

Factors Affecting Customers to Buy Apartments in Dhaka City

Mostafa Kamal¹

Shah Alam Kabir Pramanik²

Abstract: *This study investigates factors that affect prospective customers' purchase intention when purchasing apartment in Dhaka city, Bangladesh. The paper also examines relationships among the influential factors and buying attitude. Total forty six (46) attributes have been taken into consideration in designing questionnaire for the study. A questionnaire survey method is used with 220 prospective buyers and response rate of 92 percent. Initially an exploratory factor analysis is directed using SPSS (version 21). We explored six factors where project facilities, environmental issues, physical quality, location and communication facilities are considered as most influential factors. Comparatively promotional and prices have less impact on purchase decisions. But the attribute 'reasonable prices' received the buyer's attention. Factors project facilities, physical quality, location, communications and prices have significant relationship with buying attitude except the promotional and environmental issues. Real Estate developers, marketers, policy makers can use the findings to better understand, segment and satisfy the buyers. Therefore the findings of the study will help to develop the successful Real Estate marketing policy and strategies. The study may be limited by its focus on a geographic section of the Bangladeshi Real Estate market.*

Keywords: *Real Estate, Buyers, Factors, Buying Attitude, Real Estate Marketing.*

Introduction:

Being the most densely populated country of the world Bangladesh has been facing extreme housing problem. At present 28 percent people live in urban areas which are expected to be 34 percent in 2025 (The Daily Ittefaq, May, 2013). The current trend of urban growth in Bangladesh is about 5-6 percent per annum (REHAB, 2013). Dhaka city, the capital of Bangladesh, approximately accommodates a vast population of over 16.6 million with the estimated 4.7% growth rate per annum. The pressure of population in Dhaka city is escalating day by day as people of Bangladesh are largely Dhaka centered. Housing is a real need for this enormous population and in turn housing sector is facing major challenges in Dhaka. To cope up with this situation many private real estate developers with very few provisions of government housing have been trying to meet the demand of housing for more than last twenty years. Due to urbanization, rising house rent, scarcity of land, high prices of land, hazards in land purchasing, high cost of land registration, re-structuring of households to single family units, and high price of building materials some dramatic changes have occurred in the real estate industry in recent years

¹ Adviser, Department of Real Estate, Daffodil International University, Email: m.kamal@daffodilvarsity.edu.bd

² Lecturer, Department of Business Administration, Daffodil International University, Corresponding Author: Shah Alam Kabir Pramanik, Email: kabir.bba@diu.edu.bd

that has changed the attitudes of the people of Bangladesh. Now people are interested to buy a ready apartment from the developers than purchase land for building their own house. (Khaled, M. C., Sultana, T., Biswas, S. K., & Karan, R. 2012, Mohiuddin, M. 2014). That's why they turn to real estate companies who are providing flats or apartments. In response, real estate business has enjoyed a boom over the recent years. In all over Bangladesh, there are now real estate companies growing up like mushrooms. At present according to Real Estate & Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB), more than one thousand real estate companies are related to house and land development in Dhaka city (REHAB, 2012). As real estate sector has been growing in Bangladesh, the competition in the real estate sector becomes intense. Development and implementations of proper marketing strategies are inevitable for the real estate developers to sustain in the highly competitive market. Real estate sector can make significant contribution to the socio economic development of the country through increasing infrastructural development and creating employment opportunities. The success of real estate marketing depends on knowing the real needs, wants and demands of the real estate customers. To know about the needs of customers it is unavoidable to understand the factors and variables that stalwartly influence the customers to buy an apartment. Identifying the dominant factors that influence the buyers to buy an apartment will be helpful to develop real estate marketing strategies and model that ultimately attract the customers, ensure customers' satisfaction as well as sustainable development of the industry.

Literature Review:

Numerous studies have been conducted on the real estate sector all over the world. Although enormous studies have been undertaken till now in Bangladesh unfortunately almost all of the studies are conducted on recent trends of real estate sector and problems & prospects, challenges and real estate financing. The studies on recent trends of real estate sector in Bangladesh brought into some causes that act as catalysts for booming of the real estate sector. The grounds for flourishing & dramatic changes in the real estate sector are urbanization, rising house rent, scarcity of land, high price of land, increasing the price of land (20 to 50) times in the last 15 years (Hasan, 1991, Labib, et al., 2013), lack of public supports (Labib, et al., 2013) acted as catalyst for real estate boom previously, hazards in land purchasing, high cost of land registration, re-structuring of households to single family units, and high price of building materials that have occurred in the real estate industry and changed the attitudes of the people of Bangladesh [Bony, S. Z., & Rahman S., (2014); Labib, et al. (2013); Khaled, M. C., et al. (2012); Dewri, L. V., et al. (2012); Leiser, K., & Ghor, A. P. (2011); Barua, S., et al. (2010); Khan, M. S., & Barua, S. (2009); Islam, M. T. (2008)]. The researchers have also showed that people of Bangladesh are now interested to buy a ready apartment from the developers than purchase land for building their own house. (Khaled, M. C., Sultana, T., Biswas, S. K., & Karan, R. 2012, Mohiuddin, M. 2014).

The most pivotal part of real estate industry is the customers of apartment. Numerous studies on factors influencing customers to buy an apartment and dimensions of customer

satisfaction have been undertaken in the field of Real Estate. But there is a scope for conducting a comprehensive study on those topics. What do the buyers consider to purchase an apartment? To purchase an apartment is a crucial decision for every customer in Bangladesh because sometimes customers spend their whole-life savings to buy an apartment. Extraordinary studies have been conducted on location and size preferences [Labib, et al. (2013)], Customer Perception and Expectation [Khaled, M. C., et al. (2012)], and the dimensions of customer satisfactions and services [Preko, A., et al. (2014); Khaled, M. C., et al. (2012); Zadkarim, S., & Emari, H. (2011); Zadkarim, S., et al. (2011); Leiser, K., & Ghor, A. P. (2011); Shahin, A., et al. (2010); Lee, Y., et al. (2009)]

Labib, S.M., Bhuiya, M. M. R., & Rahaman, M. Z. (December, 2013) explored the real estate buyers' preferences for location and factors that influence to choose an apartment. They showed the prime concerns for selecting flat location are budget, residential environment and communication facility with different facilities. They identified multiple factors that influence buyers to buy an apartment in Dhaka city. Location, Residential living environment, better communication with work place [Leiser, K., & Ghor, A. P. (2011)], near to educational facilities, biasness due to relatives [Zadkarim, S., & Emari, H. (2011)], living in the same area for long time, near to main road and affordable price, quality of municipality services and cost (Friedman 1981; Reshovsky, 1979), size and quality of apartment [Khaled, M. C., et al. (2012)] are some major factors that guided the choice for flats. The priorities of these factors are not same for all areas in Dhaka city.

Khaled, M. C., Sultana, T., Biswas, S. K., & Karan, R. (2012); aimed to identify the dimensions of customer perception and expectations & with the help of that dimensions they measured the customer satisfaction. quality and types of apartment ,size of apartment, security, fittings, interior design, sufficient ventilation, location, preferable services facilities (timely handover, quality maintaining, after sales service), good communication (transportation hub),project facilities (car parking, community hall room ,generator) [Barua, S., et al. (2010)], price (installment pay , bank loan) [Dewri, L. V., et al. (2012); Islam, M. S. (2012); Khaled, Zadkarim, S., & Emari, H. (2011)], company brand & goodwill,expert opinion, advertisementand promotion [Islam, M. S. (2012)] also are almost equally important.

Preko, A., Agbanu, S. K., & Feglo, M. (2014) have showed the relationship between services delivery dimensions and customer satisfaction. Moreover it showed the relationship among customer satisfaction, word of mouth communication and customer loyalty. This paper explored the factors like customer satisfaction, word of mouth communication and customers' loyalty that act as crucial elements for purchasing an apartment.

Zadkarim, S., & Emari, H. (2011) has identified the dimensions of customer satisfaction and offered a model of overall customer satisfaction with the help of customer satisfaction dimensions. In case of purchasing apartments, the buyers consider some factors such as customer cost (price, credits, installment payments); physical quality

(cracks, kitchen, lighting, electronic lighting and window to outside) [Khaled, M. C., et al. (2012)]; water [plumbing facilities, water quality and water pressure, drainage, commode, internal architecture] [Dewri, L. V., et al. (2012)]; environment quality (traffic, noise, region security) [Dewri, L. V., et al. (2012)]; project facilities (parking, lobby, external staircase, lift, front attractiveness and quality, warehouse) [Khaled, M. C., et al. (2012)]; word of mouth (intentions to say positive things to others; recommend the apartments of project to another consumer, encourage friends and relatives to buy the apartment from this project) [Preko, A., et al. (2014)]. In another study Zadkarim, S., et al. (2011) also showed “Environmental quality acts as an important dimension of customer satisfaction in apartment industry”. Here they endeavored to add a new dimension of customer satisfactions namely services (dimensions of services are tangibility, reliability, assurance, responsiveness, empathy) [Khaled, M. C., et al. (2012);Zadkarim, S., & Emari, H. (2011); Shahin, A., et al. (2010); Lee, Y., et al. (2009)]

Customers give concentration on the quality of services when they take the purchase decision of an apartment [Lee, Y., et al. (2009)]. Lee also used Parasuraman’s SERVQUALscale to compare services quality perception in the Real Estate industry. Now -a-days customers also prefer to services dimensions to buy an apartment. Bony, S. Z., & Rahman S., (2014);Dewri, L. V., et al. (2012); Islam, M. S. (2012); Leiser, K., & Ghor, A. P. (2011); Barua, S., et al. (2010); Khan, M. S., & Barua, S. (2009); surveyed research on real estate sector of Bangladesh. Besides the current scenarios/trends, problems, prospects and challenges they also showed the growth rate [13.77% in 2013, Bony, S. Z., & Rahman S., (2014)] and contribution to the economic development of the country & GDP [778 million taka in 2013, Bony, S. Z., & Rahman S., (2014)]. Barua, S., et al. (2010) brought out the new dimensions in the real estate industry that the buyer of apartment always would like to get a diversified product. Model towns, which are built with the structure of a small town including all facilities for people, like offices, shopping mall, houses, schools, swimming pools, gymnasium, banks, power plant etc. Projects that include swimming pool, gymnasium, shopping malls etc. in one building are also diversified products supplied by the real estate agents in Bangladesh. All these products wrapped with diversification have great demand in the market.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses:

Based on a review of the literature, this study has developed a framework linking project facilities, location or communication, quality, environmental quality, prices and promotion to buying attitude. The figure indicates the hypothesized model for real estate customers and examines the relationship between the attributes of an apartment and buying attitude.

Generally attitude describes a person’s relatively consistent evaluations, feelings, and tendencies toward an object or idea (Kotler, P., 2011). Attitudes put people into a frame of mind of liking or disliking things of moving toward or away from them. Here buying attitude indicates that the tendencies of customers to favor or disfavor the apartment based on evaluations of the attributes of an apartment.

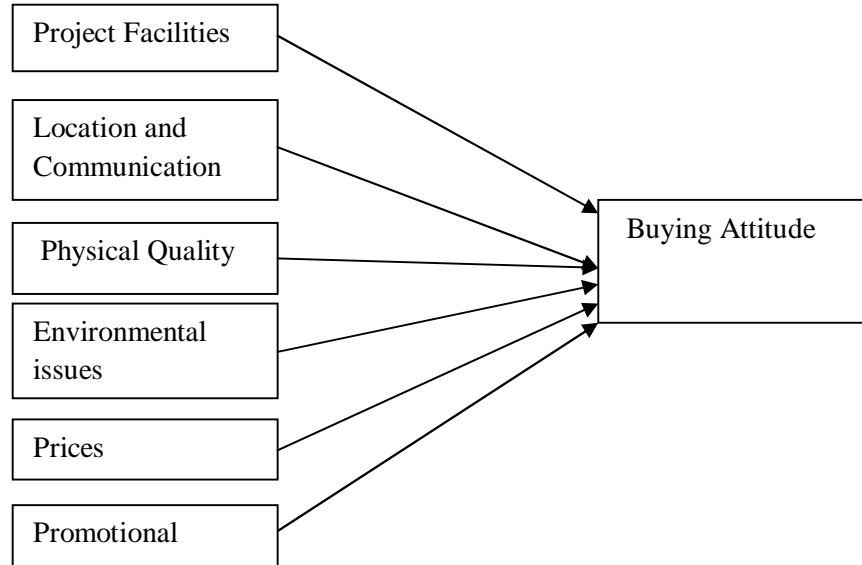


Figure 1: Hypothesized Model of Real Estate customers' Buying Attitude.

Hypothesis:

- H1: Project facilities have positive effect on buying attitude in the real estate industry.
- H2: Apartment situated in the nice location with communication facilities influence the buying attitudes positively.
- H3: Quality of the apartment affects buying attitude of customers.
- H4: Environmental quality where the apartment is located has a significant effect on buying attitude.
- H5: Prices of the apartment influences the buying attitude.
- H6: Promotional efforts influence customers' buying attitude.

Objectives of the study:

- To identify the factors and attributes that influence customers to buy an apartment in the Dhaka city, Bangladesh.
- To examine relationships among influential factors and customers' buying attitudes in the Real Estate industry.

Research Methodology:

Sampling Design: For the study all the customers who have ability and willingness to buy an apartment in the Dhaka city, Bangladesh were considered as target population. Sample frame included customers who came to different Real Estate developers during the data collection phase (1st January to 18 August, 2015). For this study we used two types of sampling techniques namely, simple random sampling and convenient sampling. Initially, 220 questionnaires were distributed to the customers for their responses but a total 203 usable questionnaires were collected.

Data Collection and Analysis: Through literature review and field survey with open ended questionnaire we found more than 64 attributes that influenced the customers to purchase apartment. Then, the relationships of similarities and dissimilarities (+, -) among the variables were portrayed based on empirical research. Then respondents' comment and ideas were incorporated into the design of the final questionnaire. After the several round revisions a total number of 46 attributes were considered for designing final questionnaire. To test the reliability of the questionnaire a pilot survey was used. In pilot test 20 questionnaires were approached and collected from the real estate customers. To test the internal consistency of each of the attributes, dimensions, and items of the attitudes we applied the Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis. The results showed the Cronbach Alpha coefficients for the overall questionnaire was 0.78, indicating that the reliability of the questionnaire was quite high. This study collected data through a survey conducted in the major areas of Dhaka using a detailed structured self-administered questionnaire. The respondents were asked about different attributes those are usually considered for purchasing an apartment by using 7 point Likert scale. For the data collection process, 10 students from the graduate program of BBA, Department of Business Administration, Daffodil International University, Dhaka were selected as Research Assistants (RA). They were trained for two days so that they can collect data uniformly. Training covered making the initial contact with the respondents, asking the questions, probing, recording the answers, and terminating the interview etc. All the data were analyzed in Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and MS Excel and finally report is produced based on the analyzed data.

Findings and Discussion:

Scale Reliability: To test the internal consistency of each of the attributes, dimensions, and items of the attitudes we applied the Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis. In this study a total of 29 items (25 items from the influential factors and 4 items from the buying attitude) have been considered. In scale reliability analysis we found that the value of Alpha is 0.77 which is highly reliable (Nunnaally, 1978).

Exploratory Factor Analysis:

In order to identify the influential factors and attributes of customer preferences in choosing apartment we have conducted an exploratory factor analysis. Initially we have considered 46 variables.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sample adequacy test was applied on influential factors to test whether the sample was adequate to consider the data was normally distributed or not. The KMO value was **0.62** indicating that the sample size was adequate to consider the data normally distributed as the KMO values above 0.5 are considered to indicate normality of data. **Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity** has been used to test the null hypotheses that the variables in the study are not correlated. The Chi-Square test value was **1697.947**, which was significant at **0%** level of significance. The test indicated that variables in the study were correlated and rejected the null hypothesis (The population correlation matrix is an identity matrix). Therefore, the data were suitable for factor analysis.

Table1: Showing the KMO test results:

| KMO and Bartlett’s Test | | |
|--|---------------------|----------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling adequacy. | | 0.62 |
| Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi- Square | 1697.947 |
| | Df | 595 |
| | Sig. | 0.000 |

Influential Factors:

The principal component analysis was used as the extraction method associated with the rotation method of Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. This study has examined communalities of each attribute accounted for the research. Initially 46 items were approached for this test. This study did not find absolute communalities score for all items. Hence, 23 items that scored less than 0.5 have been dropped from the data set. Since data have been collected from field survey, authors have considered current score level for 25 items included in 6 factors. Therefore 6 factors have been extracted on the basis of Eigen values and variance explained by them. The factors were named based on communality of all the items that converged on that factor. **Finally this study has identified six factors namely project facilities, environmental issues, promotion, physical quality, prices, communication facilities that robustly influence the buyer preferences in choosing an apartment in Dhaka city.** Information about the factors are summarized below:

Table 2: Loading and Cronbach’s Alpha score of the retained factors:

| Factors | Attributes | Mean | Standard Deviation | Factor Mean | Factor Loading | Cronbach’s Alpha | Eigen Value | Variance (%) | Cumulative Variance (%) |
|--------------------|---|------|--------------------|-------------|----------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Project Facilities | Mini Town under the Projects | 5.98 | 0.75 | 5.67 | .801 | 0.81 | 3.998 | 15.99 | 15.99 |
| | Play Ground for the Children under the projects | 6.00 | 0.93 | | .750 | | | | |
| | Lift Facilities & Generator in the Apartment | 5.48 | 1.03 | | .749 | | | | |

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| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| | Car Parking Facilities | 5.90 | 0.73 | | .639 | | | | |
| | Indoor Game Facilities | 5.42 | 1.27 | | .613 | | | | |
| | Community Hall Room | 5.21 | 0.88 | | .606 | | | | |
| Environmental | Noise and Sound of Adjacent Area | 6.21 | 0.99 | 6.08 | .818 | 0.77 | 2.961 | 11.85 | 27.84 |
| | Environment Pollution of the Area | 6.02 | 0.71 | | .817 | | | | |
| | Density of Population or Traffic Flow | 6.02 | 0.80 | | .704 | | | | |
| Promotional | Sales Forces | 4.86 | 1.14 | 5.35 | .863 | 0.72 | 2.573 | 10.29 | 38.13 |
| | Word of Mouth Communication | 6.01 | 1.40 | | .810 | | | | |
| | Brand Reputation of the Company | 6.03 | 0.88 | | .622 | | | | |
| | Advertising of the Apartment that Influence | 4.50 | 1.14 | | .449 | | | | |
| Physical Quality | Water Facilities of the Apartment | 6.63 | 0.58 | 6.18 | .702 | 0.74 | 2.302 | 9.21 | 47.34 |
| | Drainage System | 6.36 | 0.81 | | .647 | | | | |
| | Quality of Basin and Commode | 5.72 | 0.78 | | .542 | | | | |
| | Qualities of Tiles of Apartment | 5.80 | 0.75 | | .535 | | | | |
| | Sufficient Ventilation & Windows in the Apartment | 6.37 | 0.71 | | .525 | | | | |
| Prices | Credit Facilities | 6.05 | 0.67 | 6.05 | .726 | 0.58 | 1.842 | 7.37 | 54.70 |
| | System of Installment Payment | 6.13 | 0.69 | | .713 | | | | |
| | Availability of Bank Loans | 5.86 | 0.87 | | .582 | | | | |
| | Reasonable Price | 6.16 | 0.86 | | .493 | | | | |
| Location and Communication | Residential Living Environment | 6.25 | 0.79 | 6.30 | .741 | 0.59 | 1.560 | 6.24 | 60.94 |
| | Near to Educational Facilities | 6.22 | 0.77 | | .645 | | | | |
| | Better Communication with Workplace | 6.42 | 0.65 | | .567 | | | | |
| Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization | | | | | | | | | |
| a. Rotation converged in 11 iterations | | | | | | | | | |

The extracted 6 factors can be interpreted in terms of the variables that load high coefficient.

Project facilities: It is apparent from the analysis that a new dimension in the real estate industry has brought out that buyers of apartment always would like to get projects facilities. Now customers would like to get diversified products in one place. This factor has high coefficients for model towns (.801); playground for the children (.750); Six (6) attributes has constituted this factors which are highly correlated. Playground for the children and mini town under the projects got the highest average score 6 and 5.98 respectively. The mean value of this factor is 5.67 that indicating its significance which influences stalwartly customers to buy an apartment. The Eigen value for this factor is almost 4 (3.998). This factor's Cronbach's Alpha is 0.81 that shows the high level of acceptance. Therefore the apartment which is wrapped with diversified facilities has great demand in the market.

Environmental Issues: Now-a-days customers are very much conscious about environment. When they purchase an apartment they consider the surrounding environments of the apartment. This factor has been constructed with 3 items which have high coefficient: noise and sound of adjacent area (0.818); environment pollution of the area (0.817); density of population (0.704). Noise and Sound of adjacent area and environment pollution of the area got the highest average score 6.21 and 6.02 respectively. The factor mean is 6.08 that indicate high level of significance.

Promotional Factor: Promotional factor refers to the specific blend of advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relation and direct marketing, word of mouth communications tools that the developers of real estate marketers use to persuasively communicate the value of the apartment and build a relationship with the target buyers. The main objective of promotion is to inform, remind and persuade buyers to buy an apartment. The factor analysis suggests promotional factor is a composite of 4 attributes where the attribute 'brand reputation of the company' has obtained the highest average score (Mean: 6.03; Loading: .622). Similarly word of mouth communication also obtained good score (Mean: 6.01; Loading: .810). On the other hand, sales force of the company has significant impact on buyers (0.863). The average score of the factor is 5.35.

Physical Quality: Physical quality of the apartment is crucial factor for the buyers when they take the buying decisions. The mean value of the factor is 6.18. Five attributes constituted the factors those are highly correlated. The loadings of the attributes are water facilities (.702); drainage systems (.647); quality of basin and commode (.542); quality of tiles (.535); sufficient ventilation (.525). Among those attributes water facilities and sufficient ventilation both achieved the highest priority. The average mean of the two attributes are 6.63 and 6.37 correspondingly. Physical quality (Mean: 6.18) is considerable factor for buyers to choose an apartment. Drainage system (Mean: 6.36) also acts as a central attribute in this factor. The alpha value for this factor is 0.74.

Prices: Price is the amount of money that is charged for a product or services or the sum of values that consumer exchanges for getting, having or using the benefits of a product

or service. To purchase an apartment, buyers think about credit facilities, system of installment payments availability of bank loans and reasonable price. The item reasonable price achieved the highest mean value 6.16. Customers also prefer installment payments (Mean: 6.13) when they buy an apartment. The items of the factor prices are correlated. The loadings of the items are .493; .713; .582; .726. The average score of the factor price is 6.05 that indicating significant influences of the prices on purchasing an apartment.

Location and Communication facilities: Buyers of the apartment prefer the location with good communication facilities. Three items have constituted the factor location and communication facilities. Customers prefer the residential living environment (.741); nearness of educational facilities (.645); and better communication facilities (.567). The attribute better communication with work places has obtained the highest mean score (6.42). Among the all six factors the factor location and communication has achieved the best factor mean (6.30). Therefore the location and communication factor is prominent in case of choosing the apartment.

Relationships among the influential factors and buying attitudes of customers in the real estate industry:

Table 3: Model Summary:

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .692 ^a | .478 | .445 | .450 |

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Location and Communication, Physical Quality , Promotional, Prices, Projects Facilities, Environmental Issues
- b. Dependent Variable: Buying Attitude

The model was developed to examine the relationships among the influential factors for customer preferences in purchasing apartment and buying attitude. In this model dependent factor is buying attitude and independent factors are location and communication facilities, physical quality, promotions, prices, project facilities and environmental facilities. The results show that the factors are significant. 48% of variation is explained by the six factors together in the model as showing the value of R Square is (.478). The model indicates that the variables are highly correlated as the multiple coefficient of correlation is (R=0.69). The adjusted R Square value is .445.

From the table we can see that the hypotheses H1, H2, H3, and H5 have been supported because the significance level of the factors project facilities (0.000); location and communications (0.000); physical quality (0.032); and prices (0.011) are below 0.05. This indicates that those factors have significant relationship with buying attitudes of buyers in purchasing an apartment in Dhaka city. On the other hand, the hypothesis H4 and H6 are rejected because the factors environmental issues (0.506) and promotions (0.177) have significance value > 0.05 which indicates that the environmental issues and promotions have no significant relationships with buying attitude in choosing an apartment in the Dhaka city.

Coefficients Analysis and Hypotheses Testing:**Table 4: Coefficients of dependent and Independent variables:**

| Hypothesis | Dependent Variable | Independent Variable | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. | Results |
|------------|--------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|-----------|
| | | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | |
| H1 | Buying Attitude | Projects Facilities | .262 | .063 | .326 | 4.138 | .000 | Supported |
| H2 | Buying Attitude | Locations and Communications | .432 | .086 | .418 | 5.036 | .000 | Supported |
| H3 | Buying Attitude | Physical quality | .176 | .081 | .180 | 2.179 | .032 | Supported |
| H4 | Buying Attitude | Environmental Issues | -.042 | .062 | -.055 | -.667 | .506 | Rejected |
| H5 | Buying Attitude | Prices | .222 | .086 | .205 | 2.592 | .011 | Supported |
| H6 | Buying Attitude | Promotions | -.068 | .050 | -.105 | -1.360 | .177 | Rejected |

Conclusion and Implications:

Shelter is one of the fundamental needs of people of any country. Government of every country tries to provide the housing facilities to general public. In Bangladesh approximately 7 million people have been facing housing deficiency of which 4 million are in the urban areas and 3 million are in the rural areas. It is impossible for any government to ensure 100% housing facilities to all the public. Dhaka is grappling with severe shortages of affordable housing due to immense migration from the countryside into new urban centers and for that reasons Dhaka city requires between 55,000-83,000 housing units each year, whereas all public and private efforts together can only produce 25,000 housing units a year. [Bashar, A. (2013), Urban Dialogue, Habitat for Humanity] <http://www.habitatbangladesh.org/files/Urban%20Housing%20HFHBD.pdf>

To cope up with this situation many private real estate developers with very few provision of government housing have been trying to meet the demand of housing/shelter for more than last twenty years in Bangladesh. Therefore the government of this country should come forward to make a public private partnership (PPP) with private real estate developers to develop the real estate sector in a sustainable way. The real estate developers should be aware of the needs and choices of the customers of the apartments.

Our research has revealed six influential factors of customers' preferences in purchasing an apartment in the Dhaka city. Project facilities are demanding by the customers. When customers choose an apartment they think about the physical quality of the apartment, surrounding environment, location and communication facilities, reasonable prices. Location and communication facilities (Mean Value: 6.30) get the highest priority in case of purchasing an apartment. Real estate developers should be aware of the factors that

customers prefer. Sometimes real estate developers involve with malpractices and try to cheat the customers. To ensure customer satisfaction and sustainable development of the real estate industry those malpractices should be avoided. Besides the aforesaid facilities customers of apartments would like to get prompt services, timely handover of the apartment, empathy, responsive behavior and after sales services from the developers. Identifying customers' needs, choices and preferences are crucial tasks for developing effective real estate marketing strategies. The findings of the study will help to understand the buying attitudes and behavior of customers and ultimately lead to develop the sustainable marketing strategies.

Limitation and Further Research:

The present study is not out of limitations. Some constraints are appended like our sample size was limited. Convenience sampling technique was used to collect data which is not well enough to serve the purpose. The visitors were too busy to provide researchers much time for responding to the questionnaires. The authors did not have the opportunity to compare the customers' preferences and attitude among the various locations. So further research is encouraged to consider more samples as well as compare behavior and attitudes of customers from location to locations. In this study authors have identified factors and attribute that influence customers to buy an apartment. The authors have the plan to measure customers' satisfaction on the concerned factors and attributes of apartment. Therefore, further research will be conducted on comparison of high income versus low income customers' attitude and behavior.

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