

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF COMMERCE
DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING MANAGEMENT
GRADUATE PROGRAM

**THE EFFECTS OF SALES PERSONS' PERSONALITY TRAITS ON
ORGANIZATIONS' BRAND IMAGE (The case of Ethio-telecom)**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Program of School of Commerce of
Addis Ababa University in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Masters in Marketing Management in the Department of
Marketing Management**

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November 27, 2018

ABSTRACT

Sales persons' personality traits have a huge effect on organizations brand image (Magandini and Ngwenya, 2015). Literature review showed that there was no sufficient evidence to demonstrate the effect of personality traits on organization brand image. Hence, this study was conducted using a case of ethio-telecom. The study used quantitative study involved 123 sales persons and 10 purposively sampled interviewees from 10 sales branch offices in Addis Ababa. The quantitative data was cleaned, organized and analyzed using STATA version 11 software and qualitative data was analyzed using appropriate qualitative data analysis method.

Thirty-five (28.5%) were between 26 – 30 years of age, 52.0% were males and 68.3% were married. The majority (75.6%) were first-degree holders and fifty-seven (46.3%) earn between 5,000 – 10,000 Birr per month. Fifty-six (45.5%) of the study participants has worked above 10 years in ethio-telecom and nearly half (48.8%) worked as sales persons between 2 – 5 years. The personality trait finding showed, 64.3% had openness, sixty-three (51.2%) had conscientiousness, 57.8% had extraversion, 65.9% had agreeableness and eighty-six (69.9%) had low neuroticism personality trait. Over four in ten study participants reported that ethio-telecom did not have good brand image among its customers and nearly half of them reported that ethio-telecom did not have a good brand image among the public, media and its employees. Years of experience in ethio-telecom was found to be a significant determinant ($p < 0.05$) of all personality traits except agreeableness. Therefore, significant amount of organization brand image, 82.1%, influenced by sales persons' personality traits, which means independent variable statistically and significantly predictor of the dependent variable (organization brand image). Extraversion personality trait was a significant predictor of brand image among employees and strongly correlated ($p < 0.05$). The qualitative study finding showed sales persons did not have good understanding of the personality traits.

In conclusion, personality traits except openness showed significant effect on organization brand image. Sales persons in ethio-telecom strongly did not agree that ethio-telecom had a good brand image. Moreover, sales persons did not have good understanding of the personality traits. Hence, considering the study limitations actions need to be taken based on the recommendations.

Key terms: *personality traits, openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, neuroticism, brand image,*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis report would not have been possible without the productive feedback and guidance from my advisor Hailemariam Kebede. Hence, I am very thankful for his advice during the thesis proposal write up development, the thesis report writing and during the entire progress until this stage. I also would like to thank the School of Commerce for providing the outlines for the thesis proposal and report write up. Finally, I want to thank my family especially my husband for his moral support and encouragement since I joined the master program.

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ACRONYMS

AA – Addis Ababa

CAAZ – Central Addis Ababa Zone

CSD – Customer Service Division

ES – Enterprise Sales

ET –ethio-telecom

GTP – Growth and Transformation Plan

HO – Head Office

IT – Information Technology

NAAZ – North Addis Ababa Zone

RS – Residential Sales

SAAZ – South Addis Ababa Zone

SWAAZ – South West Addis Ababa Zone

WAAZ – West Addis Ababa Zone

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Workplace personality influence every person output in the organization. Personality helps to develop the prevailing workplace environment that determines employee morale, productivity and team-building abilities. In the regard, service providers' personality is a crucial element of business success (Sutle, 2016). The contacts that every customers will have with sales persons is an opportunity for organizations business to promote its brand, improve reputation and increase the likelihood of customers' retention and further sales. Customers may observe that a sales person with friendly personality and outgoing but what they may not recognize is that sales persons do this with a purpose. A person with a sales personality focuses on its goal that is making the sale happen (Barrett, 2013).

A positive personality is important for organization success, whereas a negative personality is counter-productive. Therefore, if employees do not have a positive personality, changing their behavior is important to improve their work experience. For sales persons in customer-facing roles, their personality will have a huge effect on the organization brand identify and brand image (Magandini and Ngwenya, 2015). Studies conducted on sales persons personality showed that customers depend heavily upon what specific things a sales person provides compared to what the industry competitors do. Highly satisfied customers are good for business, which all depends on how the sales persons handle the customers and their personality attributes in promoting the organization brand image (Unknown4, 2018). In this regard, the sales person in ethio-telecom will play a crucial role in the promotion of the organization image.

Several studies were conducted to investigate sales personality traits. One of which was a study conducted by to investigate the effects of negative personality trait on productivity (Mark, 2016). Other studies showed sales persons personality its effect on the organization and how the personality trait will affect the organization sale (Root, 2016 and Martin, 2011). A case study reported after interviewing thousands of sales persons measured the five main personality traits and better understand the characteristics that separate them from their peers but did not show it effect of organization image (Renahan, 2013). One study that was conducted in telecom industry, assessed the effect of sales persons' personality on sales performance of the internet service providers in the telecommunication industry in Zimbabwean perspective (Magandini and Ngwenya, 2015). Similar to the previous studies this study also did not demonstrate the effect of the personality traits on organization brand image. Another study investigated how sales persons personality will play in brand leadership as a means of differentiating one company or product from another in general but not specific to telecom industry (Barrett, 2013). Hence, the purpose of this study was to conduct the study in telecom industry and partially fill this information gap.

The researcher conducted this study in ethio-telecom and assessed the effects of sales persons' personality traits on ethio-telecom brand image. In this study, the main research questions focuses on sales persons' socio-demographic and economic background, assessing their personality traits and understanding on personality traits and ethio-telecom brand image. The study investigated the effect of their personality traits on the organization brand image. The researcher focused on these areas considering the time and available resources constraints. Sales persons of ethio-telecom who work in sampled ethio-telecom sales office branches in Addis Ababa participated in the study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Research showed that customer service should be a prime consideration for every business because the sales and profitability of businesses depend on how the sales persons interact with on day-to-day basis and satisfy customers. If these things are not met, the business will lose its customers and collapse in a short period of time (Lieven, 2016). In this regard sales persons with a positive sales personality will build a positive brand image and satisfy the customers that will result in success in their sales as well as the business of the organization (Barrett, 2013). Ethio-telecom provides sales services to its customers through various branches in and outside Addis Ababa. Each of the branches consisted of varied numbers of staff. However, there is no sufficient evidence in terms of personality traits of these sales persons and its effect on their job performance, on customers and customer service as well as on organization brand image and business success.

For ethio-telecom, sales persons are the face of the organization that links the business to the customers. This means that understanding the sales persons' personality trait in ethio-telecom is important for the organization brand image, increase revenue and reach more coverage. In ethio-telecom when the sales persons acquire positive personality, they perform well and more customers will be satisfied which could create a positive ethio-telecom image towards the organizations brand. Moreover, it will result in increasing income and organizational profit. In the past years, ethio-telecom has achievement in-terms of increasing its customers based every year. However, there is no adequate evidence whether the sales persons' personality trait has a contributed to this or not. In this regard filling the information gap on sales persons' personality traits and its effect on organization image is critical. Hence, this study aimed to provide partially the evidences on sales persons' personality trait and its effect on the organization brand image in

the organization. The information that this study generated could enable the organization to develop a strategy for developing sales persons personality linked to organizations brand image.

1.3 Research Questions

The main research question for this study is what effect does the ethio-telecom sales persons' personality traits have on ethio-telecom brand image?

The sub-questions are:

- What are the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of ethio-telecom sales persons?
- What are the types of sales persons' personality traits among ethio-telecom sales persons?
- What are the sales persons' understanding on the relationship between personality traits and ethio-telecom brand image?
- What are the effects of openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion and neuroticism on organization brand image?

1.4 Research Objectives

General objective: The general objective of this study was to understand the effect of sales persons' personality traits on ethio-telecom brand image in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Specific objectives: The specific objectives of the study are:

- To describe socio-demographic and economic characteristics of salespersons in ethio-telecom.

- To identify sales persons' personality traits among sales persons in ethio-telecom.
- To assess sales persons understanding on the relationship between personality traits on ethio-telecom brand image.
- To evaluate the effect of sales persons' openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism on ethio-telecom brand image.
- To disseminate the study findings and recommendations for decision makers and other audiences.

1.5 Significance of the Study

There are 12854 employees currently working in ethio-telecom. Within this, 1206 have a direct relationship with customers through sales offices and others have an indirect relationship. There are 51 Residential and 7 Enterprise sales shops in Addis Ababa. As a service providing organization, a positive personality trait among sales persons in ethio-telecom will have a significant impact on the organization reputation, income and influence. However, there was no adequate study among ethio-telecom to understand the effects of sales persons' personality traits on organizations brand image. Hence, this study was conducted to provide evidence base partially on the status and could enable management to develop action on how best to utilize the sales persons' personality in building the organization brand image. After the supervisor and evaluators approval of the study report, the researcher will to sales persons to utilize the result in their day-to-day activities, for sales supervisors to make decision including sales persons training, mentorship and create awareness on personality issues and for policy and planning team for designing better sales services in ethio-telecom. The research will also share the findings in national forums and to ethio-telecom management following review by the research supervisors

and feedback from the examiners. Finally, this study identified areas for future research in areas where the findings cannot provide evidences.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study focused on assessing the effect of sales persons' personality traits on organizations brand image in ethio-telecom. The researcher selected the sales persons from sales offices in sampled ethio-telecom branches in Addis Ababa. Hence, this study did not include study participants outside of Addis Ababa. The study also focused on assessing only the sales persons personality on organization brand image based on their verbal report and hence may not reflect the actual practice they might exercise. The study population were composed of sampled employees of the organization that have direct and indirect relation with sales and it was representative sample and did not include the opinions of all the sales persons in the organization.

In terms of time, the study was conducted at one point in time and hence it could only reflect the personality traits of the sales persons of the organization during the specific study period. Finally, the study used only interview and reflected only the opinions of the sales persons. Hence, the study cannot provide the evidence base how the sales persons' practice their personality since it did not include direct observation or follow up over a period.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The study has the following limitations. First, it did not involve all the sales persons of ethio-telecom. Hence, it might not represent the views of all ethio-telecom employees. Moreover, due

to the time and resource limitation the study focused on employees in Addis Ababa and hence due to the geographic focus and types of employees who might participate in the study it might not reflect the views and opinions of other sales persons outside of the city. In addition, since the study focuses on the staff in Addis Ababa their opinion might be different from those outside of Addis Ababa since the study participants might have years of experience, high level of education, access to information, supervision from experienced sales supervisors and highly educated customers. Finally, this study excluded staffs who are temporary workers for ethio-telecom whose view might affect the study findings if they will participate in the study.

This cross sectional conducted at one point of time. Hence, it might not reflect the personality traits of the sales persons over a longer period. However, the numbers of participants were limited considering the researcher's time and resource available for this study strong evidence based would have been generated if the study was done in large sample size. During data collection, the researcher gathered the information based on the sales persons' opinion. Hence, this study cannot proof whether what the report was what they actually practice as a sales person when they encounter with customers.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Ethio-telecom – an organization established by law to provide all forms of telecom service in Ethiopia (Ethio-telecom, 2014).

Sales person – ethio-telecom permanent employee stationed at sales offices and employed to work as sales person (Ethio-telecom, 2016).

Sales supervisor – ethio-telecom permanent employee stationed at sales offices and employed to supervise two or more sales persons (Ethio-telecom, 2016).

Brand – a brand is a name, term, design, symbol, or other feature that distinguishes an organization or product from its rivals in the eyes of the customer. Brands are used in business, marketing, and advertising (Sasson, 2016).

Brand image – brand image is the impression in the consumers' mind of a brand's total personality (real and imaginary qualities and shortcomings). Brand image is developed over time through advertising campaigns with a consistent theme and is authenticated through the consumers' direct experience (Juneja, 2018).

Personality – it is defined as the set of habitual behaviors, cognitions and emotional patterns that evolve from biological and environmental factors (Pappas, 2018).

Personality traits – personality traits are divided into five factors called the Big Five. These traits are openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and negative emotionality (neuroticism) (Butts, 2018).

Agreeableness – refers salespersons personality trait who are usually warm, friendly, and tactful (Rehanan, 2013 and Cherry and Gans, 2018).

Openness – it is defined as personality characteristics of an individual who are invariably imaginative, creative, as well as inquisitive towards new ideas (Rehanan, 2013 and Cherry and Gans, 2018).

Conscientiousness - is a personality trait described as having a strong sense of duty, take their jobs very seriously and feel deeply responsible for results and reliable (Rehanan, 2013 and Cherry and Gans, 2018).

Extraversion - refers how outgoing and social a person is and enjoy being with people, participating in social gatherings, and are full of energy (Rehanan, 2013 and Cherry and Gans, 2018).

Neuroticism - is a personality trait that is characterized by a more likely than average to be moody and to experience such feelings as anxiety, worry, fear, anger, frustration, envy, jealousy, guilt, depressed mood, and loneliness (Rehanan, 2013 and Cherry and Gans, 2018).

1.9 Organization of the Study

The thesis report organized in to ten sections. The front matter consists of abstract, acknowledgement, list of tables and figures, acronyms and the table of contents. Seven chapters of this thesis report follow the front matters. The first chapter is introduction that consists of background of the study, statement of the problem, research question, research objectives, and significance of the study, scope of the study, limitation of the study, definition of terms and organization of the study. Chapter two describes the review of the relevant literature and chapter three that describes the research design and methodology follows this.

The research design and methodology sections described the research area, research approach, research design, research population and sample size including research population, sample size and sampling technique, data collection, validity, reliability and generalizability, data preparation and analysis and ethical considerations.

Chapter four, five and six follows this section and these chapters describe the research findings, discussion, summary, conclusions and recommendations respectively. The final two sections present the bibliography for the relevant literatures referenced and appendix for the consent form, quantitative and qualitative data collection questionnaire used to conduct this study.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

2.1.1 Theories and Perspectives of Personality

Reports showed that there are four major personality theory perspectives: the psychoanalytic, humanistic, trait and social cognitive perspectives. Each of these perspectives attempts to describe different patterns in personality, including how these patterns form and how people differ on an individual level (Cherry, 2018). According to Sigmund Freud, the psychoanalytic perspective of personality emphasizes the importance of early childhood experiences and the unconscious mind. The humanistic perspective of personality focuses on psychological growth, free will, personal awareness and takes a more positive outlook on human nature and how each person achieves its potential (Cherry, 2018 and McLead, 2017). On the other hand the trait perspective of personality is centered on identifying, describing and measuring the specific traits that make-up human personality while the social cognitive perspective of personality emphasizes the importance of observational learning, self-efficacy, situational influences and cognitive processes (Boeree, 2018). This study will focus on the trait perspectives of personality focusing of sales persons.

2.1.2 Trait Perspectives of Personality

Trait theory, also called dispositional theory, is an approach to the study of human personality that is primarily interested in the measurement of traits, which is the habitual pattern of behavior, thought and emotion (Wikipedia, 2018). A trait is a relatively stable characteristic that causes individuals to behave in certain ways. Unlike other theories of personality, such as psychoanalytic or humanistic theories, the trait theory to personality is focused on differences between individuals (McLead, 2017). The combination and interaction of various traits form a

personality that is unique to each individual that are the distinguishing qualities or characteristics of individuals' (Pappas, 2018).

Trait theories such as Cattell's and Eysenck's have been in a considerable research. Researches showed that Cattell focused on too many traits and Eysenck on too few. As a result, a new trait theory often referred to as the "Big Five" theory emerged (Boeree, 2018). This five-factor model of personality represents five core traits that interact to form human personality. These are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness (Butts, 2018). These personality traits could be assessed using personality trait assessment tools that help to identify the individuals' personality traits (John and Soto, 2016).

2.1.3 Sales Persons Personality Traits

Theorists describe personality traits from a number of different perspectives. According to the trait perspective, sales personality is related to one's capability to perform the job that the person has the right personal uniqueness and the right mind capabilities for selling. Moreover, sales persons' personality traits have been defined as psychological characteristics that enhance a person's ability to perform (Wiley and Carolyn, 2005). There are five personality traits that the sales persons exhibit which influence the sales persons and their organizations performance. These five main personality traits are the once that differentiate successful sales persons from their peers ((Martin, 2011 and Hargreaves, 2010). Table 1 summarized the key positive and negative personality traits that sales persons could exhibit in an organization (Rehanan, 2013 and Cherry and Gans, 2018).

Table 1: Features of the positive and negative personality traits

Personality traits	Positive personality	Negative personality
Agreeableness	Able to identify and react accurately to the behavior and emotions of customers Able establish rapport easily and put people "at ease" Feel empathy and concern to customers and enjoy helping	Experience difficulty in establishing rapport; takes little interest in others; Have little interest for customers problems even could insult
Openness	Able to focus on opportunities, new ideas and solutions; creative Focus on tackling new challenges Refusal to allow rejection and persistence	Experience "paralysis" when faced with setbacks, problems Do not enjoy new things, changes and new ideas Dislikes abstract or theoretical concepts
Conscientiousness	Are goal-orientated and able to articulate their goals clearly in set schedule Do not depend upon the sales manager for direction Possess the self-discipline Spend time for preparation and finish task in time	Need occasional reminders to finish tasks; not structures Need managers assistance to keep them "on track" or return things where they were Are anxious about things being performed and get distracted
Extraversion	Possess an appropriate sense of urgency, anticipate consequences and evaluate alternatives before acting Tend to not have excuses for a situation and take action when situations require action Maintain a positive outlook towards situations and people Can accept valid criticisms and suggestions for performance improvement	Tend to blame people, circumstances and other external factors for why something did not succeed or why something was not completed Are comfortable with the status quo and perform only what is required of them
Neuroticism	Enjoy competitiveness and constantly look for ways to measure themselves against their peer Possess leadership qualities and is not afraid to exert pressure to influence others Enjoy sales as a profession Emotionally stable and deals well with stress	Rely on manipulation instead of trust and rapport for results Possess "win-at-all costs" attitude often at the expense of other Find minimal personal gratification Experience a lot of stress dramatic mood change

2.1.4 Can Personality Traits Change?

According to older personality type theories, the individual's personality type is inborn and does not change. However, recent reports indicated that individuals can develop personality traits and habits that differ or even directly contradict the description of their type (Roberts, 2018). This is due to the environment where people live in can shape their personality in a certain way and force them to develop traits and habits that might be foreign to their type (Ethan, 2018). For instance, if a person is naturally casual and spontaneous, but the work schedule is very structured and the manager is obsessive about schedules, the preferences of the person likely to change to more organized and scheduled personality. The same rule applies to other personality traits as well.

Recent research showed, there is an increased optimism that personality traits could change. A study published in the January 2017 journal *Psychological Bulletin* synthesized 207 published research papers and found that personality may be altered through therapy (Pappas, 2017). Another study found that the changes imparted in therapy lasted for well over a year and showed no indication of fading out with time (Roberts, 2018). Similar study report indicated that the big five-factor model is not a personality system rooted in typology. Therefore, the personality traits of the five-factor model can be changed because they are not fixed (Butts, 2018).

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1 Organizations Brand Image and Personality Trait

Brand image is a unique bundle of associations within the minds of target customers and consumers' perception about the product. In addition, it is the manner in which a specific brand is positioned in the market (Juneja, 2018). Organizations brand image is an accumulation of

contact and observation by people external to an organization, which should highlight an organization's mission and vision to all (Dolatabadi, Kazemi and Soltani, 2012). Brand image is the overall impression and associations in consumers' mind that is formed from all sources. Based on these associations, they form brand image, which can be strengthened using brand communications like advertising, packaging, word of mouth publicity and other promotional tools. In this regard, the sales persons play a critical role in the promotion of the organization brand and creating a positive image on consumers (Juneja, 2018).

Globally with the development and expansion of information and technology, almost everything can be sold and purchased through internet from any location. However, the direct selling conducted through sales persons still has its own importance, in which the personality of salesmen has very critical role, especially in order to get market competitive advantages build the organization brand image and increase sell (Tabasum et al., 2014, p.). In this regard, sales persons have a great role to play in creating a positive brand image and mental feedback of the consumers when they purchase a product. Positive organizational brand image enhances customers' expectations, goodwill and brand value of an organization (Juneja, 2018).

2.2.2 The Effect of Salespersons Personality Trait on Productivity

Personality trait helps to develop employee morale, productivity and team-building abilities. Understanding how positive and negative attitude affect the workplace is an important tool in creating a harmonious work environment and achieve the organization goal (Root, 2016). A positive personality trait at work is important because work is a place where people interact with other co-workers and colleagues most of the time on a daily basis (Info Entrepreneurs, 2016). In this regard, a positive personality trait helps to cope more easily with the daily affairs of life and

enable to see the bright side of life (Sasson, 2016). A positive personality in the workplace is not only important how sales people do at work and handles customers. Major sales and marketing researchers study the link between personality and consumer purchasing behavior. These studies found that personality factors influence greatly what consumers purchase, as well as when and how they use products and services (Middlebrook, 2018). Maintaining a good attitude and personality trait can help to achieve the goal at the workstations (Michaels, 2007).

How people interact with people at work place can directly affect their productivity and career prospects (Self Improvement Advice, 2018). Negative personality in the workplace might include laziness, tardiness, rudeness or any other personality traits or activity that lowers overall morale and sales persons. Negative personality could be due to personal problems, trouble at home or it can result from workplace events, such as a firing, pay decreases or other problems (Mack, 2016). Negative workplace personality trait and attitudes have an effect on every person in the organization, from the employees to the company owner. Understanding how negative attitude affect the workplace is important to create a productive working environment in order to achieve the organization goal (Root, 2016).

Researches in various disciplines have been conducted to investigate salesperson personality and sales performance. Successful salespeople possess a unique set of personality traits that enable them to succeed. Some experts believe that a person's attitudes, personality, and work methods are virtually the entire basis for sales person success (Greenberg, Weinstein and Sweeney, 2001). Workplace negative personality and attitude of employees affects how the customers are handled. Failure to respond properly to customers can negatively affect a business. A study conducted among employees showed 72% of respondents blamed their negative attitudes affect

their performances at different times (Self Improvement Advice, 2018). Customer service representatives, who have neither the authority nor the ability to resolve customers' problems on their own, run the risk of isolating customers and transferring them from agent to agent without any resolution due to negative personality salespeople (Marketing Donut, 2018). To avoid damaging effects in the organization business, organizations needs to make sure that the employees who will be working most closely with customers acquire the appropriate training and authority to manage issues that triggers them express characteristics of negative personality traits (Sales Force, 2018).

2.2.3 The Effect of Sales Parsons' Personality Trait on Organizations' Success and Brand Image

Generating income and revenue are the primary roles of sales personnel. Hence, the personalities of these salespeople play a critical role in determining their success (Hargreaves, 2010). Whilst management has paid particular attention in training and developing the sales personnel, they seem to neglect the profound impact of the personality of the sales person performance. Given the same sales tools, level of education, and propensity to work, some salespeople succeed where others fail (Martin, 2011). A research conducted in telecommunication internet provider in Zimbabwe revealed that self-efficiency, locus of control, and proactive personality determines sale performance (Magandini and Ngwenya, 2015).

Identifying the core traits required for sales persons can help business owners to hire the best sales candidates, keep their brand and succeed in sales (Fernandes, 2016). Studies have proven that the personality traits play a critical role in determining their success (Davis, 2018). Personality tests conducted on high technology and business services sales persons indicated that

key personality traits directly influence sales persons' performance and ultimately their organizations success (Martin, 2011). A Zimbabwean study report showed that given the same sales station, level of education, and propensity to work, some salespeople succeed where as others fail as a result of variability in personalities, which is a critical factor in determining their organization success (Magandini and Ngwenya, 2015).

Contrary to conventional stereotypes that successful salespeople are pushy and egotistical, top salespeople had medium to high modesty and humility, high levels of conscientiousness, high in achievement orientation, lower gregariousness, low levels of discouragement, are comfortable fighting for their cause and experiencing infrequent or only occasional sadness (Martin, 2011 and Renahan, 2013).

Every sales person is the face of his or her company to clients, giving personality to an inanimate product and business (Suttle, 2016). The sales persons' personality and attitude will shape the customers' view of and feelings toward the product, company, and brand. The way a client feels about and interact with the sales person will often determine the way the client feels about the organization (Sales Force, 2018). Sales person's personality and behavior must give clients positive and confident feelings about the product or service they are considering. It is those personality traits, which often help sales persons to make the sale and create a positive organization brand image (Gavel International, 2018).

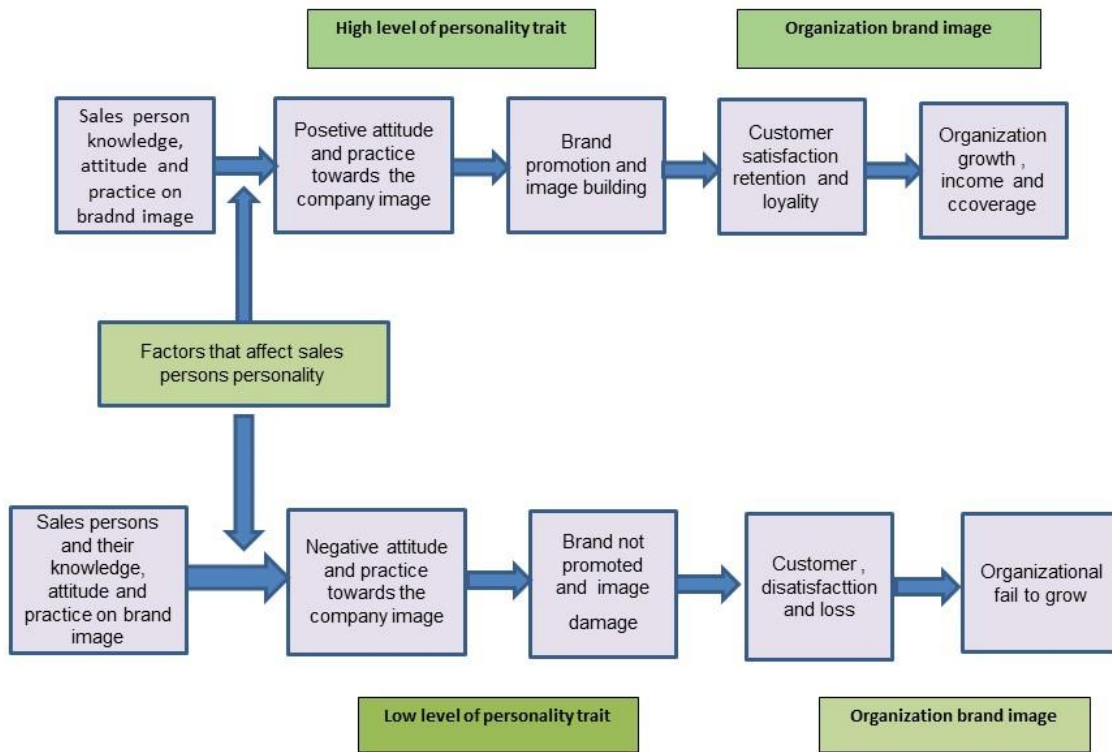
A study conducted via an online survey from a cross-sectional sample of 246 salespeople indicated that the salesperson personality with their perceived brand personality has a significant impact on the brand identification. This identification has important sales force

outcomes, including affecting intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, task self-efficiency and both behavioral and outcome performance (Gammoh, Mallin and Pullins, 2013).

2.2.4 Mind-map or “pyramid” on effect of sales persons’ personality on organization brand image

In this study, it was hypothesized that sales persons’ personality traits will have effect on brand image. An important question was which type of personality traits exists among the sales persons, how do sale persons’ understanding on the relationship between personality traits and brand image and what kind of opportunities available in to train or orient sales persons on personality traits. Literature review conducted shows the importance of personality traits on organizational performance and brand image. While good attitude and practice and positive personality traits contributes positively to the organizational image the low level of personality traits affect the organization image negatively. In this regard, there is no sufficient evidence in the past that showed the effect of sales persons’ personality traits and its effect on brand image. Hence, this research tested an approach to fill this gap. The following figure shows the mind map on the relationship between personality traits and its effect on organization brand.

Figure 1: Mind-map or “pyramid” on effect of sales persons’ personality on organization brand image (Tefera, 2018)



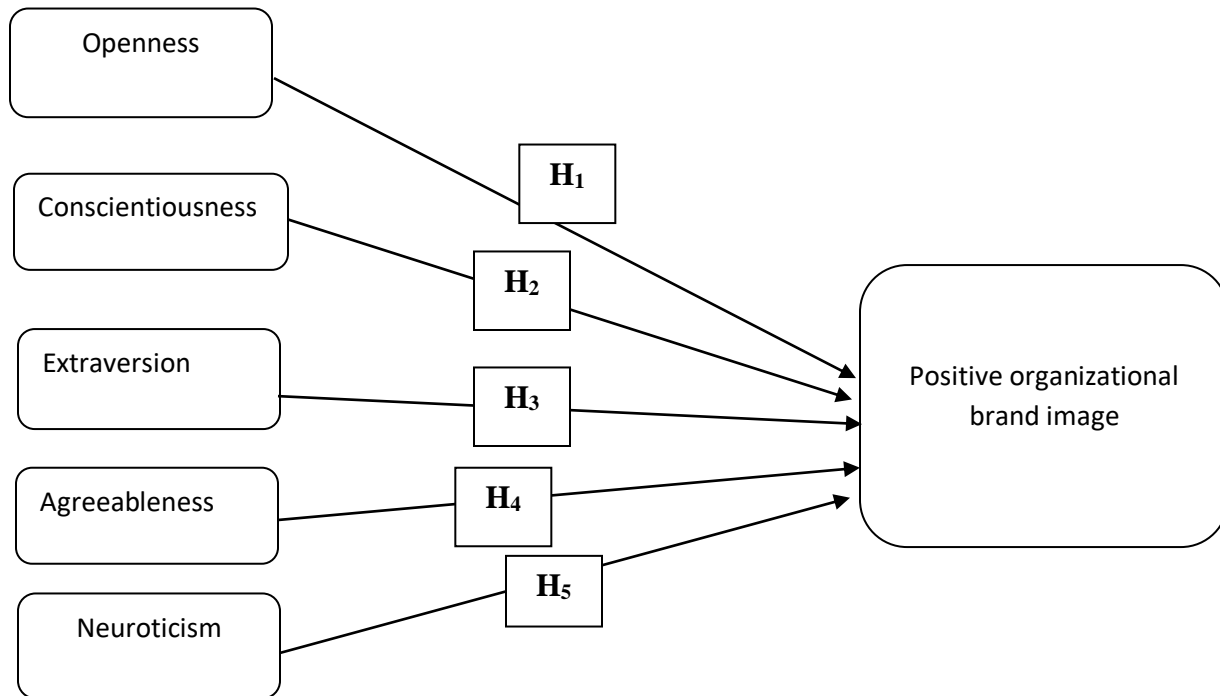
2.2.5 Sales persons and Customer Service in ethio-telecom

Ethio-telecom provides its sales services to its customer through Residential and Enterprise Divisions located at different locations. Those front desks are responsible to handle customer issues. In addition, Customer service Division gives after sales support for Residential customer through 994 and Enterprise customers also can call 980 to appeal for any complaints in 24/7 (Ethio-telecom1, 2016). Ethio-telecom is expanding its service to reach more customers through an agreement with global companies such as Ericsson to transform and expand the current mobile network and add additional capacity to meet the country’s need to bring connectivity. By the end of the GTP one, there were more than 40 million subscribers in the country (Ethio-

telecom, 2014). Ethio-telecom is providing specified service with two models that are in a form of most preferred customer premise-based, and with optional ethio-telecom premise-based models (Ethio-telecom, 2015). There are total of 12854 employees currently working in ethio-telecom. Within this, 1206 have a direct relationship with customers through sales offices and others have an indirect relationship. This study was conducted among sampled sales persons that have direct relationship with customers.

2.2.6 Conceptual Framework

Figure 2: Conceptual framework showing the relationship between personality trait and organization brand image



Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

The hypotheses for this study are based on the literature review (Fernandes, 2016, McLead 2017 and Martin, 2011, Pappas, 2017and Renaham, 2013).

H₁: Sales persons' openness personality trait has effect on the organization brand image.

Sales persons need to be creative and be able to utilize wide range of new ideas when engaging with customers. Such open personality trait salespersons will be able to create a positive image on the organization (Cherry and Gans, 2018). Sales persons with openness personality trait did show a positive relationship with sales and organization performance (Funham and Fudge, 2008).

H₂: Sales persons' conscientiousness personality trait has effect on the organization brand image.

When sales persons have a strong sense of duty, and highly committed for achieving high and serve more customers they will satisfy the customers. Such conscientiousness personality salespersons will build a positive image on the organization (John, and Soto, 2016).

H₃: Sales persons' extraversion personality trait has effect on organization brand image.

Sales persons interact with large number of customers. As a result, they need to be social person and be able to interact with a wide range of people. This requires a lot of energy. In this regard, sales persons who have extraversion personality will be able to reach large number of customers (Rehanan, 2013 and Cherry and Gans, 2018).

H₄: Sales persons' agreeableness personality trait has effect on organization brand image.

Warm and friendly personality that will enable to answer the customers' request is a key characteristic of open personality trait that will have a positive effect on the organization brand image (Cherry and Gans, 2018). Waheed, Yang and Webber (2017) study conducted to investigate the relationship between the five-factor model of personality traits and sales performance in Pakistan showed agreeableness is highly desirable personality trait.

H₅: Sales persons' neuroticism personality trait has effect on organization brand image.

Interaction with wide range of people requires patience and understanding of the other persons' perspectives. In this regard, sales persons who are more likely neuroticism will have a negative image on the organization brand image (Rehanan, 2013 and Cherry and Gans, 2018).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Area

The study was conducted in Addis Ababa where Ethio-telecom provides sales services to its customers. Out of the 58 sales branch offices in Addis Ababa 10 branch offices from six zones and an enterprise were included in this study. Population proportional to size method was used to select the 10 branch offices in each of the zones and enterprises.

3.2 Research Approach

The study used quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The quantitative approach involved interview with sales persons sampled from the sales branches. The qualitative approach allowed participation of purposively selected interviewees from the list of sales persons who were not participating in the quantitative study.

3.3 Research Design

The researcher in consultation with the supervisor selected appropriate research design and methodology considering the research problem, objective of the study and the literatures reviewed to develop the questionnaires. Moreover, the design contributed to the research information gaps in the field sales persons' personality and organization image. In this regard, this study was conducted with cross sectional descriptive study with an analytical component. The cross sectional study was selected since it was simple in design and the required information was generated in less time with reasonable cost. It also helped to investigate the current personality traits of the sales persons and its effect on ethio-telecom brand image at specific time-period by taking a snapshot or cross-section of the population. Compared with other studies

cross sectional study involve one contact with the study population and did not take too much time from the study participants. The descriptive component of this study design helped to investigate the study participants' socio-demographic and economic background, their personality traits, sales persons understanding on personality and ethio-telecom brand image. The analytic component of the study design assisted to find out if the ethio-telecom brand image was related to the sales persons' personality trait or not.

3.4 Research Ppopulation and Sample Size

3.4.1 Research Population

Sales persons in ethio-telecom sales branch offices in Addis Ababa were the study population for this research. Out of the 1206 sales persons in Addis Ababa ethio-telecom sales branch offices, randomly sampled sales persons that meet the inclusion criteria were included in this research. There were 58 branches in Addis Ababa and 10 of them were included in the study. The list of sales persons in Addis Ababa was received from Residential and Enterprise sales Coordinators.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria: all employees hired permanently enrolled in the study. Employees on contract, casual, hired by other organizations or expatriate staff who came to provide technical support were not included in the study.

3.4.2 Sample Size

The following assumptions were considered to determine the sample size for the quantitative study: 50% used since there was no data for estimating the prevalence on effect of employees' personality on organization image, a 95% confidence interval and a sample precision within 5% range. The researcher used the following formula to determine the sample size

$$\text{Sample Size} = \frac{Z^2 * (p) * (1-p)}{c^2}$$

Where: $Z = Z$ value (e.g. 1.96 for 95% confidence level)
 $p =$ since the prevalence is unknown the percentage choice is 50% which is expressed as decimal (.5 used for sample size needed)
 $c =$ desired sample precision, expressed as decimal (0.09)

$$\text{Sample Size} = \frac{1.96^2 * (50\%) * (1-50\%)}{0.09^2}$$

$$\text{Sample Size} = \frac{3.8416 * (50\%) * (50\%)}{0.0081}$$

$$\text{Sample Size} = \frac{3.8416 * 0.25}{0.0081}$$

$$\text{Sample Size} = \frac{0.9604}{0.0081}$$

$$\text{Sample Size} = 118.6$$

Considering the non-response rate of 5%, which sample size (118.6) multiplied by the non-response rate (0.05) will add additional 5.9 sales persons to the sample size.

Hence, the total sample size was = $118.6 + 5.9 = 124.9$

This gives a sample size of 125.

Based on the above formula, out of the total employees in the sampled branches, the researcher approached 125 of them but two of them did not agree to participate in the study since they refused to take part in the study for their personal reasons. A proportional number of employees were included from sampled branch offices. To complement the quantitative information the researcher conducted key informant interviews among 10 purposively sampled sales persons who did not participate in the quantitative study.

3.4.3 Sampling Technique

For the quantitative study, the researcher used the employees' number at list of sales persons as a sampling unit. The number of employees from sales branch in the zones was proportional to the total number of employees in each of the study locations. Based on the total numbers of employees, the employees were selected using systematic random sampling from each of the branches. A random number was used for the first sampling interval to determine the random starting point and each *n*th employee after the starting point will be selected systematically each time adding the sampling interval to the previous number. For this report due to the large number of branches, the researcher compiled the report by zones.

For the qualitative study, a purposive sampling methodology was used. The researcher conducted key informant interview among purposively sampled 10 sales persons in different sales branch offices among sales persons that did not participate in the quantitative study.

3.5 Data Collection

A mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) was used to conduct the study. Quantitative data was collected with salespersons interview using a pre-tested semi-structured questionnaire. A qualitative interview was conducted among non-sampled sales persons to complement the quantitative information. The researcher collected the data from September 3 – 10, 2018.

The researcher developed the quantitative questionnaire for the study based on the literature review. The big five personality trait inventory or test questions were adapted for this study and the responses were given a score (John and Soto, 2016). The big five personality trait assessment

test was used as a five Likert scale score rating ranging from strong agreement (score 5) to strong disagreement (score 1) and this rating will be used for this study.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part focused on study participants' socio-demographic and economic background and which followed by assessment of personality traits. The work-related big five-factor personality trait assessment, test questionnaire was used for the study. It specifically focused on the degree to which people were ambitious and wish to influence others, the degree to which people were extrovert and focused on others, the degree to which people were driven and energetic, the degree to which people were orderly and accurate in their work and the degree to which people are immune to stress and self-assured. Each of them had three questions both positive and negative characteristics. The last part assessed sales persons' opinion the effect of personality traits on ethio-telecom brand image among customers, generic public, media and its employees, .

Two trained data collectors conducted the data collection. The researcher trained them and conducted a pilot test on non-sampled branches and adjusted for errors and inputs received during pilot testing. Finally, after duplicating the data collection questionnaire, the researcher carried out the actual data collection. During data collection, the researcher reviewed completed questionnaires to check for completeness and to ensure the quality of data.

The qualitative study provided detailed description of participants' feelings, opinions, and inner experiences and interpretation. The researcher conducted all the qualitative interviews. The researcher explained the purpose of the interview, anonymity and duration before the interview. The researcher gave time for the participants to respond and probe for each question to get as

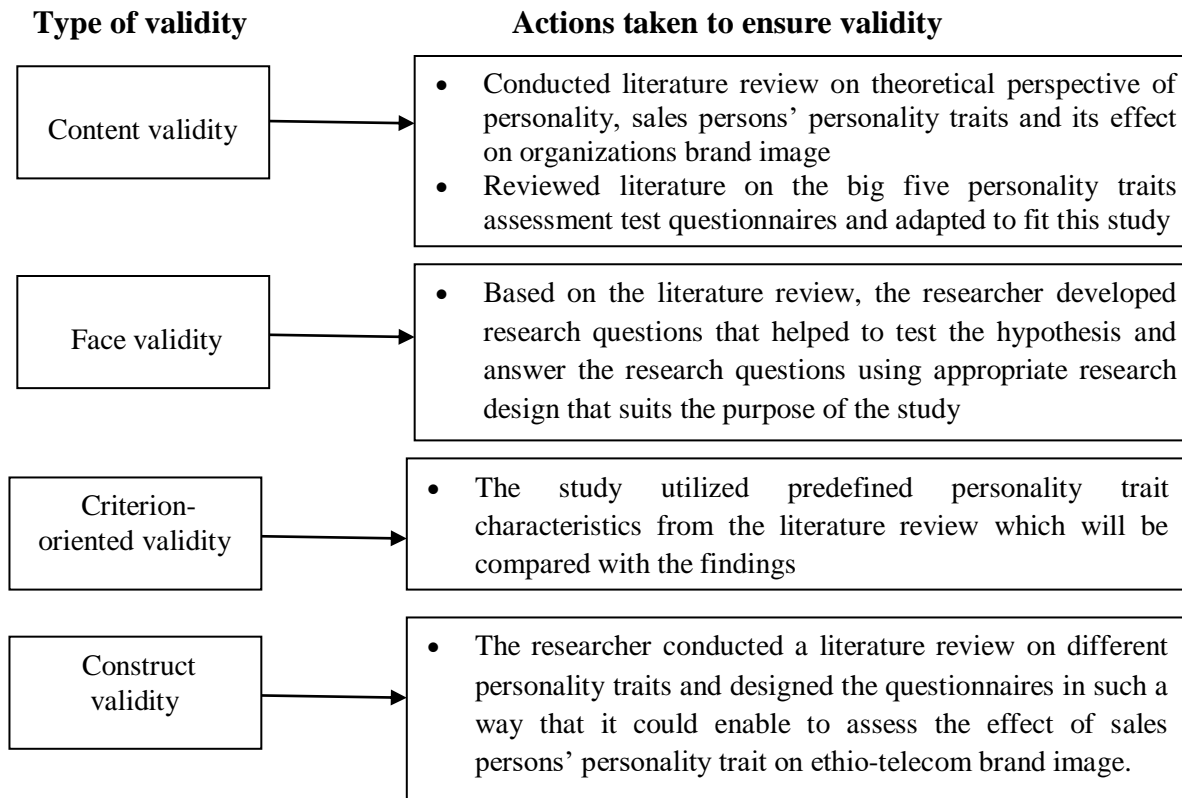
much information as possible. The participants were given chances to ask questions before closing the interview.

3.6 Validity, Reliability and Generalizability

3.6.1 Validity

Before developing the questionnaire, the researcher conducted literature review on published articles, ethio-telecom documents and online personality trait assessment tests. These helped to test the hypothesis and answer the research questions. Moreover, jointly with the research advisor, who is experienced in examining study methodology and the appropriateness of the questions, the researcher reviewed quantitative and qualitative questionnaires. To ensure the validity, the researcher conducted the following activities (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Actions taken to ensure the validity the study



Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

Person's correlation analysis was conducted to demonstrate the construct correlation between the various variables. Correlation is measured by a correlation coefficient, r , showed most of the findings were between -1 and 0 . On a scale of -1 to 1 , where $r=-1$ is perfect negative correlation, $r=1$ is perfect positive correlation, and $r=0$ is no correlation at all. The result of the correlation coefficient presented in the findings.

3.6.2 Reliability

The researcher trained the data collectors to understand the data collection questionnaire, internalized the sampling procedure and practiced how to conduct the interviews among sales persons in the respective ethio-telecom branch offices. To ensure the test-retest reliability, which improves the accuracy of the interview, the researcher conducted pilot testing in a number of sales persons. The multiple interviews among non-sampled sales persons helped the data collectors to familiarize themselves with the questionnaire. The researcher took the necessary measures to avoid participation of sampled employees during pilot testing. The researcher supervised the data collectors and ensured completeness of the information that was gathered.

To ensure the internal consistency before conducting the actual data collection, the questionnaire was pilot tested among the sales persons who did not participate in the study to standardize it. The pilot test helped to know the length of time it will take, to correctly organize, make appropriate wording and adjustments on the questionnaire based on the feedback. This enabled to collect accurate, unbiased, and complete information. After the pilot testing, the questionnaire was clearly formatted to make it easy to use. The researcher avoided selection bias among the study participants by selecting sales persons randomly using the full list of employees' numbers.

During data entry, any negatively phrased question were identified the Likert scale was entered in reverse order. Moreover, each personality trait category has three questions and the average scale of the three questions were used during the analysis, however, for analyzing Cronbach's alpha the responses of all the 19 Likert scale questions were used.

In addition, I calculated the Cronbach's alpha (α) to assess the internal consistency of a set of scale used in this study using the following formula. The following formula was used to calculate alpha:

$$\alpha = \frac{N \cdot \bar{c}}{\bar{v} + (N - 1) \cdot \bar{c}}$$

Where:

- N = the number of items.
- \bar{c} = average covariance between item-pairs.
- \bar{v} = average variance.

Using excel I calculated the average covariance between item-pairs (\bar{c}) and average variance (\bar{v}) which were 19.15 and 49.9 respectively. I have designed a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" with 19 questions that each 5 items are related to each other (forming six sub-group). When 123 sales persons answer my questionnaire, it means the total answer for each question (each row of my questionnaire) is 125 with 19 numbers of items (N) for the whole questionnaire.

Hence, the overall Cronbach's alpha was calculated as follows:

$$\text{Cronbach's alpha } (\alpha) = \frac{19 * 19.51}{49.9 + (19-1) * 19.51}$$

$$\text{Cronbach's alpha } (\alpha) = \frac{360.79}{401.08}$$

$$\text{Cronbach's alpha } (\alpha) = 0.92$$

In the study, Cronbach's alpha test was above 0.9 that showed excellent internal consistency and the test accurately measuring the variable of interest.

The internal consistency analysis for each of the personality traits described in table 1 as follows:

Table 2: Cronbach's alpha value

Variables	Cronbach's alpha
Independent variable	
Openness	0.72
Conscientiousness	0.75
Extraversion	0.99
Agreeableness	0.82
Neuroticism	0.60
Dependent variable	
Organization brand image	0.92

Hence, all the values of the Cronbach's alpha tests for the personality traits are above 0.5 that ranges from good to excellent.

The values for reliability coefficients range from 0 to 1.0 and all the figures were within the perfect reliability range. During data collection, at the beginning of the interview, the data collectors and the researcher established a good rapport with study participants and they encouraged them to ask questions for clarity and share their views and thoughts freely. Moreover, participants probed to share more if there is a needed for detailed information.

For qualitative study, the researcher took about an hour with each interviewee and the researcher probed the sales persons to share all the information and took time to explain the questions. Moreover, the researcher took adequate time during interviews to ensure saturation of information before moving to the next question. The information collected from the two sources was triangulated to ensure consistency.

3.6.3 Generalizability

The findings could be generalized to the sampled branch sales office where the sales persons participated in the study in Addis Ababa. The limitations of this study have to be considered when generalizing the findings of this study to the Head Office, ethio-telecom branch offices in and outside of Addis Ababa.

3.7 Data Preparation and Analysis

Data analysis is a process for obtaining raw data and converting it into information useful for decision makers and other users. Accordingly, the data collected from the sales persons was processed or organized for analysis. Quantitative data pre-coded and entered in to STATA version 11 software and analyzed after cleaning. During quantitative analysis, the data was first analyzed using descriptive method to describe the main features of the data collected. Frequency distribution analysis was conducted to describe socio-demographic and economic factors such as branches, age, sex, work experience, year of experience, understanding of organization image, personality factors and perception on building organization image. The data was presented using tables, pie chart, frequency and proportion. Further analysis was made to determine the relationship between different variables. In this study, the effect of sales persons' personality on

organization's brand image was analyzed to see the relationship between dependent and independent variables using chi-square and Fisher's exact test.

Multiple regression was conducted to determine the overall fit (variance explained) of the model and the relative contribution of each of the independent variables on the outcome variables that is organization brand image among its customers, public, media and its employees. In this analysis the coefficient of determination showed the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that explained by the independent variables while the *F*-ratio tests conducted to see whether the overall regression model is a good fit for the data.

For the qualitative part of the study the researcher translated interview finding notes into English and read it multiple times to understand the findings and broader ideas that could be derived from the data. Next, the researcher developed anchor codes using the interview guide that helped in categorization and theming of the codes.

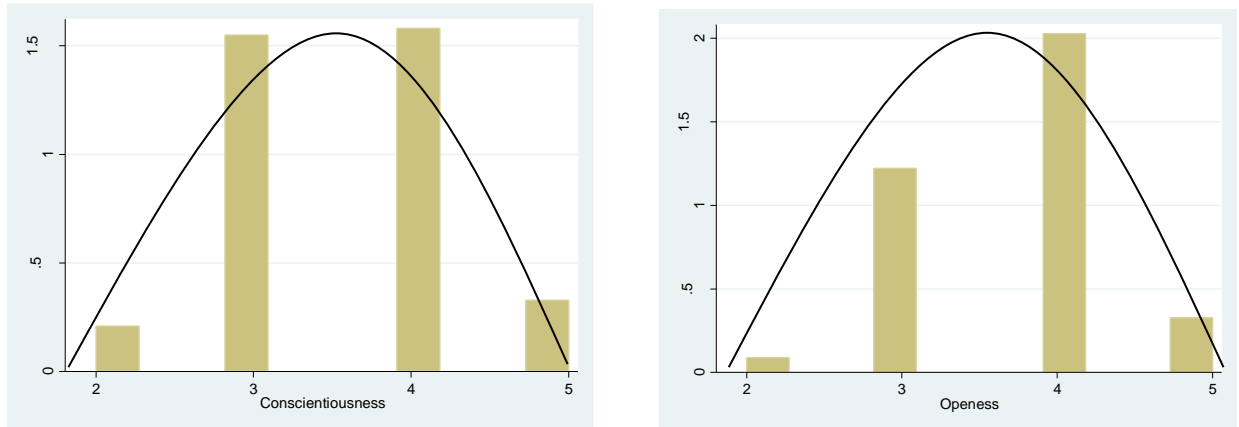
3.7.1 Ethical Considerations

The research advisor approved study proposal and Addis Ababa School of Commerce proposal examiner and distance program unit endorsed it. Ethio-telecom internal communication office provided permission to conduct the study. Moreover, the objective of the study was explained for the division heads and team leaders that were in charge of the staff who participated in the study. Each sales person gave informed consent before participating in the study.

Chapter 4: FINDINGS

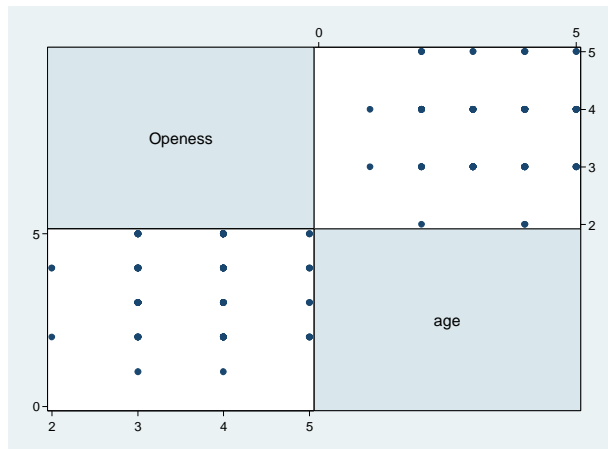
A normality test was conducted to determine whether the data set is normally distributed. The following histogram showed the distribution of the data for the conscientiousness and openness. The results showed that the data were normally distributed (Figure 4 and 5).

Figure 4: Normality test for conscientiousness **Figure 5: Normality test for openness**



Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

To assess whether there was a linear relationship between dependent and independent variables scatterplot matrix was created using Stata, where dependent variable were plotted against the independent variable. The matrix was done for various mix of dependent and independent variables and the scatterplot showed the linearity of the data. Figure xx showed the linear scatterplot for openness and age (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Scatterplot matrix for openness and age

Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

To prevent the missing values can arise from information loss as well as dropouts or nonresponses of the study participants the researcher trained the data collectors how to correctly complete the questionnaire, to review the completed data when they complete the interview and before release the study participant. That enabled the data collectors to complete the missed data. Moreover, the researcher also reviewed the data for completeness when the data collectors submit the completed interview questions every day. For questions that had missing data, the data collectors approached again the interviewees and completed the data.

To avoid the outliers, which could result from various factors including participant response errors and data entry errors, the researcher developed the questionnaire in a categorical format and advised the data collectors to use their judgements. In distribution of variables, outliers lie far from the majority of the other data points, as the corresponding values are extreme or abnormal. In this regard, review of the data set showed there were no issues regarding the outlier.

Out of the total 125 study participants 123 (98.4%) of them agreed to participate in the study and provided their consent using the consent form. However, two of them did not agree to participate in the study since they refused to take part in the study for their personal reasons. The main reason provided was they had urgent tasks and could not take part in the study.

4.1 Location of study participants

Ninety-nine (80.5%) study participants were from the residential customers sale and twenty-four (19.5%) of them were from the enterprise customers sales. Most (22.0%) study participants were from South West Addis Ababa zone sales branch followed by East Addis Ababa zone branch office. Table 3 shows the distribution of the sales branches and study participants by the sales branch offices.

Table 3: Frequency distribution sales branches and study participants by the sales branch offices (N=123)

Sales branch Zone	Sales Branches		Study Participants	
	Number	%	N	%
CAAZ	1	9.5%	13	10.6%
SWAAZ	1	11.9%	27	22.0%
WAAZ	1	11.9%	17	13.8%
NAAZ	2	14.3%	16	13.0%
EAAZ	2	21.4%	26	21.1%
SAAZ	1	9.5%	15	12.2%
Enterprise	2	21.4%	9	7.3%

Source (ethio-telecom 2018).

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Study Participants

Thirty-five (28.5%) participants were between 26 – 30 years of age while only two (1.6%) participants were less than 25 years old. Almost equal proportion of the study participants were males (52.0%) and females (48.0%). The majority of the study participants was married (68.3%) and followed by single (28.5%). Table 4 shows the detail demographic characteristics of the study participants.

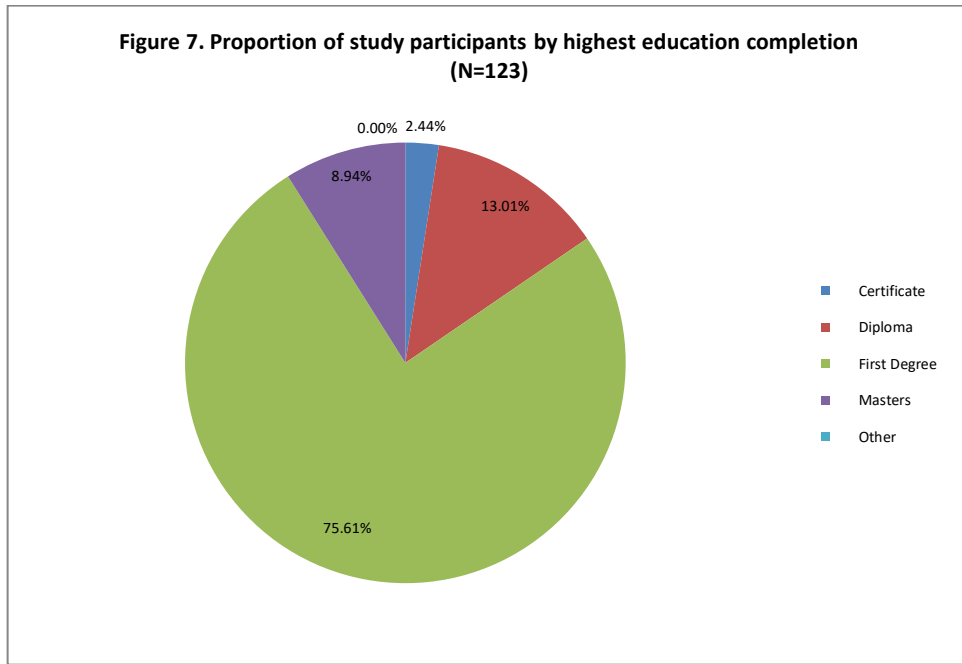
Table 4: Demographic characteristics of study participants (N=123)

Characteristics	Frequency	
	N	%
Age		
Less than 25 years	2	1.6%
26-30 years	35	28.5%
31-35 years	34	27.6%
36-40 years	31	25.2%
Above 40 years	21	17.1%
Sex		
Male	64	52.0%
Female	59	48.0%
Marital Status		
Married	84	68.3%
Single	35	28.5%
Divorced	3	2.4%
Widowed	1	0.8%

Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

4.3 Economic Characteristics of the Study Participants

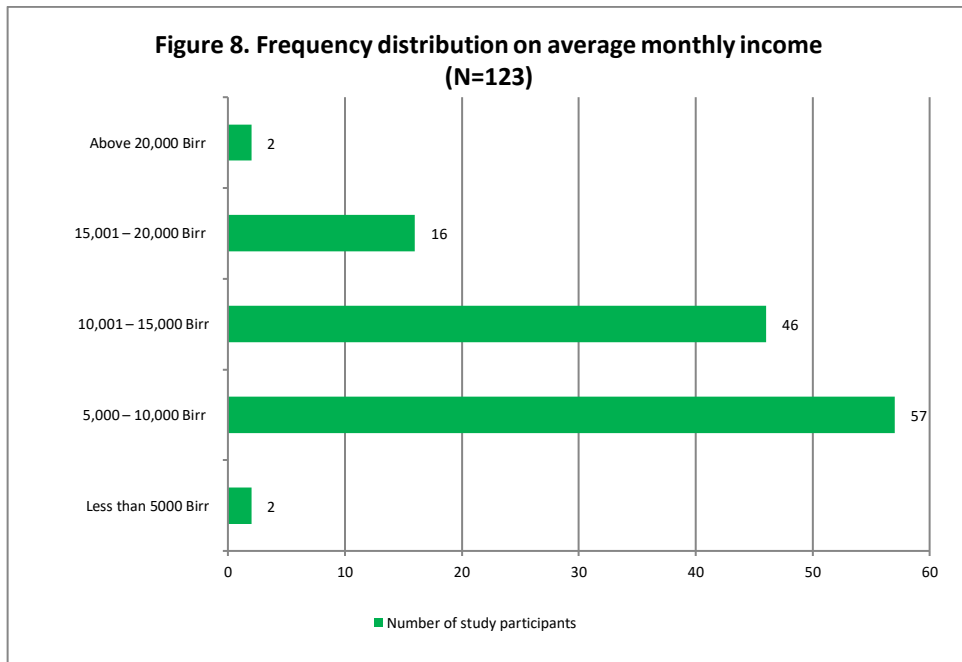
The majority of the study participants (75.61%) were first-degree holders while only 2.44% were certificate holders. Figure 7 showed the proportion of the study participants by the highest education completion.



Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

The average monthly income for fifty-seven (46.3%) study participants was between 5,000 – 10,000 Birr per month while two (2.5%) of the participants earn less than 5,000 Birr per months.

Figure 8 showed frequency distribution of the study participants on average monthly income.



Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

4.4 Sales Persons Work Experience and Current Sales Positions

Fifty-six (45.5%) of the study participants has worked above 10 years in ethio-telecom while 30 (24.4%) of them had 2 – 5 years' work experience. Nearly half of the study participants (48.8%) worked as sales persons between 2 – 5 years while 5.7% of them had worked less than 2 years as a sales person. In-terms of their sales position the majority of the study participants (85.4%) work as a sales person. Table 5 showed the frequency distribution of study participants' by the number of years they worked in ethio-telecom, as a sales person and the current sales position.

Table 5: Frequency distribution of study participants number of years in ethio-telecom, as a sales person and the sales position (N=123)

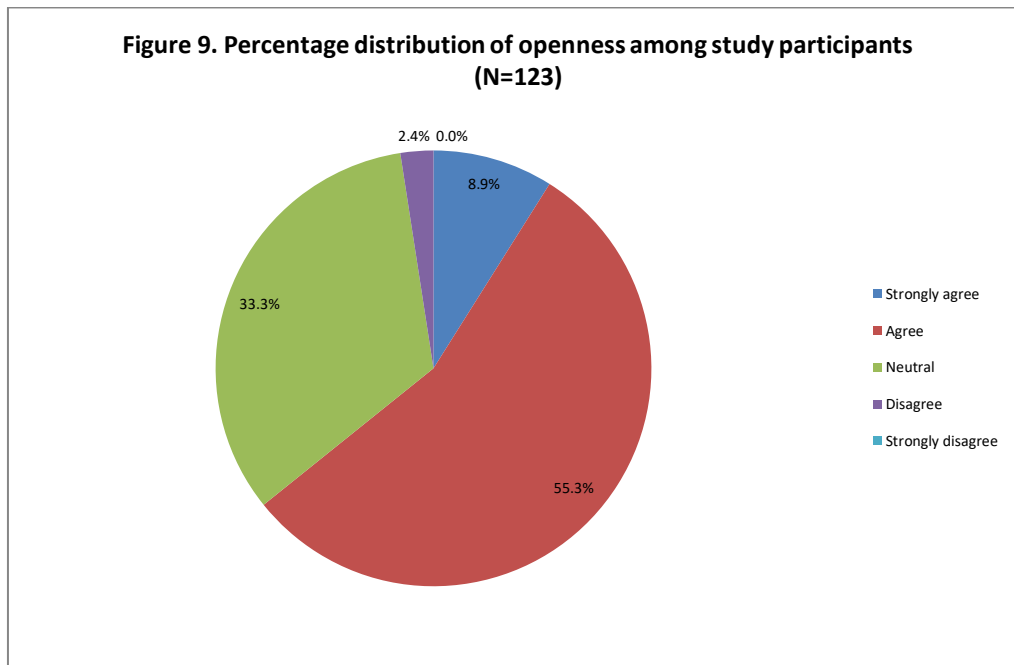
Characteristics	Frequency	
	N	%
Number of years worked in ethio-telecom		
Less than 2 years	1	0.8%
2 – 5 years	30	24.4%
6 – 8 years	28	22.8%
9 – 10 years	8	6.5%
Above 10 years	56	45.5%
Number of years worked as a sales person		
Less than 2 years	7	5.7%
2 – 5 years	60	48.8%
6 – 8 years	41	33.3%
9 – 10 years	8	6.5%
Above 10 years	7	5.7%
Current sales position		
Sales person	105	85.4%
Sales supervisor	18	14.6%

Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

4.5 Sales Persons Personality Trait

Openness

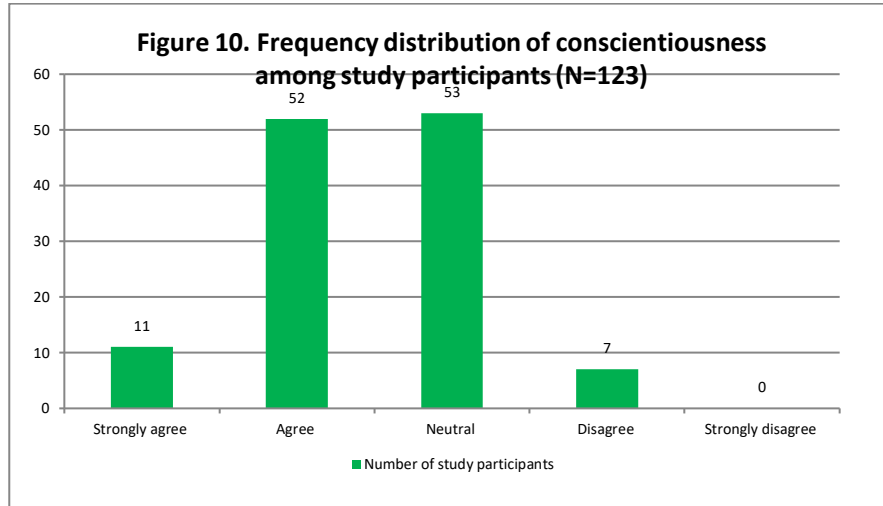
The mean openness Likert scale score among the study participants was 3.71 (± 0.66 SD). Over half of the study participants reported openness (55.3%) and strong openness (8.9%) personality trait respectively than other people while only 2.4% of them reported less openness personality trait. Figure 9 showed percentage distribution of openness among the study participants.



Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

Conscientiousness

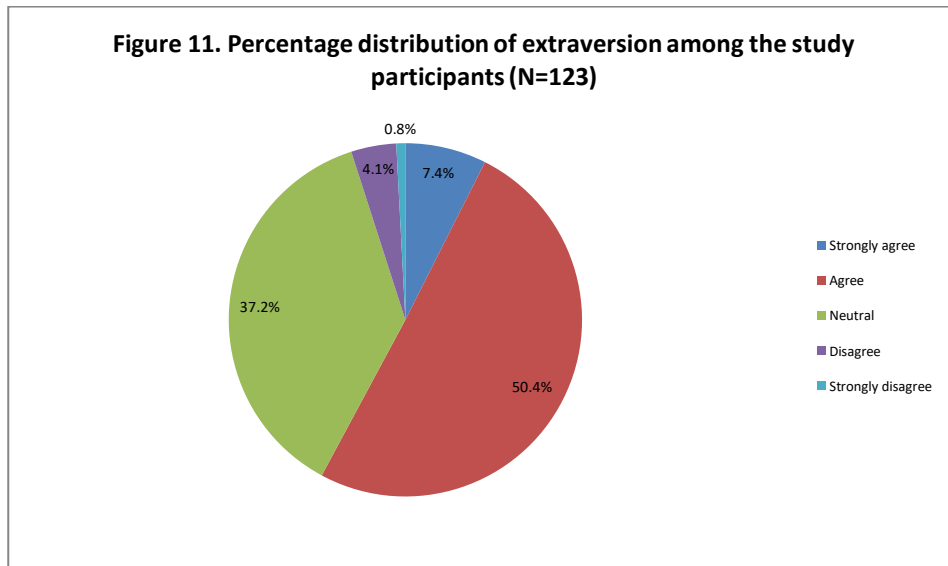
The mean conscientiousness Likert scale score among the study participants was 3.55 ($0.74 \pm SD$). Fifty-two (42.3%) of the study participants reported that they had agreed to have conscientiousness personality trait while eleven (8.9%) of them reported having strong conscientiousness personality trait. Figure 10 showed the frequency distribution of conscientiousness personality trait among the study participants.



Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

Extraversion

The mean extraversion Likert scale score among the study participants was 3.68 (0.63±SD). Half of the study participants (50.4%) reported that they had extraversion personality trait while 37.2% of them reported that they had neutral extraversion personality trait (Figure 11).



Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

Agreeableness

The mean Likert scale score for agreeableness of the study participants was 3.57 ($0.71 \pm SD$). Sixty-two (50.4%) of the study participants agreed that they had agreeable personality trait while eight (6.5%) of them reported that they had strong agreeableness personality traits (Table 6).

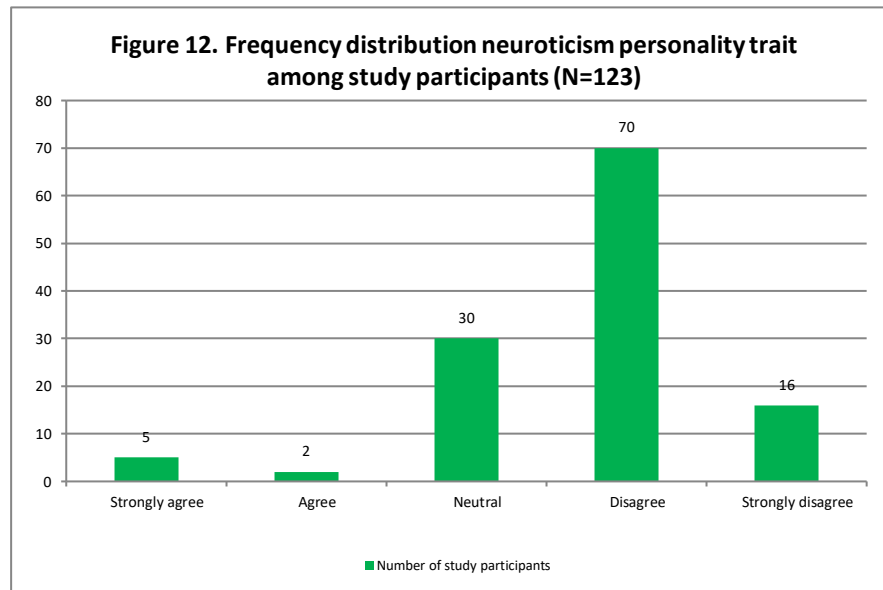
Table 6: Distribution of agreeableness among the study participants (N=123)

Characteristics	Frequency	
	N	%
Agreeableness		
Strongly agree	8	6.5%
Agree	62	50.4%
Neutral	45	36.6%
Disagree	8	6.5%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%

Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

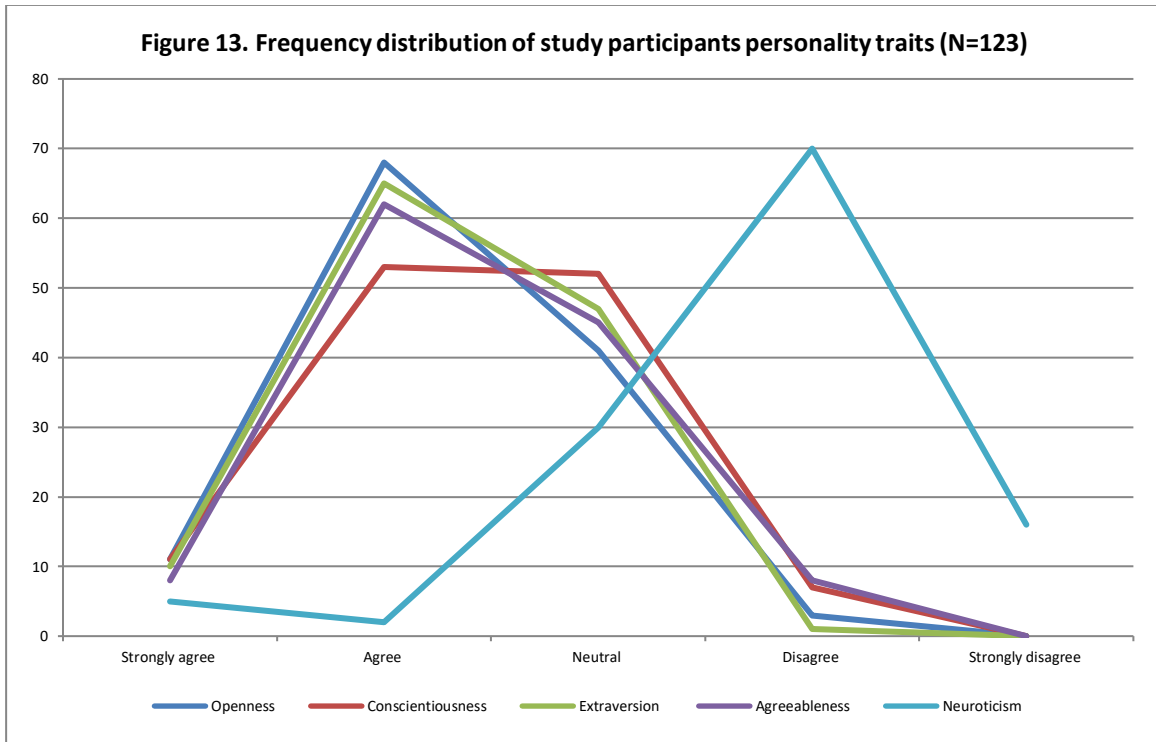
Neuroticism

The mean Likert scale score for agreeableness of the study participants was 2.27 ($0.89 \pm SD$). Eighty-six (69.9%) of the study participants disagreed that they had neuroticism personality trait while close to one in four (24.3%) had neutral neuroticism personality trait (Figure 12).



Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

Comparison of the various personality traits showed most of the personality trait of most of the sales persons have openness, conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness traits while similar proportion of them disagreed with neuroticism personality trait (Figure 13).



Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

4.6 Organization brand image

Most of the study participants (42.3%) disagree that ethio-telecom has a good brand image among its customers while only 8.1% and 19.5% of them respectively agree and strongly agree that it has a good image among its customers. A similar proportion of the study participants strongly disagree that ethio-telecom has a good brand image among the public, media and its employee. About one in four (17.1%) of the study participants strongly disagree that ethio-telecom has good brand image among its employees (Table 7).

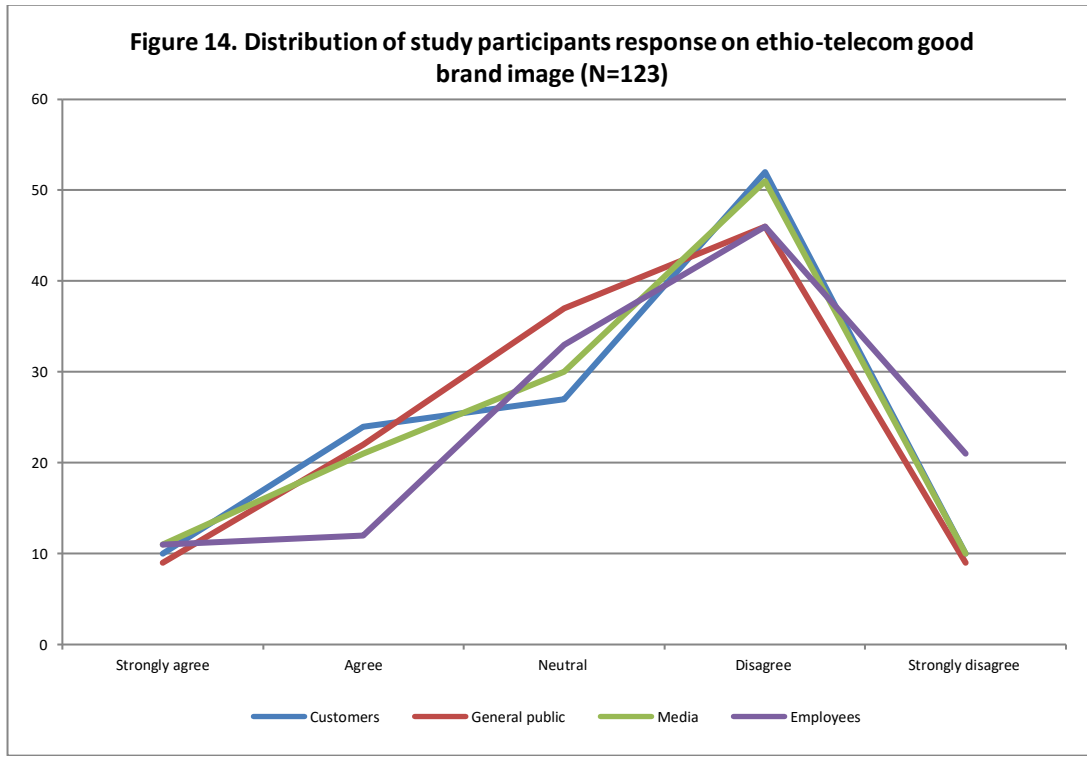
Table 7: Frequency distribution of study participants' response on ethio-telecom brand image (N=123)

Characteristics	Frequency	
	N	%
Ethio-telecom has good brand image among its customers		
Strongly agree	10	8.1%
Agree	24	19.5%
Neutral	27	22.0%
Disagree	52	42.3%
Strongly disagree	10	8.1%
Ethio-telecom has good brand image among its general public		
Strongly agree	9	7.3%
Agree	22	17.9%
Neutral	37	30.1%
Disagree	46	37.4%
Strongly disagree	9	7.3%
Ethio-telecom has good brand image among media		
Strongly agree	11	8.9%
Agree	21	17.1%
Neutral	30	24.4%
Disagree	51	41.5%
Strongly disagree	10	8.1%
Ethio-telecom has good brand image among its employees		
Strongly agree	11	8.9%
Agree	12	9.8%
Neutral	33	26.8%
Disagree	46	37.4%
Strongly disagree	21	17.1%

Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

Comparison of the study participants response showed that most of them disagree that ethio-telecom has a good image neither to its customers nor to the public, media and its employees.

However, less than one in five study participants respond that ethio-telecom has a strong brand image among its customers, the public, media and its employees (Figure 14).



Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

4.7 Sales persons understanding on the relationship between personality trait and ethio-telecom brand image

According to the qualitative study finding, personality traits were described as a characteristic of one person that can be gained from families hereditarily as well as nurtured through environmental factors. Moreover, the key informants indicated that the environment where sales persons grow, the social interaction and the society in which the person lives have strong influence on their personality traits. One of the key informants stated that:

Personality traits are specific characteristics that persons may have which form the persons' personality. They can be both positive and negative although judgement of that can be a matter of opinion.

The key informants responded on the descriptions the big five personality traits based on their understanding. Most of them did not know how to describe correctly. The summary of those who responded was described as follows (Table 8).

Table 8: Key informants' responses on personality trait

Personality traits	Key informants interview participants responses
Openness	They tend to prefer routines Able to accept novel experiences
Conscientiousness	Less motivated, disciplined and faithful Organized, hard-working and achievement striving
Extraversion	Social, energetic and assertive Not as social as possible Have skills needed as a sales person
Agreeableness	Not emotionally stable
Neuroticism	Anxious, negative, get stressed out more easily Have language problem in communication

Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

Based on the key informants organization brand image is the representative of an organization product to create the impression in the consumers mind. Moreover, they described that organization brand image is the reputability of the organization which it reflects the good will of the organization. One of the respondents indicated that:

If the organization has a good will, the brand image of the company will be good. Brand image is developed over time through advertising campaigns with a consistent theme and is authenticated through the consumers' direct experience.

The key informants reported that good personality trait has direct relationship with the organization brand image. They also indicated that sales persons' personality is one of the key determinants of the organization success and build the organization image.

Almost all the key informants indicated that they need training for further strengthening their knowledge on personality trait and organization brand image. They stated that the training would help them to develop a good personality trait, build good organization brand image and achieve its objectives.

4.8 Demographic and economic determinants of personality traits

Two-way measure of association was conduct to assess the demographic and economic determinants of personality traits among the study participants. Years of experience in ethio-telecom was found to be a significant determinant ($p < 0.05$) of all personality traits except agreeableness. Age, sex, education, marital status and sales position were significant determinant for the different personality traits (Table 9).

Table 9: Demographic and economic determinants of personality traits

Determinant factors	Two-way measure of association P-value	
	Person Chi ² test	Fisher's exact test
Openness		
Age	0.062	0.532
Sex	0.450	0.468
Education	0.013	0.026
Marital	0.316	0.216
Income	0.510	0.410
Year of experience in ethio-telecom	0.010	0.019
Year of experience as sales person	0.223	0.135
Sales position	0.549	0.586
Conscientiousness		
Age	0.007	0.010
Sex	0.718	0.754
Education	0.744	0.669
Marital status	0.112	0.341
Income	0.679	0.766
Year of experience in ethio-telecom	0.001	0.002
Years of experience as sales person	0.717	0.572
Position	0.155	0.215
Extraversion		
Age	0.334	0.166
Sex	0.487	0.543
Education	0.345	0.176
Marital status	0.320	0.153
Income	0.352	0.245
Year of experience in ethio-telecom	0.000	0.001
Years of experience as sales person	0.974	0.978
Position	0.043	0.036
Agreeableness		
Age	0.028	0.039
Sex	0.464	0.500
Education	0.147	0.126
Marital status	0.029	0.202
Income	0.934	0.920
Year of experience in ethio-telecom	0.703	0.712
Years of experience as sales person	0.697	0.490
Position	0.044	0.046
Neuroticism		
Age	0.545	0.587
Sex	0.033	0.015
Education	0.605	0.475
Marital status	0.453	0.463
Income	0.190	0.395
Year of experience in ethio-telecom	0.009	0.012
Years of experience as sales person	0.991	0.981
Position	0.961	0.939

Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

4.9 Effect of personality trait on ethio-telecom brand image

Pearson correlation coefficients reveal magnitude and direction of relationships (either positive or negative) and the intensity of the relationship (−1.0 to +1.0). Regarding the relationship among the independent variables, table 10 clearly shows that the variables are significantly correlated with each other (sig. level $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, the results indicate that conscientiousness has significantly high correlation with agreeableness ($r = .3920$).

Table 10: Correlation Analysis

Pearson Correlations	Openness	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Neuroticism
Openness	1	.3061**	.3244**	.3497**	.2504**
Conscientiousness		1	.3593**	.3920**	0.3333**
Extraversion			1	.2941**	0.2405**
Agreeableness				1	0.3069**
Neuroticism					1

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

Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

A simple regression analysis was conducted to check the critical assumptions in order to draw a conclusion about the study population. In this regard, normality of both predictor and predicted variables and the linearity of relationship between the independent and dependent variables were checked (Table 11).

Table 11: Sales persons' personality as a predictor to organization brand image

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.900 ^a	.821	.800	.17408

a. Predictors: (Constant), openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion neuroticism,
Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

From the above model summary, R is .900 and R square is .821. This indicates that about 82.1% of the variance in organizational brand image (dependent variable) can be explained by sales persons' personality traits (independent variable). The remaining 27.9% of the variance was explained by other variables that are not included in this study.

Table 11: Sales persons' personality as a predictor to organization brand image (ANOVA)

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	145.2	5	3.28	103	.000 ^b
Residual	16.4	118	1.25		
Total	16.3	123			

a. Dependent Variable: organization brand image

b. Predictors: (Constant), openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion neuroticism

Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

The F test result in the ANOVA table and the p value, tests whether the overall regression model is a good predictor and the probability of this result occurred by chance or not. In this regard, the F test result is 103 with a significance of less than .001; this implies that, the probability of these results occurring by chance is less than .001. Therefore, a significant amount of organization brand image is influenced by sales persons personality traits, which means independent variable statistically and significantly predict the dependent variable (organization brand image), and it can be concluded as, the overall regression model is significant, $F(5, 118) = 123, p < .001, R^2 =$

.821 (i.e., the regression model is a good fit of the data). Furthermore, the lower value of the standard error of the estimate and the higher F value evidenced that, the interdependence of the two variables, i.e. organizational brand image and sales persons' personality traits is strong and significant. Therefore, it may be concluded as the influence of sales persons personality traits on organization brand image is significant, where, $p < .001$.

One of the aims of this study is to identify the most contributing independent variables in the prediction of the dependent variable. Person's Correlation analysis showed extraversion has a significant relationship to the organization brand image ($r=0.988$ and $p=0.01$). Agreeableness ($r=0.778$) correlated more than conscientiousness ($r=0.627$). However, emotional stability has correlation to organization brand image but it was not as strong as the previous three. No correlation observed between openness to experience and organization brand image (Table 12).

Table 12: Value of Person's Correlation analysis

Big five factors	Value	
	Value	P value
Openness	0.000	0.9876
Conscientiousness	0.627**	0.0010
Extraversion	0.988***	0.0000
Agreeableness	0.778**	0.0113
Neuroticism	0.345*	0.0243

***Higher Correlation; **Moderate Correlation; *Weak Correlation

Source: Developed by the researcher (2018)

In summary, regression analysis showed the independent variables predict the organization brand image among its employees. Moreover, extraversion strongly correlated with organization brand image. However, openness to experience did not show correlation with the organization brand image.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

5.1 Discussion

Sales persons' personality traits

A positive sales persons' personality trait is an important factor for organization brand image and success. Various factors affect the personality traits of sales persons which in-term influences the organization brand image. This study assessed the effect of sales persons' personality traits on organizations brand image using a case of ethio-telecom. The study was conducted among sales persons working in ethio-telecom sales branch offices in Addis Ababa.

Openness is a personality trait of individuals who are invariably imaginative, creative, as well as inquisitive towards new ideas (Cherry and Gans, 2018). In this study, sales persons were found to be more open than 64.2% of the other people. This might enable the sales persons to be able to focus on opportunities, new ideas and solutions, be creative, focus on tackling new challenges, have strong persistence, inventiveness and intellectual curiosity, have preference to variety over routine and seek fulfillment. However, researchers' findings vary on the relationship between openness and sales performance.

According to meta-analysis study conducted by Funham and Fudge (2008), sales persons with openness personality trait did show a positive relationship with sales. On the other hand, in a study conducted to assess the relations between the big five personality traits and sales performance among Japanese Life Insurance sales agents, openness to experience was not related sales performance (Tsuzuki, 2016). Recent study conducted to assess the effect of personality trait among the sales persons in Pakistan revealed candidate's openness to experience has a positive correlation to sales performance (Waheed, Yang, and Webber, 2017).

The mean Likert scale of openness in this study was comparable with the study conducted by McConochie (2018) on Caucasians, which was 3.96. However, this score is much lower than the mean openness score reported in other studies (Waheed, Yang, and Webber, 2017). In this study, nearly one in four of the sales persons had less openness personality trait. These sales persons might experience “paralysis” when faced with setbacks and problems, do not enjoy new things, changes and new ideas, dislikes abstract or theoretical, seek fulfillment in perseverance and tend to be pragmatic and data-driven (Rehanan, 2013).

Conscientiousness personality trait is described as having a strong sense of duty, take their jobs very seriously and feel deeply responsible for results and reliable (John, and Soto, 2016). In this study, nearly half of the sales persons reported have positive conscientiousness personality trait. This means that these sales persons in various sales branch offices might be goal-orientated and able to articulate their sales goals with clearly set schedule, do not depend upon the sales manager for direction, possess self-discipline and spend time for preparation and finishing their sales task in time (Wihler et al. 2016). The same research indicated that conscientiousness are uniformly beneficial to sales performance, recent evidence suggests that scholars should consider nonlinearity, narrow personality and inverted U-shaped relationships with sales performance. However, the results of other current study affirmed that conscientiousness personality trait might perform better in sales occupation (Waheed, Yang, & Webber 2017). In this study, almost half of the sales persons in these sales branches might need reminders to finish tasks, not structured, might need managers’ assistance to keep them "on track”, might be anxious about things being performed and get distracted and could be careless and perceived as unreliable. This could affect the sales persons’ performance, interaction with customers as well as the organization brand image.

Personality trait with extraversion characteristics are usually outgoing and social, enjoy being with people, participating in social gatherings and are full of energy (Rehanan, 2013 and Cherry and Gans, 2018). In this study, over six in ten sales persons demonstrated an extraversion personality trait. This indicated that the sales persons might possess an appropriate sense of urgency, anticipate consequences and evaluate alternatives before acting, take action when situations require action, maintain a positive outlook towards situations and people and can accept valid criticisms and suggestions for performance improvement. High score extraversion also showed a tendency towards being outgoing and energetic, assertiveness, talkativeness, positive emotions, and a tendency to seek the company of others. This is consistent with other studies where sales persons with an extraversion personality trait were better performers in the sales field and it was a significant predictor of goal-setting and self-efficacy motivation (Tsuzuki, 2016, and Ileus and Judge, 2002). This is consistent with the finding in this study that extraversion personality trait was a significant predictor of sales persons good organization brand image among employees. Contrary to this finding, Funham and Fudge, (2008) meta-analysis research suggested that individuals with high extraversion personality trait showed no statistically significant relationship with sales performance.

In this study, three in ten sales persons have low extraversion personality trait. This means that the sales persons might tend to blame people, circumstances and other external factors for why something did not succeed or why something was not completed, might be comfortable with the status quo, reserved and perform only what is required of them. On the contrary, in a Japanese study, it was found that sales agents who were low in extraversion personality trait performed well in their sales work while those who were high in extraversion attributional style were optimistic (Tsuzuki, 2016).

Sales persons with high agreeableness score showed a tendency to be friendly, compassionate, cooperative, warm, friendly, and tactful (Cherry and Gans, 2018). According to Ilies and Judge (2002), agreeableness was a significant negative predictor of goal-setting motivation. However, Waheed, Yang and Webber (2017) study conducted to investigate the relationship between the five-factor model of personality traits and sales performance in Pakistan showed agreeableness is highly desirable when compared to openness to experience, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. In this study, 70% of sales persons were found to have agreeableness personality traits. This might enable the sales person to be able to identify and react accurately to the behavior and emotions of customers, able establish rapport easily and put people “at ease”, feel empathy and concern to customers and enjoy helping.

On the other hand, low agreeableness score is an indication for an analytic and detached tendency, often competitive or challenging and can be seen as argumentative or untrustworthy (Roberts, 2018). In this study, three in ten of them had low agreeableness personality trait Likert score. This means that these sales persons might have trouble in establishing rapport and take little interest in others even for customers’ problems a challenge in building a positive relationship with the customer. This could affect the organization brand image.

Neuroticism is a personality trait that is characterized by a more likely than average to be moody and to experience such feelings as anxiety, worry, fear, anger, frustration, envy, jealousy, guilt, depressed mood, and loneliness (Rehanan, 2013 and Cherry and Gans, 2018). A high neuroticism score means a high emotional reactivity and vulnerability to stress while low neuroticism score tendency to be calm, emotionally stable, and free from persistent negative feelings. In a meta-analysis study that Funham and Fudge (2002) conducted, it was found that

neuroticism personality trait showed no statistically significant relationship with sales performance. This report was consistent with another study conducted in Pakistan that showed neuroticism had least positive correlation on sales performance (Waheed, Yang, and Webber, 2017).

In this study, seven in ten sales persons had disagreed or strongly disagreed to have neuroticism personality trait while less than one in ten had agreed or strong agreed to have neuroticism personality trait. This showed that the majority of the sales persons could enjoy competitiveness, constantly looks for ways to measure themselves against their peer, possess leadership qualities, not afraid to exert pressure to influence others, enjoy sales as a profession and emotionally stable and deals well with stress (Renahan, 2013). However, those with neuroticism personality traits might rely on manipulation instead of trust and rapport for results, possess “win-at-all costs” attitude often at the expense of other, find minimal personal gratification and experience a lot of stress dramatic mood change that affects their productivity as well as relationship with customers (Pappas, 2017).

Relationship between sales persons’ personality traits and organization brand image

Organizations brand image is an accumulation of contact and observation by people external to an organization that should highlight an organization’s mission and vision to all (Dolatabadi, Kazemi and Soltani, 2012). Understanding this among the sales persons might provide them opportunity to promote the organization brand image. In this study, nearly half of the sales persons did not agree or strongly disagreed indicating that ethio-telecom had a good brand image among its customers, the public, among media and its employees. This could affect the sales persons’ performance as well as their effort to achieve the organization goal.

Juneja (2018) reported that sales persons have a great role to play in creating a positive brand image among consumers when they purchase a product which will enhance customers' expectations, goodwill and brand value of an organization (Juneja, 2018). This could be one way the sales persons could support the organization to fill the gap in-terms of lack of good brand image among its customers, media, the public and employees. However, the qualitative study found that sales persons lack of good understanding of the personality traits, they trained inadequately and lacked the necessary skills how they could contribute in organization's brand image promotion.

Positive personality trait at work is important because work is a place where customers interact with sales persons, sales persons interact with co-workers and colleagues on a daily basis. In this regard having a positive personality trait could also influence the sales person to have a positive attitude towards their organization (Sasson, 2016). In this regard, as reported in the qualitative study providing training for the sales persons could increase their understanding on personality traits and its effect on organization brand image which might enable them to be involved in building good organization brand image.

The effect of socio-demographic and economic characteristics on sales persons' personality traits

Though there are a number of studies that assess the effect of socio-demographic and economic and personality traits on sales performance and other factors, the researcher could not get comparable similar studies to assess the effects of socio-demographic and economic characteristics on sales persons' personality traits. However, I used my personal experience with

ethio-telecom to provide meaningful insights on the socio-demographic and economic characteristics findings. In this study, educational status and year of sales persons' work experience in ethio-telecom among sales persons had strong association with openness personality trait. This might be due to the sales persons that were educated might get new knowledge, ideas, skills and capacities which will enable them to focus on new ideas and solutions, tackle challenges and provide intellectual curiosity. Moreover, as the sales persons serve more years in the organization the exposure with various customers, other sales persons and sales supervisors could give them chance in understanding the organization culture, policies and procedures and might give them confidence to face as well as solve problems.

The age of the sales persons and year of sales persons work experience in ethio-telecom had a strong association with their conscientiousness personality trait. This might be due to various factors. Considering the researchers experience, as the age of the sales person and the number of years of sales persons work experience increases, they might acquire experiences and confidence that could enable them develop a sense of responsibility and purpose.

Like other personality traits, the years of sales persons work experience had a strong association with their extraversion personality trait. This indicated that sales persons with years of work experience might be exposed to large number of staff and customers that could enable them to develop good inter-personal communication skills and could know how to handle customers. Moreover, the experience could enable them to understand the type of work at hand and they could be able to prioritize the urgent tasks first, look for options before making decision and take actions in a timely manner. Since such kind of sales persons could also get feedback from their

supervisors and customers over a long period, they might be experienced in accepting valid criticisms and suggestions for performance improvement.

The age, marital status and position of sales persons had a strong association with agreeableness personality trait. In this study, most of the study participants were on adult age groups when they could establish rapport easily, feel responsible to take care of other people in a compassionate manner, with empathy and concern and make realistic judgement for the customers emotions. Moreover, having a marital responsibility could also help them feel more responsibility to their work and take time to listen customers' problems and challenges.

The sex and years of work experience in ethio-telecom had a strong association with neuroticism personality trait. The association between sex and high neuroticism personality trait might be more among female sales persons due to the family responsibility, the physiological processes that they might go through as well as the pressure that the customers and others staff might put on them due to the gender inequity that exists in the society. Regarding the years of work experience, the less the number of years of work experience could have more effect on neuroticism. This could be the result of inadequate experience, inadequate understanding of the various demands and pressures that the customers could bring on the sales persons, lack of understand of the organization policy and guidelines, and inability to cope up with the various problems and challenges that the sales persons could experience at the workstations.

Effect of personality trait on organizations' brand image and its predictors

In this study, strong association found between conscientiousness sales persons' personality trait and good brand image among its customers. Moreover, conscientiousness correlated with the

organization brand image. This might result from such kind of personality traits are goal-orientated and able to articulate their goals with clearly set schedule and could be able to promote the organization brand among the customers. Moreover, they might not depend upon the sales manager for direction, take time for preparation and finish task in time in a discipline manner. This is consistent with the study finding in Pakistan where conscientiousness personality trait was viewed as a desirable personality trait by sales management and sales occupation. However, it was found being less important than extraversion and agreeableness (Waheed, Yang, and Webber, 2017).

In the current study, sales persons' extraversion personality trait is a strong predictor of good brand image among its employees and strongly correlated with organization brand image. This might be due to the tendency of extraversion personality trait to be outgoing and energetic with positive emotions, and a tendency to seek the company of others. This could give such kind of personalities an opportunity and strongly promote the organization brand image among employees and customers (Martin, 2011). In a Japanese study, extraversion is associated with high energy and sociability, which would be helpful in taking initiative in building relationships with their potential customers and being assertive in convincing them to purchase their commodities (Tsuzuki, 2002).

In this study, sales persons with strong agreeableness personality traits were more likely to say that ethio-telecom have good organization brand image among the public and media than sales persons that did not have strong agreeableness personality trait. Moreover, agreeableness was strongly correlated with organization brand image. This could be due to that fact that sales persons with agreeableness personality trait could easily interact with the public as well as media

due to their tendency to be friendly, compassionate and cooperative. Sales person with friendly personality and outgoing and focuses on its goal will have positive brand image and make the sale happen (Casas, 2018 and Barrett, 2013). Although agreeableness is less important than extraversion by Pakistani sales managers, it is highly desirable when compared to openness to experience, conscientiousness, and neuroticism when it comes to the salespersons performance (Waheed, Yang, and Webber, 2017).

In this study, sales persons with high neuroticism personality trait were more likely to have significantly strong disagreement that the organization could have a good brand image among its customers, public, media and its employees. This was consistent with other study reports where negative personality in the workplace, any other personality traits or activity that lowers overall morale and sales persons could have a negative effect on the organization (Davis, 2018). Reports showed that negative personality could be due to personal problems, trouble at home or it can result from workplace events have an effect on every person in the organization (Mack, 2016 and Root, 2016). Hence, understanding such kind of negative personality that could have negative effect at the workplace is important to create a productive working environment, increase sales persons' performance and achieve the organization goal.

Unlike other studies, openness to experience did not show any association or correlation with the organization brand image. A study conducted by Waheed, Yang and Webber, (2017) showed openness to experience had a moderate correlation ($r=.592$, $p < 0.05$) among the Pakistani's salespersons.

5.2 Summary

Out of the total 125 study participants 123 (98.4%) of them participated in the study. Ninety-nine (80.5%) of the participants of the study were from residential customers sale. Thirty-five (28.5%) study participants were between 26 – 30 years of age, 52.0% were males and 68.3% were married. The majority of the study participants (75.6%) were first-degree holders and fifty-seven (46.3%) of them earn between 5,000 – 10,000 Birr per month. Fifty-six (45.5%) of the study participants has worked above 10 years in ethio-telecom and nearly half of the study participants (48.8%) worked as sales persons between 2 – 5 years. The majority of the study participants (85.4%) were currently working as a sales person.

The study finding showed, 64.3% of the study participants had openness, sixty-three (51.2%) participants had conscientiousness, 57.8% had extraversion personality trait and seventy (65.9%) had agreeable personality trait. Eighty-six (69.9%) of the study participants had low neuroticism personality trait. Over four in ten study participants reported that ethio-telecom did not have good brand image among its customers. Moreover, nearly half of the study participants reported that ethio-telecom did not have a good brand image among the public, media and its employee.

Years of experience in ethio-telecom was found to be a significant determinant ($p < 0.05$) of all personality traits except agreeableness. Age, sex, education, marital status and sales position were significant determinants for one of the personality traits. Similar to other studies, high neuroticism personality trait had strong association with negative sales persons attitude on organizations good brand image among customers, public, media and employees ($p < 0.05$). Conscientiousness and agreeableness personalities were strongly associated with brand image among customers and among the general-public and media respectively. Correlation analysis

showed significant amount of organization brand image, 82.1%, influenced by sales persons' personality traits, which means independent variable statistically and significantly predictor of the dependent variable (organization brand image). Moreover, extraversion has the most significant relationship to the organization brand image. Similar to other studies extraversion personality trait was found to be a significant predictor of brand image among employees ($p < 0.05$). However, openness personality trait did not show any association with organization brand image.

The qualitative study finding showed that the sales persons did not have good understanding of the personality traits and though they have some understanding on the relationship, it has with the organization brand image. They proposed training to strengthen their knowledge on personality trait and contribute in promoting positive organization brand image.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

The main motivation behind the use of personality traits and other characteristics for sales performance and organization brand image is that, a single measure cannot predict much of the variance in the organizations performance and labor market outcomes. These soft skills, in addition to some other factors that govern human behavior, can explain the variance in the outcomes that cannot be attributed to the effect of cognitive skills (Wiley and Carolyn 2005). There is often controversy pertaining to the stability of the personality traits (Roberts, and Jackson, 2008). However, it has been widely accepted that personality traits tend to be stable in adulthood (Cobb-Clark, and Schurer, 2012). Hence, this study finding could serve as a good indicator for the sales persons.

In this study, irrespective of the limitations, over half of the sales persons had openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeable and neuroticism personality traits and the rest lack these personality traits. This means that most sales persons were in their right position. However, considering the qualitative study findings almost all needs immediate training to improve their understanding on personality traits. Four in ten study participants disagree that ethio-telecom has a good brand image among its customers and nearly half of them strongly disagree that ethio-telecom has a good brand image among the public, media and its employee. This might affect the organizational performance but the salespersons' personality trait could also contribute to this.

Years of experience in ethio-telecom were a significant determinant of all personality traits except agreeableness. In this regard, the organization can promote other staff to sales positions

than recruitment and deploying new staff to sales role. Socio-demographic factors such as age, sex, education, marital status and position needs to be considered in the recruitment and assignment of staff to the sales positions' as they were significant determinant for the different personality traits. Similar to other study findings, high neuroticism personality trait demonstrated strongly association with negative organization brand image among customers, public, media and employees. Conscientiousness and agreeableness personalities were strong association and correlation with good brand image. There was no association between openness personality traits and organization brand image. Extraversion personality trait was found to be a significant predictor of brand image among salespersons and the correlation was the strongest among all the five personality traits. This calls considering of these traits in human resource recruitment.

Based on the findings of the study, the hypotheses for this study were accepted and rejected as follows:

- H₁: Sales persons' openness affects the organization brand image – Rejected due to lack of evidence.
- H₂: Sales persons' conscientiousness affects the organization brand image – accepted.
- H₃: Sales persons' extraversion affects the organization brand image – accepted.
- H₄: Sales persons' agreeableness affects the organization brand image – accepted.
- H₅: Sales persons' neuroticism affects the organization brand image – accepted.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the study findings the researcher made the following recommendations:

For ethio-telecom:

- Over half of the study participants have the required personality trait needed for sales persons. Hence, new staff recruitment needs to focus on identifying the right personality traits and socio-demographic and economic characteristics needed for customer facing role.
- Existing sales persons lack adequate understanding of the personality traits. Hence, appropriate training is required to meet their training needs as well as reach half of the sales persons that do not have the personality trait needed for the sales persons.
- The majority of the study participants reported that ethio-telecom did not have a good brand image among customers, the public, media as well as its employees. The organization needs to further investigate the cause and make necessary actions.
- Year of experience in ethio-telecom was a significant determinant for most personality trait. Hence, the organization needs to consider this in promoting staff to sales persons' positions.

For further research:

- This study showed the year of experience in ethio-telecom as a significant determinant for the personality trait. Further study needed to understand contributing factors for providing positive personality traits among employees with long years of work experience.
- The study showed ethio-telecom did not have a good brand image. This requires further investigation to identify the contributing factors and execute corrective actions.

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APPENDIX

DATA COLLECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

The Effect of Sales Person’s Personality on Organization’s Brand Image (The Case of Ethio-telecom)

CONSENT FORM

Dear participant,

Thank you for your time to talk with me. What follow is the study information, purpose and process of the interview. You will be asked to give your consent before we start the interview.

Information about the interviewer: I am, Yideneku Tefera, a Master student at the School of Commerce at Addis Ababa University. As part of my master’s in marketing management, I am required to conduct a research for my thesis, which includes an interview with sales persons in ethio-telecom. I am accountable to my Advisor, Hailemariam Kebede who is contactable at cell phone number 0911763804 and e-mail at hailemariam.kebede@aau.edu.et.

Here is some information to explain the purpose and process of the interview.

Purpose and content of interview: The purpose of the study is to assess the effects of sales persons’ personality on organization’s brand image (a case of ethio-telecom). The interview consists of information on your background, experience, and understanding of sales personality traits and organization brand image.

The interview process: 125 salespersons will be interviewed using this question and 10 sales persons will participate in key informant interview. I will ask you a question and you will tell me your responses. The time that this interview will take us is about 20 – 30 minutes.

Anonymity of contributors: At all time I will keep the source of information confidential and refer to you and your words by a pseudonym. I shall keep all other records of your participation personally and destroy them after the data has been collected.

Voluntarily participation and withdrawal: you will be the one that will decide your participation in this study. You can also terminate the interview at any stage of the interview process. Please feel free to inform me your thoughts in this regard.

Agreement: Do you agree to participate in the study?

Yes, I agree

No I do not agree

QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Registration number	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Sampled employee number						
Section 1. Socio-demographic and economic background						
Q1	Sales branch (write name of sales branch)					
Q2	Age	1 = less than 25 years 2=26-30 years 3= 31-35 years 4 = 36 – 40 years 5 = above 40 years				
Q3	Sex	1 = Mal 2 = female				
Q4	What is the highest education that you have completed?	1= Certificate 2= Diploma 3 = First Degree 4 = Masters 5 = other				
Q5	Marital status	1= married 2= single 3= divorced 4= widowed				
Q6	Average monthly income	1= less than 5000 Birr 2 = 5000 – 10,000 Birr 3 = 10,001 – 15,000 Birr 4 =15,001 – 20,000 Birr 5 = above 20,000 Birr				
Q7	Number of years in ethio-telecom	1= less than 2 years 2= 2 – 5 years 3= 6 – 8 years 4= 9 – 10 years 5 = above 10 years				
Q8	Number of years as a sales person	1= less than 2 years 2= 2 – 5 years 3= 6 – 8 years 4= 9 – 10 years 5= above 10 years				
Q9	Sales positions	1= sales person 2 = sales supervisor				
Section II - Assessment of sales person's personality traits						
Please give a rating to yourself from based on the questions below (5=strongly agree 4= agree 3=Neutral 2 = Disagree 1 = Neither agree nor disagree)						
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
2.1	Openness					

Q10	You focus on new ideas and solutions					
Q11	You do not enjoy changes					
Q12	You dislike abstract concepts					
2.2	conscientiousness					
Q13	You are goal oriented in your work place					
Q14	You need manager reminder to do a job					
Q15	You are anxious when you are distracted					
2.3	Extraversion					
Q16	When a task is given you do it in urgency					
Q17	You blame others when things go wrong					
Q18	You accept positively valid critics and suggestions on your performance					
2.4	Agreeableness					
Q19	You easily establish rapport with customer					
Q20	You feel sad and tense under pressure					
Q21	You have little interest for customers problems					
2.5	Neuroticism					
Q22	You enjoy competitiveness					
Q23	You do not afraid to exert pressure to influence others					
Q24	You are emotionally stable and deals well with stress					
Section III – Organizational Brand Image						
Q25	Ethio-telecom has good brand image among its customers					
Q26	Ethio-telecom has good brand image among the general public					
Q27	Ethio-telecom has good brand image among media					
Q28	Ethio-telecom has good brand image among its employees					

Appendix 2

QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What do you understand by the word personality trait?
2. What are the key personality traits related to salespersons? (probe for each of the big five personality traits)
3. What is your understanding on organization brand image?
4. What are the effects of salespersons personality traits on organization brand image?
5. How do you assess yours or your colleague's exposure to training or orientation on personality traits or organization image?