MEASURING CUSTOMER ORIENTATION OF SALESPEOPLE: A STUDY ON HOUSEBUYERS

by

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ABSTRAK

Kajian ini mengkaji sikap yang berorientasikan pelanggan oleh jurujual terhadap pembeli rumah. Pembelian rumah adalah suatu proses yang amat komplek dan memerlukan kos yang tinggi dan objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengukur tahap orientasi pelanggan-jurujual dan mengkaji hubungan antara orientasi pelanggan dan kepuasan selepas jualan. Empat dimensi digunakan untuk mengukur orientasi pelanggan; kepekaan, servis selepas jualan, kebolehan memenuhi kehendak pembeli dan pertolongan yang diberikan kepada pembeli. Keempat dimensi ini diukur ke atas 82 responden. Ujian-ujian dan analisis statistik telah dilakukan untuk melihat perbezaan, jika ada, di antara responden yang tergulung daripada pelbagai ciri budaya ekonomi dan demografik.

Keputusan penyelidikan ini telah menunjukkan bahawa pembeli Melayu tidak berpuashati terhadap rumah yang mereka beli berbanding dengan bukan Melayu. Keputusan kajian juga memberi implikasi tambahan kepada jurujual. Terdapat perbezaan yang ketara di antara kepuasan terhadap pembelian rumah dan kepekaan jurujual. Ini menunjukkan bahawa kepantasan dan kecekapan jurujual terhadap permintaan pelanggan akan menambahkan kepuasan terhadap pembelian. Kesimpulan hasil kajian ini menunjukkan terdapat hubungan yang ketara antara kepuasan pembelian dan orientasi pelanggan-jurujual.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the perception of customer orientation of salespeople among housebuyers. Buying a house is a very complex task involves financial risk to the buyer, thus, the primary objective of this study is to assess the degree which housebuyers rate salespeople as being customer oriented and examining the relationship between customer orientation and buyer satisfaction. Four dimensions used to measure customer orientation include; responsiveness, ability to fulfil buyer's needs, assistance to buyers on purchase and after sales service. These four dimensions of customer orientation were measured upon 82 research respondents. Statistical tests and analysis were conducted to observe differences, if any, between respondent belonging to variety of socio-economic and demographic characteristics.

The findings that in comparison with the non-Malay, the Malay are not satisfied with the house they had purchased. The results also have an additional implication for the salesperson. It was found that significant relationship between housebuyers satisfaction and responsiveness. This suggests that the faster and more efficient the salespeople are in responding to the demand of customer, the greater will be the satisfaction of the customer. Overall, it should be noted that a significant relationship was found between housebuyers satisfaction and the customer orientation of the sales people.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Despite the importance of the customer, businesses are still lacking in developing

an enduring customer orientation. For many organizations, customer orientation exists

mainly as slogan and occasional campaigns. The real estate industry in Malaysia is an

excellent example of lacking an enduring customer orientation. Here, where the demand

for houses is so overwhelming, it is not unusual for a would be buyer to queue for the

chance to bid on a house. Just as often, it is only after the sale is completed that the buyer

will actually view his purchase, having seen only the advertisement and contractor's model

beforehand. Thus, a buyer merely buys based on promises of future satisfaction. As a

result, customers do not get the maximum value of the house they purchase and they are

less satisfied than they can be.

The orientation of salespeople to housebuyers is an important consideration in the

marketability of houses. Indeed, salespeople must understand the relationship between

customer orientation and house buyers' satisfaction. Kotler (1989) defines customer

oriented marketing means that the company should view and organize its marketing

activities from customer's point of view, it should work hard to, sense and satisfy the

needs of a defined group of customers. Thus, customer orientation is understanding

customers to the extent that one can respond quickly to the specific and unique needs of

the customer.

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Reynolds (1991) indicates that the principles of marketing are governed by an outside force, namely the customer. It is therefore, the task of the marketing company to convince their salespeople that moving towards a marketing orientation means moving towards a better understanding of the customer. This is parallel with Peter Drucker (1974) assertion that marketing requires separate work and distinct group of activities. But it is, first, a central dimension of the entire business. It is the whole business seen from the point of view of final result that is from the customer's point of view.

Peter Drucker (1974) also suggested that since no business have the skills and resources to be all things to all people, business must identify which customer needs and wants should be met. He further suggest that deciding with preferences and potential customers to serve is crucial, given any business's limited resources and competitive strength. Thus, the success of salespeople would depend very much on obtaining up-to-date information on customer preference. Prior knowledge of customer needs and wants is important for the formulation of appropriate marketing strategies ensuring buyer's satisfaction.

1.2 Scope and Significance of the Study

In Malaysia, where customers become more vocal and demanding, study on customer orientation of salespeople toward housebuyers is much needed because many complaints are frequently lodge about salespeople in the newspaper. Moreover, many salespeople view the jobs merely as selling their product. They do little to understand customer needs and responding to those needs. In order to protect the public as well as their own personal reputation, a housebuyer may reasonably expect certain minimum

standards from salespeople. Thus, salesperson's efforts are made not to sell the customer but to guide him or her in the purchase of what is needed and affordable. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to assess the degree to which house buyers rate salespeople as being customer oriented and examining the relationship between customer orientation and housebuyers' satisfaction.

Ring and Dasso (1981) defines real estate as a "Public interest" commodity and real estate, being a high-value asset, involves a large amount of money. Thus, the real estate industry in Malaysia has been selected for study as it deals with a high involvement consumer product that involves higher financial risk to the buyer. Moreover, Saxe and Weitz (1982) argue that a customer oriented approach should be expected when salespeople can offer a range of alternatives and have the expertise to assist customer and customer are engaged in complex buying tasks. Thus, customers want to feel important and salespeople to show interest in their needs and wants.

1.3 Definitions and Related Concepts

Definitions and related concepts focus on customer orientation, customer oriented selling and purchase satisfactions are identified for this study.

1.3.1 Customer orientation

The origins of customer orientation can be traced to the development of the marketing concept, which is basically a business philosophy or policy statement which hold that the ultimate goal of an organization is to fulfil customer needs for the purpose of maximizing business profits (Apiah-Adu & Singh, 1998).

Customer orientation has been explained in different ways in the literature (Shapiro, 1988; Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Naver and Slater, 1990) and often associated with terms such as "market orientation", "marketing concept" and "customer first". The term "market orientation" refers to the implementation of the marketing concept (McCarthy and Perrault, 1984; Kohli and Jaworski 1990). Naver and Slater (1990) view the customer orientation as one of the behavioural components of market orientation. Other is competitor orientation and interfunctional co-ordination, which are interlocked in two decisions making criteria-long term focus and profitability.

The significance of the general nature of a customer orientation is clearly highlighted in the management literature (Naver and Slater 1990), and researchers in the field of strategic marketing management in particular, have continuously emphasized the fact that a focus on customers should be central to the operations of organizations (Webster, 1988). The implication of this is that customer orientation involves cultural attitudes, which concerned with developing and enhancing value to customers (Naver and Slater, 1990).

Some marketing practitioners and academicians argue that there is no clear distinction between customer orientation and market orientation. Accordingly, the term are used interchangeably (Shapiro, 1988; Webster, 1988).

1.3.2   The Customer Oriented Selling Process

According to Saxe and Weitz (1982), "Customer oriented selling can be viewed as the practice of marketing concept at the level of the individual salesperson and

customer". They also suggested that salesperson who are highly customer oriented engage in behaviour that increase long-term customer satisfaction and avoid behaviours that lead to customer dissatisfaction, whereby highly sales-oriented salesperson are less sensitive in this regard. Thus, salespeople who are customer oriented avoid activities that raise the probability of making an immediate sale but sacrifice of customer interest.

Thong (1995) suggests that in customer oriented selling process, the salesperson does not take customer for granted, and each steps taken in the selling process into the mind-set of the customer to correctly established his needs or objectives, often in consultative manner. This probing process will find out what the customer wants or like in achieving his buying objectives.

1.3.3 Purchase Satisfaction

Kohli and Jaworski (1990) proposed that " the greater the market orientation, the greater the customer satisfaction". This proposition is consistent with Kotler (1988) assertion that a customer-oriented approach would lead to enhanced satisfaction. Chee and Peng (1996) suggest that customer orientation represent a conscious attempt by the seller to meet even exceeded the expectations of the buyer. Thus, the buyer's satisfaction may be result of the seller's effort to fulfill the formers needs and wants.

1.4 Problem Statement

The purpose of this study is to examine the perception of customer orientation of salespeople among housebuyers as well as to understand the linkage between customer orientation and purchase satisfaction. More specifically, the study attempt to distinguish

evaluation outcomes of likely purchase satisfaction from the assessment of the sellers customer orientation by buyers.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The importance of customer orientation had been widely discussed although few studies have specifically measured this construct. The key studies relevant to the topic of customer orientation from the literature are reviewed and discussed. Finally, a discussion on the concept of customer orientation and an overview of the literature concerning the dimension of customer orientation, the methodology used and results of purchase satisfaction are presented.

2.2 History of Research

The origin of customer orientation can be traced to the development of the marketing concept introduced in the early 1950's, which is basically a business philosophy or policy statement, which holds that the ultimate goal of an organization is to fulfill customer needs for the purpose of maximizing business profits (Jaworski and Kohli , 1993). Appiah-Adu and Satyendra Singh (1998) suggest that customer orientation really come to the fore following radical changes in both domestic and global economies in the 1970's. They further suggest the significance of customer-based information became a key feature of the quest for an appropriate conceptualization of market orientation in the late 1980's and early 1990's. Thus, in the past few years, there has been a renewed academic and practitioner interest both the market and customer orientation concept (Kohli and Jaworski ,1990; Naver and Slater, 1990; Webster 1988). Some effort have been made to fill the gap with regard to measurement issues and empirically based theory of customer

orientation (Saxe and Witz, 1982; Dunlap et al, 1988; Naver and Slater ,1990) .

Apiah-Adu & Singh (1998) defines customer orientation to describe organization-wide emphasis on evaluating and addressing customers needs. Shapiro (1988) indicated that customer orientation is the dissemination of information about customers throughout an organization formulation of strategies and tactics to satisfy market needs inter-functionally and achievement of sense of company-wide commitment to these plans. Ruekert (1992) defines this orientation as "the degree to which the organization obtains and uses information from customers, develop a strategy which will meet customer needs, and implements that strategy by being responsive to customer needs and wants".

Kohli and Jaworski (1990) define market orientation as the organizationwide information generation and dissemination and appropriate response related to current and future needs and preference. They further suggest that customer orientation represent the degree to which customer information is both collected and used by business unit Naver and Slater (1990) define customer orientation is the sufficient understanding of one's target buyers to be able to create superior value for them continuously or to create continuously an "Augment product". They suggest that this activity involved in acquiring information about the buyers in the target market and disseminating it throughout the business unit for appropriate response to fulfil customer needs and preferences.

Desphande et al. (1993) defined customer orientation as a set of beliefs that put the customers interest first while not excluding those of all stakeholders such as owners, managers, and employees in order to develop a long term profitable enterprise. According to Desphande, customer orientation is an integral component of a general, underlying

organizational culture and, thus, attention to information about customer's needs should be considered alongside the basic values and beliefs that are likely to reinforce such as customer focus and permeate the firm. Day and Wensley (1988) indicates that customer orientation requires that a seller understand a buyer's entire value chain, not only as it today but also as it will evolve over time subject to internal and market dynamics.

The customer oriented behaviors of marketing personnel become the activities through which relationships can be nurtured and managed (Gillis et al., 1998; Daniel and Darby, 1997; Dunlap et al., 1988). Thus, Customer orientation is described as philosophy and behavior directed toward determining and understanding the needs of the target customer and adapting the selling organization's response in order to satisfy those needs better than competition, thereby creating competitive advantage (Saxe and Weitz, 1982; Chee and Peng ,1996).

2.3 Review of Key Studies

Naver and Slater (1990) in their literature review suggest that for long-term survival in the presence of competition, a business cannot avoid a long run perspective. That is to prevent a competitors from overcoming whatever buyer-value superiority it has created, a business must constantly discover and implement additional value for its customers, which necessities a range of appropriate tactics and investment. They proposed six components of customer orientation; customer commitment, creation of customer value, understanding of customer needs, customer satisfaction objectives, measurement of customer satisfaction and after-sale service.

Kohli and Jaworski (1990) which claims that industries and companies are

customer oriented if they market differentiated products and services reflecting heterogeneous customer preferences. They claim that companies wanting to be customer oriented must have the following criteria; first understand their customer's needs and in which direction they are heading, secondly turn this understanding into actions in all functions within the organization, and lastly to design and implement marketing mix which effectively responds to their company's understanding of the customer's.

Saxe and Weitz (1982) indicated that customer oriented selling can be viewed as the practice of the marketing concept at the level of the individual salesperson and customer. The author indicate that salespersons who are highly customer oriented engage in behaviors that increase long term customer satisfaction and avoid behavior that lead to customer dissatisfaction, whereby highly sales-oriented salespeople are less sensitive in this regard. He categories six characteristic of customer- oriented selling; a desire to help customers make satisfactory purchase decisions, helping customers assess their needs, offering products that will satisfy those needs, describe products accurately, avoiding deceptive or manipulative influence tactics and avoiding the use of high pressure.

In a customer oriented selling process, the salesperson does not take the customer for granted, and each step taken in the selling process aims to solicit positive responses from customer. In view of this Gillies et al. (1998) found that customer satisfaction with the purchase situation would not increase if salespeople were merely encouraged to be more considerate and helpful. They indicated that a comprehensive re-education plan should be implemented addressing this self defeating sale behaviour.

A seller can create value for a buyer in two ways; by increasing benefits to the

buyer in relation to the buyer's costs or by decreasing the buyer's cost in relation to the buyer's benefit (Chee and Peng ,1996). The former reflects the differentiation strategy and the letter the low cost strategy as conceptualized by porter (1980). The differentiation approach can include brand image, product features, customer service and assistant in purchase. In contrast, low cost advantage relies on economies of scale.

Gillies et al. (1998) examines salesperson of large pharmaceutical company in the United Kingdom and buyers (General Practitioner). They concluded that customer do not perceive sellers to be nearly as customer oriented as sellers perceive themselves to be. The general practitioner (GP) perceives salespeople to be occupied with their own professional needs and not really committed in their job. They also suggested the company salespeople are not sufficiently in tune with their customer base to form fully effective seller -customer relationships in maximizing repeating sale.

Apiah Adu and Satyendra Singh (1998) found those high levels of market dynamism and competitive intensity (i.e. cost and price-cutting) do not tend to result in increased emphasis customer- oriented strategies among SME's. They further suggest that a high degree of emphasis on innovativeness tend to be linked with a higher level of customer orientation because commitment to innovation will force a firm to become externally focused and, thus more customer oriented. Thus business practitioners should combine a sound customer orientation with an emphasis on innovations, and product quality because such a combination is likely to result in higher level of product success rate and this will lead to sales growth.

The extent to which real estate broker in the United States adhere to marketing

concept was the focus of the study of Dunlap et al. (1988), which compared the perception of buyers with those sellers. They concluded that customers do not perceive sellers to be nearly as customer oriented as sellers perceive themselves to be, and that may seller are more production oriented than marketing oriented. They found that sellers who consistently follow up with their customers after the sale scored higher on the customer orientation scale than did those who failed to follow-up with customer.

William (1998) examines the influence of salesperson customer oriented behavior on the development of buyer seller relationship. They suggest that the needs discovery and response adaptation characteristics of customer oriented salespeople have a strong, significant and positive association with buyer-seller development. Investing in the time and effort required to understand the customer need's and problems and alter one's actions in manner that responds to those needs in a honest and non manipulative fashion is seen as having positive effect on the customer. This is consistent with Saxe and Weitz (1982) which suggest that salespeople who are customer oriented should avoid activities that raise the probability of making an immediate sale but sacrifice the customer interest.

Chee and Peng (1996) examine between customer orientation and buyer's satisfaction for high involvement product, namely house in Malaysia. They found that buyer are most satisfied with the services of sale personnel. They suggest that this could most likely be attributed to the fact that they are normally trained to be customer oriented. They also suggested that greater emphasis on sales training should be left to the ones who are closest to the customer, namely, the sales staff.

Ying and Keen (1992) studied consumer orientation of buyer toward petrol

consumption behavior. They found that to be customer oriented is no easy task. It requires full commitment from the management and salesperson. This include responsiveness to different demographic characteristics of consumers.

Williams (1998) indicates a strong and significant influence between the customer-oriented behavior of salespeople and the development of customer relationship' His correlation analysis evidenced no significant relationships between buyer demographics and the buyer's perception of the salesperson's customer oriented behavior or relationship development. Daniel and Darby (1997) study the service provider's self-perception of customer orientation with customer perceptions of this dimension in health care setting where both nurses and patient are surveyed. They also found that there are no significance's in customer orientation Scale (COS) values between patients differing in income, gender, country of birth, education or whether patients were publicly or privately admitted. Ying and Keen (1992) analyze demographic and socioeconomic variables such as sex, race and educational level and found that this factor influence consumer orientation of buyer toward petrol consumption behaviour.

Customer satisfaction is the accumulated experience of a customer's purchase and consumption experiences (Andreassen, 1994). Customer satisfaction is influenced by two factors: expectations and experienced service performance (Yi, 1989). Expectations are formed on the basis of previous experience of a company and its marketing mix, competitor and word-of mouth communication and perceived performance is influenced by the consumer's perception of service quality, marketing mix, brand name and image of the company (Andreassen, 1994). On the other hand, Zeitmal (1988) suggested that perceived quality is the customer's judgement about the product's or service's overall

excellence or superiority.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the steps taken to undertake the research. There are seven aspects of the methodology that would be considered: theoretical framework and hypotheses to be tested, variables and measurement, sampling design, data collection methods, questionnaire construction, statistical techniques to be adopted and reliability analysis.

3.2 Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

Based on the discussion in the previous chapter, the dimensions used to measure customer orientation include responsiveness, after sales service, assistance to buyer and ability to fulfil buyer's needs. Definitions of the dimensions used in this study are presented below :

Dimension	Definition
Responsiveness	The speed to rectify and act on complaint or defect.
After Sales Service	Ability to do follow up visit after sale is made
Ability to Fulfil Buyer's Needs	Helping customer assess their need and offering products that will satisfy those needs.
Assistance to Buyer	To offer a range of alternatives and have the expertise to assist customer.

The independent variables are the four dimensions of customer orientation. The moderating variables are the socio-economic and demographic characteristics : age, marital status, education, race, occupation, income and price range and the dependent variable is purchase satisfaction . The research model showing the relationships between the variables for this study is presented by the following :

The diagram below illustrates the relationship:

| Responsiveness
After sales service
Assistance to buyers
Ability to fulfil buyer's needs | → | Satisfaction |

| Independent Variables | | Dependent Variable |

| Demographics and Socio
Economic Characteristics |

Moderating Variables

Figure 1:The Theoretical Framework

Hypotheses

From the above diagram, the following hypotheses were developed for the study:

1. The higher the level of salesperson's responsiveness the higher the level of housebuyer satisfaction.

2. The greater the level of after sales service the higher the level of housebuyer satisfaction.

3. The greater the level of assistance to buyers, the higher the level of buyer satisfaction.

4. The greater the ability of salespersons to fulfil buyer's needs, the greater the level of buyer satisfaction.

5. The married and the unmarried differ significantly with respect to buyer satisfaction.

6. The level of education affects buyer satisfaction.

7. There is a significant difference amongst the races with regard to their level of satisfaction.

8. There is a significant difference in satisfaction amongst buyers of different occupational groups.

9. There is a significant difference in satisfaction amongst buyers of different income groups.

10. There is a significant difference in satisfaction amongst buyers of different house-price groupings.

11. There is a significant difference in satisfaction amongst buyers of different types of houses.

12. There is a significant relationship between house buyer satisfaction and customer orientation of sales persons.

3.3 Variables and Measurement

In all, the questionnaire has four dimensions namely: responsiveness, indexed in three items; after sales service, indexed in three items; ability to fulfill buyer needs, indexed in 6 items; and assistance to buyers, indexed in 7 items. The four dimensions were then used

as the independent variables while satisfaction, which was indexed in ten items was used as the dependent variable.

3.3.1 Independent Variables

For customer orientation a total of 24 items, base on six components of customer-oriented selling (A desire to help customer make good purchase decisions, helping customers assess their needs, offering products that will satisfy those needs, describing product accurately, avoiding deceptive or manipulative influence tactics and avoiding the use of great pressure) as proposed by Saxe and Weitz (1982) were employed in the development of the customer orientation scale to indicate the attributes or practices of sale people that were regarded as customer oriented.

3.3.2 Dependent Variables

The transaction of house is a complex one as buyers pay large sums of money long before they even see the purchase. Thus, a buyer merely buys based on promise of future satisfaction. In order to gauge the satisfaction of purchasers with the houses after delivery, 10 items, as shown in the appendix A, were used to construct the post-purchase satisfaction. Consistent with the literature, the scale items selected for the dependent variable were direct measure of satisfaction after buyers take possession of the completed house (Chee and Peng, 1996).

3.4 Population Identification and Sampling Design

As the scope of the study is limited to housebuyers in Penang, the identified

population sampling frame is "the owner of a house, which was purchased directly from the developer within a period of two years in Penang". The convenience sampling method has been used to sample the population of housebuyers. The data was obtained from customers of the bank I work for. Thus the population frame comprises all our bank customers that sought for housing loan in the last two years.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

The questionnaire were mailed to the selected customers. A cover letter, with brief introduction of the study was attached to each set of questionnaire. A total of 165 questionnaires were sent to customers who have recently purchased owner occupied houses from the housing developer in Penang. Thus, out of this total, 82 questionnaires were properly fill in and returned, giving a response rate of 49.7 percent.

3.6 Questionnaire Construction and Administration

The questionnaire sample is given in Appendix A. It comprises 3 section; the first section (Section A) intended to measure the independent variables (respondent's scores on the dimension of customer orientation). A structured questionnaire was developed along the lines of Saxe and Weitz (1982). Certain modifications to the original questionnaire were made to take account of the Malaysia environment. The second section (Section B) intended to measure the dependent variable (respondent's purchase satisfaction). Six point Likert scales is used to measure respondent's attitudinal score for each statement (From "1" to "6" for "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The last section (Section C) of the questionnaire is used to gather Socio-economic characteristics

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of respondents.

3.7 Statistical Tests

For the purpose of analyzing the data, the software programs used were the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Before the application of any statistical tests, the data was tested for reliability. The 60 per cent benchmark was set for the Cronbach's alpha; any alpha of less than this cutoff was considered to low, necessitating the dropping of one or more items of the dimension. Once the reliability analysis is conducted, the items not dropped by the reliability analysis would then be used for further analysis of data. The analysis of data involved both descriptive as well as inferential statistics. The descriptive part gives the frequencies of socio economic and demographic characteristics of respondents such as marital status, education, race, position, type of house purchased, income, and price of house. It is hoped that frequencies would give a broad outline of the characteristics of the respondents in the sample. The inferential statistics involves hypothesis testing.

Three statistical techniques, namely independent t-test, one-way analysis of variance, and regression analysis are used. The independent t-test enables comparisons the mean satisfaction of two independent groups, such as Malays and non-Malays. The analysis of variance extends the discussion to involve variables with more than two independent groups. The regression analysis was then employed to examine the extent to which variations in the dependent variable are explained by the independent variables combined. It also enables us to examine the individual effects of each of the independent variables mentioned above.

Chapter 4

STATISTICAL RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the statistical results and analysis. The data was obtained by distributing a structured questionnaire to 165 house owners who in the last two years bought houses from housing developers in Penang. Out of the 165 questionnaires that were distributed, 82 were returned in usable form, representing a response rate of 49.7 per cent. The rest of this chapter is structured as follows: Section two presents the descriptive statistics, providing frequencies for the demographic variables of respondents. Section three examines results from hypothesis-testing. Section four summarizes the results.

4.2 Respondent Profiles

Table 4.1 below presents the classification of respondents by age. From the table, it is understood that eight of the respondents fell under less than 25 years of years; forty-five of them fell between 26 to 35 years; and twenty nine fell between 36 to 55 years. In percentage terms, this means that 9.8 per cent of them fell below 25 years; 54.9 per cent fell between 26 to 35 years of age and 35.4 per cent were in the 36 to 55 age bracket.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

DEMOGRAPHIC	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
AGE		
< 25	8	9.8
26-35	45	54.9
36-55	29	35.4
MARITAL STATUS		
Married	67	81.7
Single	15	18.3
EDUCATION		
Secondary School	27	33.3
Diploma	18	22.2
Bachelor Degree	22	27.2
Higher Degree	14	17.3
RACE		
Malay	54	65.9
Non-Malay	28	34.1
POSITION		
Management	42	51.2
Supervisors	14	17.1
Others	26	31.7
HOUSE TYPE		
Single Storey	35	42.7
Double Storey	16	19.5
Others	31	37.8
INCOME		
<RM2,000	44	53.7
2,001-3,000	24	29.3
>RM3,000	14	17.1
HOUSE PRICE		
<RM50,000	14	17.1
RM50,001-100,000	44	53.7
>RM100,000	24	29.3

The respondents were again classified according to their marital status. The results are presented in Table 4.1. From the table it can be seen that 67 of the respondents were married while 15 were single. This implied that 81.7 per cent of the respondents were married and 18.3 per cent were single. The table also shows the classification of respondents according to the level of education of respondents. From the table, it is clear that 27 of the respondents have had secondary education only; 18 of them diploma only; 22 of them first degree only and 14 of them higher degrees. Therefore the figures suggest

that 33.3 per cent of the respondents have had secondary education only; 22.2 per cent . have had diploma; 27.2 per cent have had first degree only and the remaining 17.3 per cent have had higher degrees.

When the sample was classified by race, it was found that 54 of the sample respondents were Malays while 28 were non-Malays. In relative terms, this means that 65.9 per cent of the respondents were Malays, with the remaining 34.1 per cent found to be non-Malays. Table 4.1 also shows the results of the classification. The table also shows the classification of respondents according to position. From the table, it is understood that 42 of the questionnaires were filled in by managers, 14 of them by supervisors; and 26 by respondents in other positions. In relative terms, 51.2 per cent of the respondents were managers; 17.1 per cent were supervisors; and 31.7 per cent from other positions.

The classification was also conducted according to house type. Table 4.1 above shows the classification. From the table, it is obvious that 35 of the respondents were in single storey owners; 16 double storey owners; and 31 were owners of other categories of houses. In relative terms, this means that 42.7 per cent of the respondents were owners of single storey house; 19.5 per cent were owners of double storey house while 37.8 per cent were owners of other categories of houses. When classification of respondents was performed according to income, the results in Table 4.1 show that 44 of the respondents earned less than RM2,000; 24 of them earned between two thousand and three thousand ringgit; and only 14 of them earned more than three thousand a month. In percentage terms, this means that 53.7 per cent of the respondents earned less than RM2,000 a month; 29.3 per cent earned between two thousand and three thousand ringgit; and 17.1

per cent of them earned more than three thousand ringgit a month. The respondents were also classified according to house price and the results shown in Table 4.1 above. Owners of houses below RM50,000 were 14 in number, representing 17.1 per cent of total. Respondents owning houses in the range of RM50,000 to RM100,000 were 44 in number, representing 53.7 per cent of the sample. There were 24 respondents owning houses worth more than RM100,000. This category of respondents represented 29.3 per cent of the sample.

4.3 Reliability Analysis

Before the application of any statistical tests, the data was tested for reliability. The 60 percent benchmark was set for the Cronbach's Alpha; any alpha of less than this cut-off was considered low, necessitating the dropping of one or more items of the dimension. Once the reliability analysis is conducted, the items not dropped by the reliability analysis would than be used for further analysis of data. The actual SPSS output of this test is given in Appendix B.

Table 4.2 Reliability Analysis

Variable	No of Item Accepted	No of Item Rejected	Alpha
Responsiveness	3	-	0.8574
After Sales Service	2	1	0.5967
Ability to Fulfil Buyer's Needs	6	-	0.7349
Assistance to Buyer	6	1	0.7614
Satisfaction	10	1	0.7476

Table 4.2 summarizes the Cronbach Alpha score for all the variables. It can be seen that all alpha values for all group of items we found to range from 0.60 to 0.86. This range