quality management system (ISO 9001:2008). With the vision of being the leading gas and chemical products manufacturing company in Ethiopia and playing a considerable role in the development of the country, CGCPF produces and imported different products.

Industrial and medical oxygen, Nitrogen and compressed air, pure acetylene, Sodium Hypochlorite (10-10.5%), Sedex (800cc & 300cc), Melon Sede, Lemen Meten, Jember Floor Wax, Addis Shoe polish, and car polish are products produced by the company. Argon gas, calcium Hypochlorite, Medical O<sub>2</sub> regulatory, Garage O<sub>2</sub> regulatory, Garage C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>2</sub> regulatory, cylinder valve and gas cylinder are imported products. The company also gives test of gas

cylinder, maintenance of valve, installation of gas lines for hospitals, rents of gas cylinders and disinfection of water lines and preparing manual services.

The target customers of CGCPF are hospitals - for getting oxygen for patients; metal work industries - for using cutting of steel, brazing of metals and production of steel gas; water and beverage industries - use sodium and calcium hypochlorite for killing micro organisms and cleaning purpose; agricultural bureau - uses slaked lime for removing soil's acidic nature; and paint industries - uses slaked lime as one raw material for paint manufacturing.

The factory has twenty six employees in marketing and sales department. Since the company customers are organizations who use the company product for further processing or selling for others, all sales employees are involved in business to business transactions.

## **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 sales person's 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, sales skills affects a sales persons' performance. The dimension of sales skills are 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 chemical and gas industry because by nature in this industry customer knowledge and confidence on the product and services is very low that sales people role in this regard is critical to the success of the company. The importance of personal selling is greater in the business to business marketing.

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

Therefore, the aim of this study is to assess the impact of sales skills; which is explained by variables; technical skills, interpersonal skills, marketing skills and salesmanship skills; on personal selling performance of Chora Gas and chemical products factory business to business sales force.

### **1.3 Research Question**

#### Main Research Question

Does personal selling skill affect sales performance of Chora gas and chemical products factory?

#### Sub Research Question

- ✓ What is the effect of technical skill on sales person's personal selling performance?
- ✓ What is the effect of interpersonal skill on sales person's personal selling performance?
- ✓ What is the effect of marketing skill on sales person's personal selling performance?
- ✓ What is the effect of salesmanship skill on sales person's personal selling performance?

### **1.4 Aim and Objectives of the study**

#### **1.4.1 Aim of the study**

The general aim of this study is to examine the relationship between sales skills and sales person's performance.

#### **1.4.2 Objective of the study**

Specifically the study has the following objectives:

- ✓ To find out the effect of technical skills on sales persons performance.
- ✓ To examine the effect of Interpersonal skills on sales persons performance.
- ✓ To examine the effect of marketing skill on sales persons performance.
- ✓ To find out the effect of Salesmanship skills on sales persons performance.

### **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 a sales skill that is highly relevant for the industry in general for the company in particular. In addition to this it helps to identify training need areas for the sales skills and sales management.

For academicians - since it is difficult to find this kind of researches in our country in the manufacturing industry, it helps to provide a base for future researchers in the field.

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.

### **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 industry sales persons (Gas and Chemical industry) specifically Chora Gas and Chemical products factory. The study is delimited itself on sales force of Chora Gas and Chemical products factory who are found in Addis Ababa - Ethiopia.

Conceptually, the study has limited itself on assessing only the effect of selling skills on personal selling performance. But the sales person's 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 sales skill effect on sales performance. The three dimensions of sales skill i.e interpersonal, salesmanship and technical are adopted 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).

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 sales skills (Technical, Interpersonal, Marketing and Salesmanship) and sales performance of personal selling by using questionnaires.

### **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. sales persons, as evaluator of all sales skills dimensions may impose some limitations. It is better different groups should evaluate salesperson performance. Moreover, the argument can be made that the salespersons are fronting and dealing with customers, it is suggested that salesperson is best assessed by customers. Customers could rate the salesperson 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 restrict the respondents from freely express their feeling. Finally, the respondents are the sales persons themselves. Therefore, the results of the present study are exposed to some degree of biases and should be interpreted carefully.

### **1.8 Definition of Terms**

**Interpersonal skill:** refer to mental and communication algorithms applied during social communication and interaction to achieve certain effects and results (Ahmed et al., 2010). According to Rentz et al, (2002) as cited in Ahmad et al., (2010) the dimensions of interpersonal skill are listening, empathy, optimism and perceived observation skills.

**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.

**Sales person performance:** a performance that sales persons expertise in their company's products and the market, good communication skill, ability to solve problems, ability to understand and satisfy the buyer's needs, thoroughness and ability to help in ensuring the reliable and fast delivery of orders, Jobber, David (1947).

**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.

### **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**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

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 Theoretical Review**

##### **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 are 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 sales 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 for long 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 approaches 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).

The Sales Bible said that, "Selling is not a matter of leads and appointments then closes. It is not event a matter of the quality of your product and services you response. But selling is a matter who you are, what your attitude is, and how dedicated you are to personal excellence". The philosophy of sales is how responsible the salesperson for the action that they are take in selling and how good they could helping both themselves and customers, so that ultimately the salesperson can win themselves challenge which is making a sales(Gitomer, 2008). Selling or sales activity have 10 commandments to make it successful and achieve the goals, as follow:

1. Think means positioning the sale in your head as a mindset. The mindset which approaching in the sale will make the salesperson become more friendly, smiley, enthusiastic, positive, confident, self-assured, likeable, and prepared beyond nervous. Everybody has a different way of creating his or her mindset.
2. Believe means develop a determination to your fate that can penetrated the fearless of offering product or services which also greater the trust with the company and believe in customers that contacted with you. Thus it will create the better performance in selling activity with low fearless.
3. Engage will develop personal relationship or engagement within salesperson and customers. Because selling is more easier when

performing to your friends instead of person whose do not know who you are.

4. Discover leads people to buy for their reason not because of the salesperson persuasion. The most people does not understand their motive and major need, so it is important to discover and help them to find out the motive and need first before they making a purchase.
5. Ask question will greater the information about prospective buyer and another information from the environment that could become a knowledge which is useful and beneficial in selling process.
6. Observe is the salesperson ability listening to the prospective, about their perspective and problem understanding.
7. Dare means how the salesperson willing to take a risk. Risk that come from himself and also how the prospective buyer have to be treated well in order to build a trust from risk taking.
8. Own referred to know whose fault it is make when the sales is not made. The salesperson should not blame his or her self but must to take a responsibility for it. Learn from every experience and do something for the future improvement.
9. Earn means sell for the relationship, not the commission. "If you make a sale, you can earn money, but if you make a friend, you can earn fortune." Those of quote have explain about if you sell a help to customer, so you will create relationship for long term profitability and loyalty.
10. Prove is use to motivate the salesperson from himself. Proving their good performance and fantastic result will lead the salesperson join in a good competition and make them always do the best in every selling activity. Sometimes people need to prove about what they can do to self-actualized themselves for the better performance.

Those are the 10 commandments to make it successful and achieve the goals explained by (Gitomer, 2008). In (Hannan, 2004) study of consultative selling explained that's selling is also a transfer of value which arranging customer resources (time, talent, and money) to be transferred to products or services that being purchased by those customer. Not only in face-to-face selling but sales call or telemarketing must exchange the value as well. Thus, Selling is not always about the exchange of products or services that offered by salesperson with the money from its customers, but also can become a transfer of value within sales salesperson and customers in terms of information, expectation, value added, and long term relationship throughout product or service which offered.

Historically, the act of communicating for the purposes of exchanging goods and services has occurred since the early stages of the human race. Around 10,000 years B.C., the forging and gathering activities of men were set aside as less profitable by the discovery of agriculture and planned production created shortage and surplus / supply and demand(Powers, T. L., Martin, W. S., Rushing, H., & Daniels, S. (1987); Lambert (2008) as cited in Meredith (2009), offers a useful depiction of the evolution of sales eras described as follows:

- The era of sales science (1890 - 1920): focused on the transaction itself, defining sales systems, methods, and approaches; most learning about sales was informal.
- The era of sales process (1920 - 1945): focused on facilitating transactions one customer at a time and producing new methods to train sales representatives on repeatable sales processes; most learning for salespersons was done on the job.
- The sales relationship era (1945 - 1985): focused on the transaction decision and closing the sale; training focused on pre - closing activities and landing business deals.

- The sales technology era (1985 - 2005): focused on all transaction steps as technology helped speed up the salesperson's reaction times to market trends, awareness of industry news, and develop a better understanding of clients.
- The sales competency era (2003 - present): focuses on the buying experience and is built on a salesperson's competence for building relationships, solving problems, and bringing true value to the client, not just winning the sale.

### **2.1.2 Personal Selling**

Achumba, (2000) describes personal selling as an oral presentation in a conversation with one or more buyers for the purpose of making sales. The New Zealand Qualification Authority, (2008) defined personal selling as retail and wholesale sales activities in which a salesperson actively presents products to customers in seeking to make a sale. It could also be said to mean the presentation of goods and services before the customers and convincing or persuading them to buy the products or services.

Kotler and Armstrong, (2008) posits that personal selling is the personal communication between a firm's sales force and customers for the purpose of making sales and building customer relationship.

Kotler and Armstrong, (2008) and Kotler and Keller, (2009) submitted that personal selling is one of the oldest profession in the world. In fact, its development could be linked to the period of trade by barter, when people exchanges goods for other goods (Osuagwu, 2002).

Personal selling is a unique element of marketing communication. Unlike advertising and sales promotion which main focus are to create awareness about the existence of a product or service and provide information as to the features of the products, its availability and price on a mass basis, personal

selling is an individualistic approach that is designed to meet specific need of prospects. It is usually directed to specific market segments. It goes beyond the fundamental role of marketing communication, it plays significant role in the entire exchange process. That is, participating in the activities of each of the other elements of marketing mix, especially distribution (place).

According to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, (2008) personal selling performs several activities which include; identification of customers, development of product knowledge, marketing, promotion, prospecting, knowledge of customers, service standards, gaining appointments, choosing sales approaches, meeting customers, identifying customer needs and requirements, demonstrating products, use of selling techniques, use of sales aids, making sales pitches, overcoming objections, closing sales, completing documentation, receiving payments, recording sales, using sales technologies, providing after – sales services, following up sales, and sales analysis.

However, essential elements of personal selling according to (Palmer, 2005) include; face - to - face interaction, persuasion, flexibility, promotion of sales, supply of Information and mutual benefit.

Personal selling is describe as the personal communication of information to persuade a prospective customer to buy something a good, service, idea, or something else. (Futrell, 1992 as cited in Jaramillo & Marshall, 2003). Jaramillo and Marshall (2003) believe that personal selling messages have the potential to be more persuasive than advertising or publicity due to the face-to-face communication with customers. Brooksbank (1995) suggests that personal selling is a critical component of marketing success. He defines the personal selling process as the positioning of goods or services in the mind of a particular prospective customer. (Brooksbank, 1995, p. 63 as cited in Jaramillo & Marshall, 2003).

Personal selling is defined by Weitz, Castleberry, and Tanner (1998) as an interpersonal process whereby a seller tries to uncover and satisfy a buyer's needs in a mutually, long-term beneficial manner suitable for both parties (as Cited in; Meredith, 2009). Personal selling is differentiated from other sales and marketing channels like telemarketing, catalogs, and the internet because it involves face to face communication (Soldow & Thomas, 1984). When increasing numbers of companies are attempting to build deep, meaningful, and long-term relationships with their customers, personal selling is the only communication vehicle that allows a marketing message to be adapted and tailored to the specific needs, wants, and beliefs of the individual (Weitz, 1978). Consultative selling, value-added selling, professional selling, needs satisfaction selling, customer-oriented selling, strategic selling, relationship selling, solution selling, and partnering are all terms commonly used in congruence, and often interchangeably, to describe the personal selling process (Marone & Lunsford, 2005).

Personal selling is a social situation involving two persons in a communication dyad (Evans, 1963) and success results in how well both parties achieve a common understanding that will enable mutual goal fulfillment through social interaction (Webster, 1968 as cited in Meredith, 2009). A sales representative's skill and efforts are especially important whereby good skills and effort are more effective than poor skills and effort especially for complex, new products as well as presentations from sales representations from lesser known organizations (Levitt, 1967 as cited in Meredith, 2009). The ability to customize and tailor messaging as well as developing relationships with customers is where the concept of personal selling is derived. The opportunity to tailor make presentations for each selling situation and customer is an advantage unique to personal selling (Meredith, 2009).

## **Types of Personal Selling**

Personal selling is of four categories (Achumba,2004; Osuagwu, 2002; Palmer, 2005). All the categories adapt similar methods in achieving their objectives. There variance however lies in the differences in their specific objectives. The four types of personal selling are: trade selling, missionary selling, technical selling and new business selling.

Trade Selling involves the increase in the volume of the company's sales by providing promotional assistance to the intermediaries. This is useful in a situation when intermediaries are finding it difficult to sell out their stock of a firm's products.

Missionary selling is an attempt to boost the company's sales by allowing the intermediaries to use the goodwill of the firm. It could be achieved by combining the producers sales force with the distributors salesmen and then pass all orders received through the distributor.

Technical Selling could be referred to as creative selling. It involves the provision of technical assistance and advice to customers by salesmen. This type of personal selling is most suitable for technical products like insurance services. Technical selling requires analytical and persuasive ability on the part of the seller in order to convince the customer by making him to know the worth of the product purchased (Osuagwu, 2002).

New Business Selling is used to obtain new accounts for the producer. This involves the salesmen looking for new opportunities or new users for his company's product in his territory. Obtaining new accounts may be slightly difficult and require specialists. In situations like this the company's most experienced salesmen are normally used. (Achumba, 2004).

Table 1: Strength and weakness of personal selling

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interactive: The question can be answered and objective to overcome</li> <li>2. Adaptive: Presentation can be changed to meet customer needs.</li> <li>3. complex arguments can be developed</li> <li>4. Relationship can built because its personal nature.</li> <li>5. Provides the opportunity to close sale.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sales activity through meetings and calls are costly.</li> </ol>

**(Source: Jobber & Lancaster, Selling and Management 8th edition, p.5)**

### **The Personal Selling Process**

Personal selling is not one time process; rather it is process taking several steps. As revised by Marshal & Moncrief (2005) , there are seven steps of selling and some of the topical discussion of each selling step that one might find in most sales textbook. The Seven Steps are reviewed by Marshal & Moncrief (2005) as Follows:

### **Prospecting**

Prospecting is the method by which salespeople search for new customers and potential customers. One obvious reason for prospecting is to expand the customer base, which is important because most sales organizations lose customers every year (Jolson & Wotruba, 1992 as cited in Marshal and Moncrief, 2005). Sales textbooks typically discuss methods of prospecting, such as referrals, networking, bird - dogging, cold canvassing, and numerous others. Prospecting usually includes a discussion of qualifying the prospect and thus developing some type of screening procedure.

Traditionally, salespeople were expected to find their own prospects. Prospecting was an essential and large part of the selling job and for many salespeople, this was the most difficult and tedious part of the job. In fact, it is an aspect of sales jobs that has chased off many would be salespeople.

### **Pre - approach**

The pre -approach step includes all post prospecting activities prior to the actual visit with a prospect or customer. The pre - approach step occurs on virtually every sales call. Sellers are doing their research on the prospect or customer, familiarizing themselves with the customer's needs, reviewing previous correspondence, and pulling together any other new and relevant material that might be appropriate for bringing to the sales call itself. Pre - approach activities also include talking with gatekeepers, doing homework on the customer (individual and organization), mentally preparing for the approach and presentation (rehearsal), and breaching the customer's office on entry.

### **Approach**

The approach usually takes the first minute or minutes of a sale. It consists of the strategies and tactics employed by salespeople when gaining an audience and establishing initial rapport with the customer. The approach includes opening small talk, the handshake, eye contact, and generally making a good initial impression. Most sales textbooks include a variety of different approaches that can be used, including the introductory approach, the assessment approach, the product approach, the consumer - benefit approach, the referral approach, the consultative approach, and many others.

### **Presentation**

The presentation is the main body of the sales call and should occur after the salesperson has predetermined the needs of the customer. This step can be one presentation or multiple presentations over a period of time. Goals for the sales presentation will vary. First - time buyers must get sufficient information to adequately understand the product's benefits, which may be facilitated by

building the presentation around a product demonstration. Selling points and attributes are visualized and built around a call agenda or sales proposal.

This step can be complex, and preparation is essential. Overcoming objections, Objections can be broadly defined as customer questions and hesitations about the product or company. Salespeople should expect that objections will be encountered in every sales presentation. A number of reasons exist for objections, and despite the fact that objections can delay the sales process, for the most part they should be perceived in a positive sense as useful. This is because by revealing objections, true buyer needs can be uncovered. In the early days of selling, sales objections were viewed mostly as a hurdle that salespeople had to overcome to get to the ultimate sale. In more modern times, a true objection might be viewed as a sign not to pursue the sale further because a need may not be met with a given product.

### **Close**

The close is defined as the successful completion of the sales presentation culminating in a commitment to buy the good or service. Once any objections have been successfully overcome, the salesperson must actually ask for the business and thus begin the process of closing the sale. This step traditionally has been trumpeted as difficult for many salespeople (especially new salespeople) because many simply do not ask for the order.

### **Follow - up**

The follow -up step is a relatively newer addition to the steps of selling in which the salesperson does not assume the sale is over with the acceptance of an order. Rather, much work begins after the sale to make sure the customer is happy with the product/ service and that everything that was promised is being delivered. Examples that are frequently given include a thank - you letter to the customer or a follow - up phone call to ensure the customer is happy.

### **2.1.3 B2B Personal Selling**

For many firms, especially in business - to - business markets, personal selling is the dominant element in the marketing communications mix and the key to implementing marketing strategy successfully. One important advantage of personal selling is that the selling pitch can be adjusted and individualized to the prospect. Once you determine the prospect's needs, you tailor the sales pitch. Unfortunately, personal selling is extremely expensive. Door - to - door selling is disappearing in the area of consumer marketing (Friedman, 2011). This is, however, not true in the area of business - to -business (B2B) marketing. Companies selling complex products such as printing presses, buses, jets, computer systems, power plants, and other expensive "installations" usually use salespeople to sell their products (Friedman, 2011). These salespeople are compensated quite well and a large number of them are college graduates. When selling complex, costly products B2B (business - to - business), personal selling is extremely important. Personal selling is also important where prices have to be negotiated and the sale involves a great deal of money (Friedman, 2011). A key disadvantage of personal selling is that it is costly and you have to deal with customers one at a time.

### **2.1.4 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 behaviors). Anderson and Oliver (1987) explained that, sales

support and planning are, as elements of salesperson behavior performance. Other dimensions of behavior 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 related to the work behavior 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 behavior of the salesperson. (i.e. the tasks consuming effort while working), since behavior 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 suggests that salesperson performance can be studied both as behavior 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.

### **2.1.5 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 sales performance:

- ✓ Leadership including strategy, decision making, attitudes toward learning, 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 investigate 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.

### **2.1.6 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 measures for each salesperson.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

### **Sales skills and Sales person 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 persons performance.

#### **A) Technical skill and Sales person 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; Katiskeck 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 salespersons' performance.

## B) Marketing Skill and Sales person performance

Salespersons also possess knowledge about the industry and trends in general such as customers, markets and products; competitors products, services, sales policies; knowledge of competitors 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 are 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 salespersons' performance.

## C) Interpersonal Skill and Sales person 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 salespersons' performance.

D) Salesmanship Skill and Sales Person 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 behavior 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 Boorum, 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

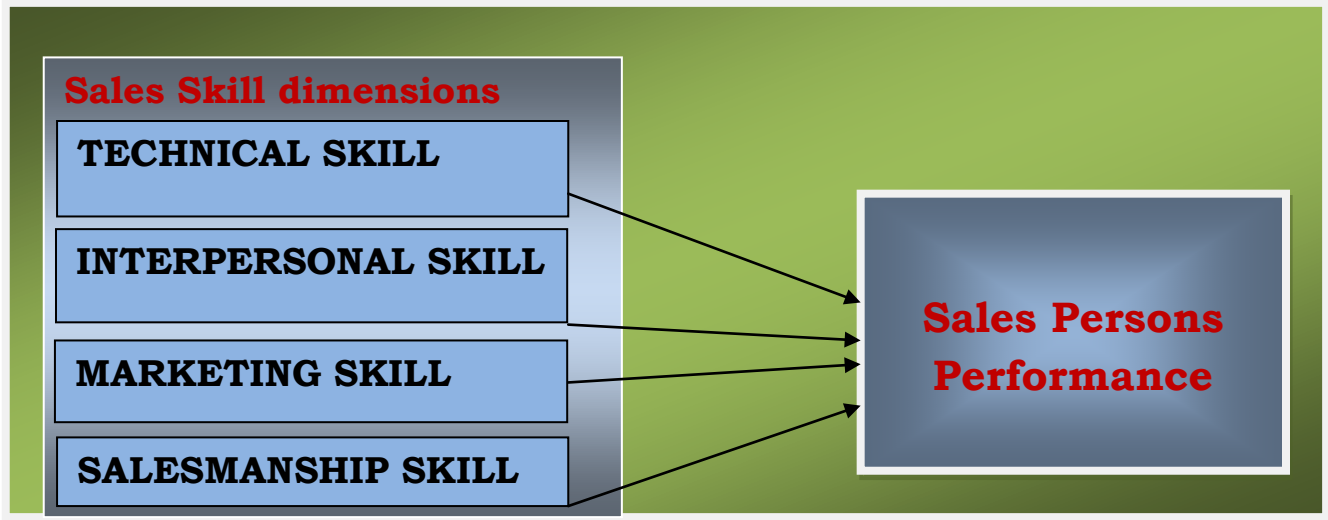
emerged as a critical component of successful selling (Leigh and Summers, 2002; Futrell, 2006; Stafford, 1996; Whittler, 1994; Williams, K.C., Spiro, R.L. and Fine, L.M. (1990). William et al., (1990) posited that employing four nonverbal symbolic expressions such as voice qualities, nonverbal vocalization, 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.

### 2.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

As indicated on the review of related literature many research have indicated a positive effect of sales skill on sales persons performance. This is summarized as follow :

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the study



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

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

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.

#### **3.1 Description of the study**

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

#### **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 sales persons. 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 of personal selling 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 dependent variable (salesperson 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 Population and Sample**

The population of the study is sales person's working in Chora Gas and Chemical Products Factory who are responsible for business customers. There are twenty six sales persons working under marketing division. There is no sampling mechanism to be used because the study takes all the population that can increase the generalize ability of the finding to the company. Therefore, the subjects were all sales persons working under marketing division who are responsible for business to business transaction.

### **3.5 Data source and Type**

Data can be 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 collect 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 was collect 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 Data Collection Procedures**

The measurement was developed after a rigorous survey of a literature relevant to sales skill and pre-validated measuring instrument. The instrument used to collect data from respondent in this study is questionnaire. To measure all the variables the researcher directly took up measurements from different

researchers which are organized in to one by Ahmed et al (2010). Very slight modification was made on the questions to fit the existing condition in the industry. The researcher 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) sales persons 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 were given for the salespersons who are respondents of the questionnaire. The final questionnaires were produced incorporating the comment and feedback from the pilot test. Then the questionnaires were given to the rest of sales people to collect the last data.

These survey questionnaires were administered personally by visiting the office of the sales persons' working in Chora gas and chemical products factory in Addis Ababa. The questioners used are structured as it is the case in quantitative research design with a five point likert type scale ranging from 1( one 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 sales persons and supervisors are Diploma and BA holders.

### **3.7 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.

### **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.

## 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. 26 questionnaires were distributed to sales persons of the company and 24 questionnaires were responded with response rate of 92.3%.

#### 4.1 Demographic information about respondents

Demographic analysis of the respondents is presented in the table 2 below. This table gives information about the sex, age, education, and work experience of respondents.

Table 2: Demographic information about respondents

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Sex	Male	17	70.8
	Female	7	29.2
Age	Below 25	2	8.3
	26 - 35	12	50.0
	36 - 45	7	29.2
	Above 45	3	12.5
Education	Masters degree	1	4.2
	Bachelor degree	9	37.5
	Diploma	14	58.3
Experience	Below 5	7	29.2
	5-10	5	20.8
	11-15	8	33.3
	Above 15	4	16.7

Source: Survey, 2018

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.

Regarding the age category of the respondents, only 8.3% of the respondents' age is less than 25 years. The highest share of the respondents has age between 26 years and 35 years. This age category comprises 50% of the respondents. 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 comprises 79.2% of the total respondents. 12.5% of the respondents are above 45 years old.

Regarding the educational background, only 4.2% of the respondents have masters' degree and 37.5% of the respondents have bachelors' degree. But highest share respondents have educational qualification of diploma. 29.2% and 20.8% of the respondents have a work experience below 5 years and between 5 to 10 years respectively. These experience categories comprise 50% of the respondents. On the other hand remaining two categories comprise 50% of the respondents suggesting that the company has stable work force regarding the turnover.

#### **4.2 Descriptive Analysis**

This analysis is conducted to identify skills of sales and sales performance of the sales person 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 3: Descriptive Analysis technical skills

Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
My knowledge concerning how the company's products were developed helped me to sell more.	24	3.62	.875
Skill and knowledge concerning the performance data on the company's products is useful to sell the product.	24	3.58	.830
Skill and knowledge about the delivery process of the company's product assist to sell the product.	24	3.58	.881
My knowledge about products features helps me to close sell.	24	3.63	.875
My knowledge about products benefits helps me to close sell.	24	3.50	.834
Ability to understand product general specifications of the company's products is important to close a sell.	24	3.71	.999
<b>Technical skills</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>3.6042</b>	<b>.84386</b>

Source: Survey, 2018

Table 3 above 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 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 persons 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 used their skills and knowledge about the performance of the 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 have good technical skills to support sales performance of the salespersons. This shows that the data are clustered around the mean which showed the reliability of the data.

#### 4.2.2 Interpersonal skills

Table 4: Descriptive Analysis Interpersonal skills

<b>Statements</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std.Deviation</b>
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.	24	3.17	.868
Ability in general speaking skills (such as effective use of words, voice quality or characteristics for example speech rate, loudness and articulation: vocal clarity,	24	3.21	.833

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.	24	2.92	1.018
I have an ability to control and regulate non-verbal displays of emotion (such as anger, anxiety, joy, and delight, etc.)	24	3.58	.584
I have an ability to exercise influence over others.	24	3.50	.933
<b>Interpersonal skills</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>3.2750</b>	<b>.70726</b>

Source: Survey, 2018

The 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 disagree 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. This shows that the data are clustered around the mean which showed the reliability of the data.

### 4.2.3 Marketing skill

Table 5 below presents the descriptive results about the marketing skill dimensions.

Table 5: Descriptive Analysis marketing skill

<b>Statement</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
I always have real time information about changes in customers' needs.	24	3.75	.676
I have a lot of information about industry trends.	24	3.67	.637
I am well informed about important events in our industry.	24	3.33	.702
I am able to look at sales opportunity.	24	3.67	.816
<b>Marketing skill</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>3.6042</b>	<b>.53118</b>

Source: Survey, 2018

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 6: Descriptive Analysis Salesmanship skills

<b>Statement</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
I have an ability to get buy-in from customers.	24	3.50	.780
I am able to communicate the sales presentation clearly and consistently	24	4.25	.897
I am efficient in negotiation.	24	4.25	.897

I can make collaborative environment.	24	4.21	.884
I have an ability to service customers' account.	24	4.17	.868
<b>Salesmanship skills</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>4.0750</b>	<b>.75484</b>

Source: Survey, 2018

Descriptive analysis for salesmanship skills is presented in the table 6 above. The results indicate that salesperson 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 7: Descriptive Analysis for Sales performance

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am effective in generating high level of sales revenues.	24	3.62	.875
I am effective in exceeding annual sales target and objectives.	24	3.17	.868
I establish long lasting relationship with customers.	24	3.75	.676
I am effective in contributing to the company's market share.	24	3.50	.780
<b>Sales performance</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>3.5104</b>	<b>.31691</b>

Source: Survey, 2018

The results about sales performance indicate that salespersons 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 have good sales performance.

#### **4. 3 Validity test and Reliability test**

##### **4.3.1 Validity test**

Bryman & Bell (2007) defined validity as how much any measuring instrument measures what it is intended to measure. The important issue of measurement validity relates to whether measures of concepts really measure the concept or not. There are several ways of establishing validity such as content validity; concurrent; predictive validity; construct validity; and convergent validity. This study addressed content validity through the review of literature and adapting instruments used in previous studies.

##### **4.3.2 Reliability test**

Nunnally (1978) stated that reliability is the consistency of a test, survey, observation, or another measuring device. The level of reliability of the instrument indicates the consistency of the variables. Cronbach's alpha is an index of reliability associated with the variation accounted for the true score of the underlying construct and it can only be measured for variables which have more than one measurement question. 0.5 is a sufficient value, while 0.7 is a more reasonable value. The reliability of the questionnaire is analyzed by using Cronbach's alpha statistics.

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.

Table 2: Reliability Test

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Technical skills	.980	6
Interpersonal skill	.881	5
Marketing skill	.736	4
Salesmanship skill	.921	5
Sales performance	.812	4

Source: Own computations, 2018

### 4.3.3 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 3: Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
SP	.154	24	.148	.933	24	.113
TS	.165	24	.121	.995	24	.122
IS	.105	24	.160	.997	24	.128
MS	.125	24	.133	.958	24	.123
SS	.194	24	.090	.944	24	.119

Source: Own computations, 2018

#### 4.3.4 Multicollinearity Test

Multicollinearity problem arises when there is a linear relationship among explanatory variables that the result could not obtain estimates of all parameters. This causes large variance and standard error with a very low t-ratio and wide confidence interval. Different methods are often suggested to detect the existence of multicollinearity problem. Variance inflation factors (VIF) technique used for continuous explanatory variable. If the value of VIF is 10 and above, there is multicollinearity problem(Gujarati, 2004).

Table 4: Multicollinearity Test

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

Source: Own computations, 2018

To detect the problem of multicollinearity, the VIF technique is used prior to executing the regression analysis. As presented in the table 10, the values of VIF are well below 10 and suggesting that there is no problem of multicollinearity among the study independent variables.

#### 4.3.5 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 5: 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

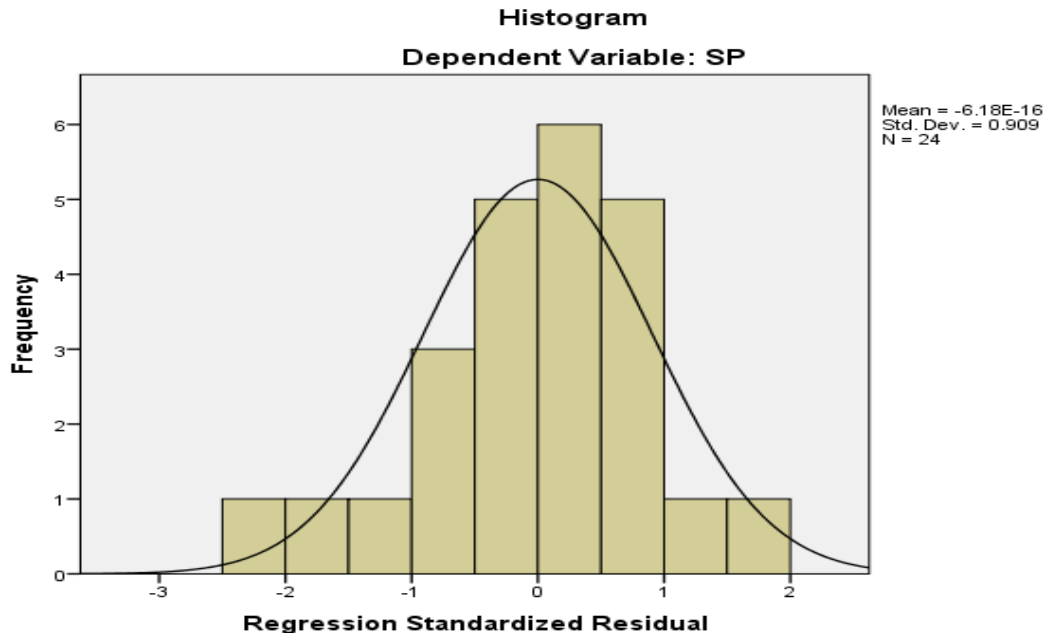
Source: Own computations, 2018

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.

#### 4.3.6 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 errors 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 centre 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, 2018

### 2.3.7 Correlation Analysis

The result of correlation analysis is presented in the table 12 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 person's performance. Pearson correlation method is used to conduct the correlation analysis.

Table 12: Correlation Analysis

	<b>SP</b>	<b>TS</b>	<b>IS</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>SS</b>
<b>SP</b>	1				
<b>TS</b>	.423*	1			
<b>IS</b>	.588**	-.203	1		
<b>MS</b>	.106	-.365	.418*	1	
<b>SS</b>	.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.

### 4.3.8 Regression analysis

Results of regression analysis are presented in the following tables 13, table 14 and table 15.

Table 6: Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.873	.762	.712	.16996

Source: Own computations, 2018

The study model summary is presented in table 13 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 salespersons is affected by variation of sales skills dimensions.

Table 14: ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1.761	4	.440	15.242	.000
Residual	.549	19	.029		
Total	2.310	23			

Source: Own computations, 2018

ANOVA is presented in table 14. 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 performance of salesman. 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 salesman's performance. This implies that sales skills

and salesman's 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 has significant positive effect on sales performance of salesperson. This study has identified similar finding to (Churchill et al., 1985; Ahmad et al., 2010) that sales skills affect a sales person's performance.

The relationship of individual dimension of sales skills with performance of the salesman is presented in the table 15 below. The researcher used unstandardized coefficients and their sign to analyze the relationship between sales skills and salesman's performance. The specific objectives are addressed based on this analysis.

Table 75: 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, 2018

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

other sales skills. Based on this finding, the researcher cannot accept null hypothesis of interpersonal skill has no effect on sales persons' 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; Katiskeck & Skermeas, 2003; Baldauf & Cravens, 2002) that the use of technical knowledge results in higher salesperson performance and salesperson'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 sales persons instead rejects null hypothesis and accepts alternative hypothesis of interpersonal skill have significant positive effect on salesperson's 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 salesman's performance. Therefore, the researcher accepts null hypothesis of marketing skill has no effect on sales person's performance.

Salesmanship is statistically significant in affecting sales performance at significant level of 0.01 suggesting that it has strong effect on performance of sales person. 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 sales person instead rejects null hypothesis and accepts alternative hypothesis of salesmanship has significant positive effect on performance of sales person. 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 performance as a salesperson and results on strong sales performance of salesperson.

Table 86 Summary of Hypotheses

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

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

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

#### **5.1. Summary of Major Finding**

This study was conducted with an objective of identifying the effect of sales skill on sales performance of salesperson. 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 sales performance at significance level of 0.01. Interpersonal skill of the sales person has significant effect on their performance at significance level of 0.01. Marketing skill of the sales person is statistically insignificant in affecting the sales performance of the sales person. Salesmanship has significant positive effect on sales performance of the sales person at significance level of 0.01. Sales skills have significant effect on sales performance of the sales persons at significance level of 0.01.

#### **5.2 Conclusions**

This study has identified the effect of sales skills on sales performance of salespersons in Chora Gas factory. Technical skills, interpersonal skills, marketing skills, and salesmanship skills were uses 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 sales person performance are significantly and positively related. It is concluded that technical skill is the predictor of

salespersons performance. So Technical skill is the predictor of sales success in Chora gas and chemical factory.

- Effect of interpersonal skills is positive and significant on the sales performance of the salesperson in the company. Interpersonal skills salespersons possess enabled them to increase their sales performance in the company.
- Salesmanship skill is positive and significant in affecting sales performance of the salespersons. Therefore, it is concluded that the salesmanship skill of the salespersons is supporting their sales performance in Chora gas and chemical factory.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Bases on the conclusions drawn the researcher provides following recommendations.

- Since the technical skill has the most significant effect on sales performance of salespersons 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 or hire chemical engineers and train them how to sale to develop the necessary sales skill.
- Interpersonal skill has significant positive effect on sales performance of salesperson. 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.

#### **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 salespersons in single organization. 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 industry would be useful to test the framework, and thus provide better generalizability of the findings.

Second, the dimensions of salesperson skills 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 salesperson skills that may also influence salesperson performance that have been left out such as personal skill, relational skill and professional skills.

Finally, the choice of the respondents i.e. salespersons, as evaluator of all sales skills dimensions may also imply some limitations. Ideally, a more diverse group should evaluate salesperson performance. Moreover, the argument can be made that, since salespersons are fronting and dealing with customers, it is suggested that salesperson is best assessed by customers. Customers could rate the salesperson 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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