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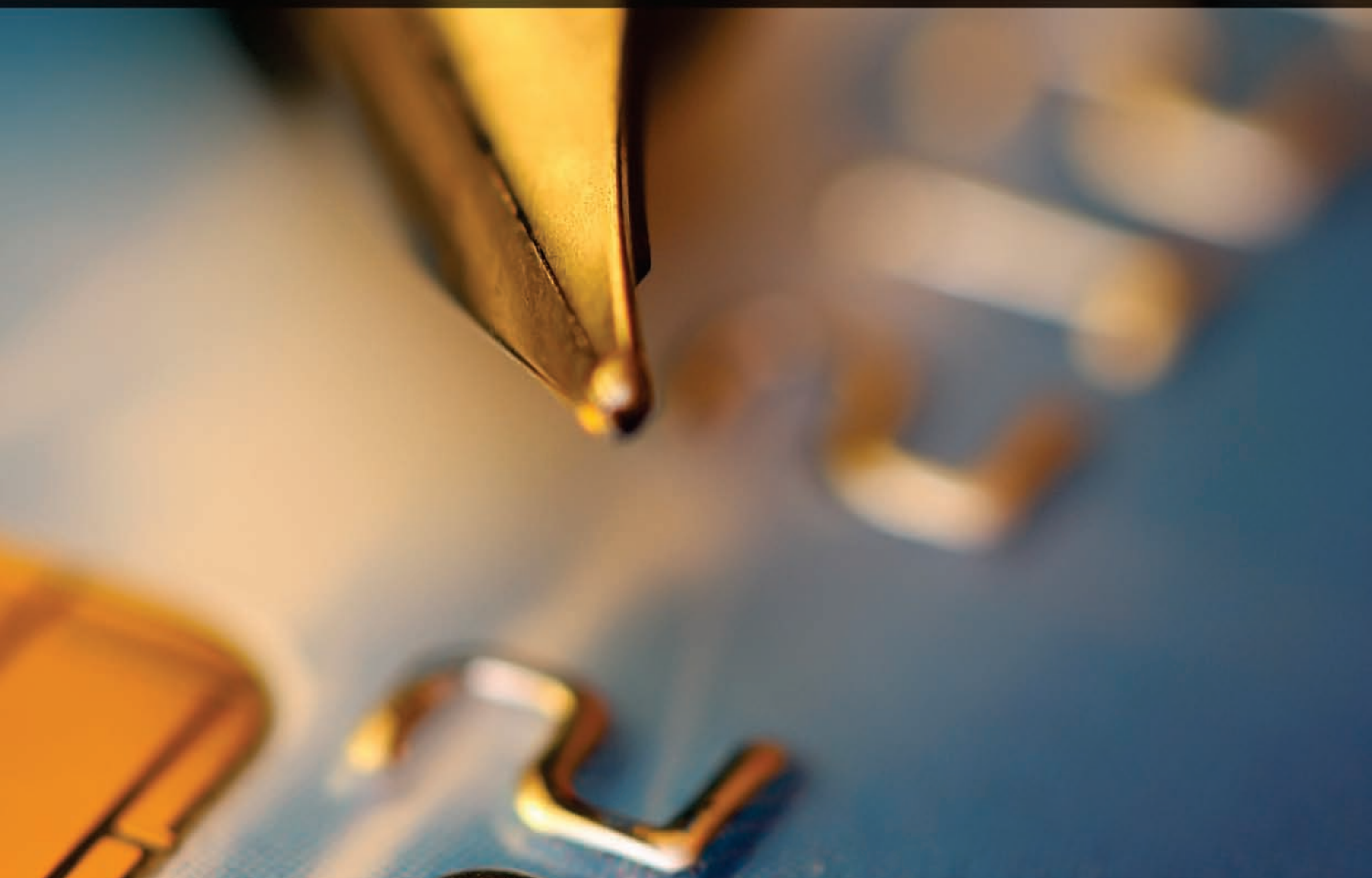

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Revisiting the Issue of Marketing Education and Professional Practice in Nigeria

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Abstract- This paper explains the historical development of marketing education and professional practice in Nigeria, it considers the marketing problems and advanced recommendations towards solving the numerous challenges. Emphasis was on the marketing curricular in Nigeria tertiary institutions. Also the important issue of the relationship between the marketing education and the marketing professional practice was considered. The onus of professionalism and success is moving from the professional institutes to the individual marketers. Here lies the success of marketing education in Nigeria, as qualified marketers will be practicing their art at a consistently high level, or they will bring the professional institute into disrepute. The focus of marketing is changing from brand to people and service which coupled with the shift from a manufacturing to a service economy means that much classical marketing theory is becoming if not redundant but less important.

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Revisiting the Issue of Marketing Education and Professional Practice in Nigeria

Ayozie Daniel [α] & Ajibola Raman [σ]

Abstract - This paper explains the historical development of marketing education and professional practice in Nigeria, it considers the marketing problems and advanced recommendations towards solving the numerous challenges. Emphasis was on the marketing curricular in Nigeria tertiary institutions. Also the important issue of the relationship between the marketing education and the marketing professional practice was considered. The onus of professionalism and success is moving from the professional institutes to the individual marketers. Here lies the success of marketing education in Nigeria, as qualified marketers will be practicing their art at a consistently high level, or they will bring the professional institute into disrepute. The focus of marketing is changing from brand to people and service which coupled with the shift from a manufacturing to a service economy means that much classical marketing theory is becoming if not redundant but less important. This has implications for the way marketing is taught, learned and practiced in Nigeria. The paper considers the role of marketing professional institute in the development of marketing education, the relationship between the professional institute and marketing education in Nigeria, the challenges and set backs of marketing education, and practicable recommendations to solve the problem at hand.

I. Introduction

Nonyenlu (1989) defined marketing education as the systematic training and instruction leading to the acquisition of a body of knowledge concerning the theory and practice of marketing. Marketing as defined by the chartered institute of marketing United Kingdom (1984) is the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating, and satisfying the needs and wants of consumer profitability. The American association defined as the performance of business activities that directs the flow of goods and services from the producer to the consumer or user (AMA 1985). McDonald (1993) stated that it is a matching process between a company's capabilities and the wants of consumer. All these definitions show that marketing deals with the problems of an organization in providing goods and services to satisfy the demands of specific groups, persons or organizations (Oyedijo, 1995). They see marketing as the process in which companies deliver solutions to customers need problems in return for payment (Wilmshurst, 1978).

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A marketer is simply someone who wants to obtain a resource from another person and is willing to offer something of value in return. (Ayozie, 2000, CIM, 2004)

Marketing concept has undergone five alternative approaches and this can be used by a company to guide and direct its marketing activities (Kotler 1978). This includes the production concept which holds that consumers will prefer the product that are widely available and (then to the product concept) that states that consumers will favour products that are high in quality, performance and features, the selling concept that holds that consumers will not buy enough , unless the organization uses an aggressive selling and promotion technique, to the marketing concept which holds that the key to achieving organizational goals consists in determining the needs and wants of target markets and delivering the desired satisfaction to customers more effectively and efficiently than competitors, and lastly, the new societal marketing concept, which holds that the organization's tasks is to determine the needs, wants and interest of target markets and to deliver the desired satisfactions more effectively and efficiently than competitors in a way that preserves or enhances the consumers and the society's well-being. (Kotler 2008, Ayozie 1998). The societal marketing concept arose because of the need to achieve a balance between consumer wants and interests, company profits and objectives, and the long-run societal welfare which are sometimes conflicting.

Management education gave rise to marketing education in Nigeria, and the former took off in the Nigerian tertiary institutions in early 1960's. A lot of remarkable changes have occurred, and its development have soared. Then, there is a great need to review it and relate theory to practice in the industry, tertiary institutions and society at large.

II. Origin of Marketing Education

Management education which gave rise to marketing education started in Nigeria forty years ago. Marketing education an offshoot of the former is even younger. Nwokoye (1987).

The University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) pioneered management education in Nigeria, by setting up a college of administration in 1961. Akpala (1988), opined that, the UNN students for the bachelors (B.Sc) degree programme in the business administration and finance departments in the 1974/75 academic session, the faculty expanded into four departments of Accountancy, Finance, Management and Marketing. So from 1961-1974 marketing was not originally accorded a separate status, but was within the B.Sc programme in Business Administration. Nwokoye (1989), Ayozie (2000).

According to Onah and Ani (1979), Kaduna polytechnic offered OND courses in Marketing, Purchasin and Supply, and this provided middle level manpower, while the first 19 HND graduands in marketing came out in 1974. Apart from Kaduna Polytechnic no other polytechnic offered full marketing programmes before 1975. So history accords Kaduna Polytechnic that status of being the first tertiary institution of learning in Nigeria to offer a full academic programme in Marketing and this would have occurred with the establishment of Kaduna poly in 1968. Before the end of the 1960's, University of Lagos and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, both established in 1962, taught marketing courses within their programme in Business Administration.

From 1970, with the end of the Nigerian civil war, there was a rapid growth in marketing education in Nigeria, in terms of institutions offering the courses, programmes and enrolment. This witnessed the establishment of 16 Federal Universities, four federal universities of technology, 9 states universities and 23 new polytechnics. Presently, there are ----- federal universities, ----- state universities, ------ private universities, ----- federal polytechnics, ---- state polytechnics, ---- private polytechnics, all offering marketing courses as an entity or as part of the Business Administration course. These numbers tripled in the 1980's, with both the federal and state governments establishing their own institutions, and in the mid 90's, when private individuals were allowed to establish private polytechnics (i.e. Lagos City Polytechnic and our Savior Institute of Science and Technology) and private universities. With this emergence of institutions; more mounted separate programmes in Marketing either as a separate entity like Federal Polytechnic Ilaro (1979) or included marketing programme in Business Administration or management courses. Ayozie (2002).

Both the government and private polytechnics have proved to be more active in pursuing marketing as a separate academic discipline. Data from the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria "AVERTISING ANNUAL VOLUME for 1995, indicated that while ten universities offered a B.Sc progamme in marketing, fourteen polytechnics offered either an ND or HND programme in marketing. These figures correspond with the pattern when crosschecked from the Jamb brochure for applicants admission.

Although the post graduate programme started very slowly, it is available only in few universities. The University of Lagos, Ahmadu Bello University (1977/78) an the University of Nigeria (1970/71) were the earliest universities to offer the master of Business Administration (MBA) programme with marketing management options. MBA and MSc programme have been established in many universities; UNIPORT 18980/81, Rivers State University of Science and Technology (1982/83) with even a PhD programme in Marketing, Ogun State University 1995, Abia State University (1987) with many others following in that order.

Some polytechnics and other specialized institutions like Yaba College of Technology, Nigerian Institute of Journalism and the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN), offer specialized courses in marketing management.

Doctoral/PhD programme are now offered in many universities. Institutes like the University of Nigeria, Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Usman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto, and many private universities in Nigeria offer PhD programmes in marketing. This is a far cry, compared to what is obtainable in India, Malaysia or the western world and even many of these Nigerian Universities have suffered from the brain drain and academic flight to either Europe, southern African countries, or even Asia and America.

Some specialized professional bodies, parastatals and industry firms have assisted by offering both short or residential courses, seminars and workshops on areas in marketing and management education. These include the Nigerian Institute of Journalism Ogbe, the Nigerian marketing association, the Advertising Practitioners Councils of Nigeria APCON, the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria, the Nigerian Institute of Management, Centre for management Development, the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria and Private Consulting Firms like Omolayole, Walton Solomon, Zus bureau, Danayo Communication, ADCOMS, etc.

III. What are Aims and Objectives of the Marketing Education

For the marketing profession and knowledge to survive, to be respected and practiced like other professions, it needs to have a clear cut objective, so as to guide the curriculum designers. The objectives for National Diploma/Higher National Diploma or BSc programmes in the polytechnics and universities includes giving the student sufficient knowledge in marketing, sales, advertising and related subjects, so as to enable them secure employment or pursue higher studies in tertiary institutions. But most of these objectives are not pursued enough and in most cases reflect the individual perspectives of their authors.

A solution to these deficiencies was made in the 1985/86 by the executive council of the Nigerian Association of Schools of Management education and training, who commissioned a study into the objectives of management and marketing education in order to seek broad based inputs into the definition of objectives of management by both the scholars, practitioners in industry, and other bodies concerned with the develop-pment of management education in Nigeria.

In the study conducted by Nwokoye (1987), which covers mailing questionnaires to polytechnics and universities offering marketing and management studies, which were best to professional bodies and industrial concerns on what should be the broad objectives of management education in Nigeria; the answers of the academicians and industrial practitioners are summarized as thus:

1. Emphasizing aspect of management education like practical experience for student.
2. Indicating in the learner knowledge, skills attitude, positive attitudes and awareness of certain factors relating to the internal and external environment of management.
3. Developing, producing and providing things like relevant educational materials or people to man high and middle level positions in Nigerian economy.

Respondent answers on the functional area of business that they were most familiar with and what specific educational objectives that should be in areas like marketing, stated the other responses as:

a. To train managers who can establish on their own.
b. To promote marketing management effectively.
c. To equip students with fundamental and advanced concept in marketing.
d. To produce marketing oriented managers.
e. To develop marketing as a field of studies with emphasis on local conditions.
f. To make marketing play its rightful role in the economic development of Nigeria.

Specifically, The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro (2008) prospectus stated its own objectives and goals of marketing as:

- Conduct product planning for manufacturing organizations
- Organize sales and distribution of goods
- Carry out effective sales and advertising
- Undertake market research and other similar functions
- Prepare sales report and other marketing functions

The above set of goals and objective pose a big challenge to the academicians, and educational planners, and will serve as a guide in providing a meaningful marketing educational knowledge and practice on Nigeria.

IV. The Marketing Circular in the Polytechnics and Universities for the Undergraduate (HND/ND/BSC) Programmes in Nigeria

Some polytechnics prepare students for a two year National Diploma (ND) programme in marketing and business administration and management which would be followed by another two years studies for the Higher National Diploma (HND). The ND programme provides an adequate background to prepare a student for HND in marketing, and gives the student an option either in marketing, business administration or purchasing and supply. The universities run program-mmes that award the bachelors degree (BSc) in Marketing after three or four years depending on the qualification of the student. The minimum admission requirement into polytechnics requires five credits in five subjects including English language and mathematics while the universities programme requires the same number of credits.

The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) based in Kaduna, Nigeria regulated and accredits progammes in polytechnics and colleges of technology while the Nigerian University Commission (NUC) with other relevant professional bodies accredits programmes for the universities. The NBTE also sets minimum guideline in the syllabus for the ND and HND programmes in marketing. In between the ND and HND programmes, is a provision for one year industrial attachment for all ND diplomats, where they are expected to gain practical experiences, before proceeding for their HND programmes.

Data from the APCON (2008) annual volume indicated that polytechnics offered either ND or HND programmes in marketing more than the universities. This simply explains that presently polytechnics are producing more to the quality of marketing education in Nigeria at the undergraduate level, more than the universities.

A typical eight semesters (4 years) programme in marketing, contains more than thirty five courses comprising of more than 100 units of credits. This includes the ND programme in business studies, marketing, business administration and purchasing and supply.

The courses for HND/ND in marketing are thus:

1. Marketing concentration courses (e.g. Marketing management, sales management, entrepreneurship education, marketing research, advertising, distribution and logistic management, agricultural marketing, international marketing, industrial marketing, marketing communication, marketing planning and control. Marketing problems and cases, financial aspect of marketing, advertising public relations, etc)

2. Behavior and Social Sciences Courses (e.g. behavioral aspect of marketing, micro economics, macro economics, social psychology)
3. Business Core Courses (e.g. entrepreneurship education development, principles of management, practice of management, marketing management)
4. Accounting Courses (e.g. Principles of accounting, cost accounting, managerial accounting, business finance)
5. Quantitative Courses (e.g. Business Mathematics, business statistics, qualitative studies in business, computer programming).
6. General studies courses. (e.g. use of English, logic, literary appreciation, history, contemporary social studies, citizenship education, communication in English)
7. Sciences (e.g. Biology, physics, natural science, chemistry, etc)

The curricular for BSc programme in marketing have basically a similar spread of courses like the ND/HND version, but it consists more of general studies and behavioral science courses. The advantage of the polytechnic education is its emphasis on practical knowledge and skill acquisition in marketing and sales, which is essential in the competitive business world of today.

V. Revisiting the Marketing Education and the Marketing Proffession

A profession is simply a calling or a vocation, especially one that involves some branch of learning or science. A profession provides a code of conduct and ethics, that serves as a guide to the members of the profession to practice.

Nwokoye 1989 postulated that the assimilation of the requisite body of knowledge or education qualifies one to practice the profession. The challenges and demand faced by the profession dictates the substance of such education. Thus, a reversible situation exists, where the requisite education and professional practice constantly interacts. This interaction takes care of the new ideas in a constantly changing business environment.

VI. What is the Role of Maketing Proffessional Institute in the Development of Marketing Education or Vice-Versa

First, it is imperative to consider the status of marketing in Nigeria. Is marketing like Medicine, Law, Advertising and Accounting, a profession or just a vocation. Available literature, Onah (1985), Okunola (1985) stated that underlying assumptions, that if marketing should be regarded as a profession, then it should be in the same footing as other professions stated earlier (law, banking, advertising, medicine and accounting). Since marketing is now presently on the same footing as accounting, medicine or law, who should then be regarded as a members? Should traders, market men and women, street hawkers, be regarded as members of the profession since they are all practicing marketing?

I agreed with Nwokoye's submissions in 1989 that "Marketing Practitioners are a monthly amalgamation of subgroups that differ sharply in practice and in the nature of their practice. But then it is still necessary to have both one monolithic marketing profession as in law, and still permit many different professional groups in marketing, so as to cater for interest groups in advertising (APCON) sales, marketing research, public relations, (NIPR) and International Marketing. This is in line with what is obtainable abroad especially in the UK ad USA.

These groups should recognize each other, liase, co-exist and co-operate as the need arises, while individuals can belong to as many of the groups as they find it rewarding and where they have career prospects. Taking a look at advertising, it consists of ADVAN. Ayozie (2004) created by the generators of advertising, the manufacturers or producers, or the clients, to protect their interest and have a greater voice in the state of affairs in the advertising. The Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN), the Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria which is the association of radio and television houses, the outdoor advertising Association of Nigeria, and the AAPN (Association of Advertising Practitioners of Nigeria and all of those did form what is known as APCON, which is the sectorial group that regulates the practice of advertising in Nigeria. Directives, guidelines and the Advertising code of practice are implemented through APCON. Marketing has to borrow this wonderful idea from advertising, which is even a subsidiary. This will make modern marketing profession practice to acquire the status o a profession comparable to law, medicine and accounttancy and penalties must exist for purporting to practice marketing without due registration and acquiring the necessary skills, with the marketing professional body.

Marketing should not be regarded as monolithic profession but should be many professional institute making within marketing.

VII. The Role the Marketing Professional Institutes Play in the Marketing Education in Nigeria

A part from APCON and NIPR, no other profession in marketing has the legal backing of the government. The National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria was granted the charter of Government in 2003 by harmonizing the submissions by the Chartered

Institute of Marketing of Nigeria and the Nigerian Marketing Association.

NIMARK existence for many years, although it has performed creditably well, but it has no legal status, so also does it apply to the vibrant Chartered Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (CIMN). Among the problem of NIMARK (established in 1978), is that Goal Aspiration (Nwokoye1989), it wants to model itself in the mould of Accountancy and Banking, without taking consideration the peculiarities of each profession. There is a total alienation between the Academicians and the practitioners of marketing, denying the Association that espirit-de-corps and better contribution to NIMARK'S growth. NIMARK has organized as a semi-cult, handled and coordination by the Lagos and Blue Chip Mafias. Marketing is not like Accountancy or Banking, and it cannot attract membership by not being dynamic, down to earth, and identifying with all stratas of marketing profession. Marketing cannot attract members by holding out to them a sheltered professional practice protected by barriers erected by the association and which is appreciated due to sufficient information dissemination and lack of comradene.

The inadequacies of Nigerian Institute of Marekting and its failure to be dynamic gave rise to growth of splinter groups like CIMN, when has risen up the challenge of giving marketers a pride of place. It reached out to the neglected academics in the polytechnics and universities, who provides the bulk of potential marketers (i.e. the students) and serve as a think tank to the profession.

NIMARK did not embrace all marketing related associations and bring them under one umbrella as its operated in the UK. (THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF MARKETING). In essence, while a section of NIMN should be in charge of the day to day activities, another section should take up the role of regulation of the practice and coming up with the practical education, seminars and conferences that will enable the marketers to come up with the dynamism of the 21^{st} century.

Marketing profession in Nigeria should combine the attributes of the highly successful Chartered Institute of Marketing of United Kingdom, the American Marketing Association, and even the APCON. In essence it can conduct examinations for all categories of students, and still provide quality services to its members. Marketing in Nigeria must have it's own peculiarity. Such quality services should include journals, bi-weekly news magazines, employment services, books, monographs, conferences and seminars, both for the practitioners and academicians, professional recognitions by the government and the industry, public awareness campaigns by establishing strong Nigeria network of branches and industry groups, international networking opportunities, comprehensive personnel and professional development, continuous transition from student to Fellow based on Educational attainment and professional experience, continuing professional development (CPD), life time learning programme lending to registered and chartered Marketer status (as obtainable in the UK). Marketing Information such as quarterly members newsletter, "connections) list of registered members, compreh-ensive use of information and library information and library service, and the most important of all the personal benefits such as job vacancy services, use of NIMN's training facilities, Access to consultancy services, free personal advice, specific marketing and sales legal advice, independent financial and insurance advice covering pensions, investment and family protection, travel service and the marketing website in Nigeria, so that members will have privileged access to certain areas of the website and promptly.

NIMN, in case there is a merger, should have a common goal, co-operate and co exist, and should aspire to greater heights of efficiency and performance.

In essence, there should be just one Apex professional Organisation in Marketing, which admits members from diverse groups, but should also have a Hard core membership group, consisting of experienced marketing educators (Academicians) and top marketing managers in the industry. To resemble the UK CIM, and the AMA, The marketing professional body should recruit more academicians Educators and Lecturers into its ranks, and get them more involved in its activities.

VIII. The Relationshi between the Marketing Professional Body and the Marketing Education in Nigeria

The home truth is that, marketing education should provide the professional body with the people from whom to draw its membership and the patriotic volunteers who will deliver benefits to the generality of its members. The Marketing Professional through its activities, publications, conferences, workshop and seminars, should reinforce the marketing education by providing valuable educational materials, and the latest ideas and empirical findings on research theory, practical examples and developments in marketing. This they can do by advising their students both in the undergraduate and postgraduate studies to register and participate fully in the activities of the NIMN. They can also write and analyze research works, case studies and other academic materials that will be useful to the institute.

The list of professional institutes in marketing or its allied field is endless. At the last count, it is now up to ten professional marketing institutes including the fight about the ownership of the national institute of marketing of Nigeria (NIMN). It includes the institute of Brand management, the institute of certified sales professionals, Direct marketing association of Nigeria.

The chartered institute of sales in Nigeria and the triplicate, the institute of sales management in Nigeria with office in Lagos.

Every institute at its conception Development and establishment should be a timely response to the national aspiration and needs of NIMN and Nigerian. The institutes should be strategically dedicated to marketing education and to deliver an up to date counseling, training, research, technical and professional help to member in all areas of marketing management. It should also concentrate on training indigenous professionals for or industries in areas like the hospitality, manufacturing, construction, Tourism, oil and gas and in the service sectors. The institute must be able to provide excellent services through professional educational, relevant and time rewarding programmes, services and benefits that will encourage appropriate marketing altitude for the existing, emerged and emerging marketing professionals in Nigeria. It should be able to breed better educated, more courageous and vibrant marketers who can cope with the current economic and social needs of Nigeria.

The institute (NIMN) should establish and maintain a vibrant and highly reliable data bank and information service system for use by its members. It should facilitate stronger cooperation by all stakeholders in the marketing industry and facilitate greater involvement in the promotion of international trade and advertising with high level of competitiveness at the local market level. It must provide empowerment and support in a continuous basis to host instructors, teachers, researchers and lecturers of marketing and it allied field in both the secondary, vocational and tertiary institutions, via packaged trainings continuous professional development programmes compulsory /mandatory training exhibitions, meetings, industries exposure and mentoring sessions. These should be a work improvement training programmes which should be facilitated by well established marketers, sales personnels, researchers consultants and lecturers, tutors and researcher.

IX. The Short Comings, Set Backs, Problems and Chalenges of Marketing Profession in Nigeria

Nwokoye (1989) enumerated the marketing problems as such:

(i) Limited employment opportunities for graduates
(ii) Very poorly defined professional status, creating morale problems among marketers.
(iii) Scarcity of relevant books and teaching materials.
(iv) Insufficient number of qualified lecturer, teachers and academicians.
(v) Inadequate provision of opportunities for practical experience for students

Ayozie (1999, 2000, 2004) included some other challenges including other problems as:

(i) Lack of closer and proper interaction between the Academicians and the industry.
(ii) Lack of practical industry experience among the marketing educators
(iii) Very poor remuneration and incentives for the educators, thereby reducing their interest and commitment to research on marketing.
(iv) Insufficient Nigerian textbooks to give the necessary Nigerian focus to marketing education.
(v) Difficulties in getting funds to publish and book piracy in Nigeria.
(vi) High cost of publication of textbooks and academic journals.
(vii) Empire building by the industry practitioner making it practically impossible for the educators to learn from them
(viii) Insufficient opportunities for the educators to improve on their academic knowledge the qualifications. Very few polytechnics and universities offer masters or PhD programs in marketing.
(ix) Insufficient funds and financial assistance to lecturers and students of marketing.
(x) Insufficient undergraduates opportunities for students who wants to study marketing
(xi) Very poor academic background or relevant marketing educators.
(xii) Insufficient marketing textbooks in both the school ad public libraries.
(xiii) Frequent closures of the universities and polytechnics, occasioned by the constant strikes, lockouts and closures by the lecturers and students.
(xiv) Difficulties in graduating PhD holders on time in Nigerian universities.
(xv) Inadequate research materials and space.

Nigerian Marketing Lecturers have to rely so much on foreign textbooks that are in most cases marginally relevant to or own peculiar Nigerian environment. Ever since the three first known marketing profession published their works i.e. modern marketing for Nigeria, Nwokoye (1990) marketing in many textbooks have been written by Nigerian Educators, so as to give Nigerian relevance to marketing (see marketing principles and practice by Ayozie, Omotunde and Asolo (1997). Marketing for West Africa (Uche Okafor 1994), Marketing a behavioral Approach (Achumba), and many others. Although the Nigerian environment does not favour publishing and writing concerted efforts have been made by the present day marketing lecturers and educators to fill in this vacuum. Book piracy and lack of exposure makes their work to fiddle away.

There is a threat to marketing education where students can either depend only on handouts, and hurriedly printed materials. Educators have risen up to the challenges of writing, publishing co-authoring books, and through exchange of locally printed textbooks done by them.

For the problem of inadequate number of marketing lecturers in Nigeria, most of them hold terminal qualifications in marketing. Nigeria in my modest estimation does not have more than ten Professors of marketing. Because marketing is not presently a rigidly defined discipline, it has accommodated teachers whose terminal qualifications are in areas other than marketing. While those people make useful contributions, there are problems which according to Elliott (1986) include a weakening of the overall teaching effect due to confusion over what constitutes appropriate subject matter in marketing theory and research.

Most of the Nigerian universities cannot mount many doctoral programmes in either marketing or business because of poor staffing, which is made worse by poor remuneration, strikes, closures and brain drain.
Considering the many benefits of being a full member and fellow of the UK Chartered Institute of Marketing, and the American marketing Association, the marketing professional institute must be modeled to be like them. Back home the professional status of marketing continues to be a source of concern to most marketing practitioners. This is compounded by the factionalisation of the NIMN, chartered assassination, continuous and rapid court actions over issues that can be amicably resolved. There is also sit tight approach by factional presidents, who are interested on personal aggrandizement, rather than professional growth of the institute. Most members would like to append some respected and recognizable symbols after their names as proof of having passed some rigidly recognized professional examinations as their counterparts do in other disciplines like Accountancy and banking. Members should be able to attain all the professional recognitions and satisfaction that we aspire to by belonging either to the umbrella Marketing institute like the NIMN or to any of the constituents professional groups like advertising, sales, and marketing research.
Marketing Education presently had failed to properly provide for students industrial attachment scheme and practical exposures in the industry; for now only the polytechnics provide a semblance of practical knowledge and education.

Nwokoye (1987) postulated in his research that to improve marketing education, marketing students in polytechnics and universities should be required to acquire some practical experience before graduation. That is now a challenge for curriculum designers to find creative ways to provide substitutes for direct placement in the industrial sector. This we can get by constant industrial visits to interact with industry practitioners and ask questions on practical things that might not be answered by textbooks and lecturers. There should be co-authoring and research by practitioners and lecturers. Case studies should be in real company issue.
Marketing department in tertiary institutions should be more restructured so as to attract the best students, who are genuinely interested in studying.

The curricular must be responsive to the need and requirements of prospective employers of our products. Efforts must be activated as done in UK, to make marketing graduates secure jobs in companies for example, by establishing a referred service/ counseling unit to assist students on job hunting techniques or simply borrow a leaf from CIM UK by having a job vacancy service unit where students and graduates can receive monthly/weekly listings of advertised sales and marketing jobs collated all over Nigeria, and selected from a choice of salary bands.

X. Recommendations

The author has deliberately painted the problems in details because it clearly illustrates that the marketing education has lost a vital opportunity in the past in Nigeria, and even now to elevate itself and create a degree of indispensability. Nigeria cannot afford to lose another opportunity. Things have to change. The next years will provide the technology to restore the potential of a very viable marketing education and professional practice, a panacea towards making the Nigeria market highly viable and profitable.

Nothing is more certain than the inextricable match of technology, the increasing levels of globalization, and the pletora of choice faced by consumers everywhere, as this will contribute to change in the forthcoming years. The question the marketing practitioners and educators will ask themselves is can it successfully interprete where the market and product is, can it supply the skills, the resources and fresh clear thinking which will make it a significant player in the new years to come. For many, the answer will be a resounding "NO". in the light of the above, the recommendations needed are:

(I) Management faculties and departments should adopt a long term view in recruiting staff to full lecturing position, since already- made candidates quit terminal doctorate are presently in short supply. There is an adage in Nigeria that says, 'the young shall grow and the old should not die". Bright First Degree (HND or BSC) holders should be recruited as Higher Instructors and graduate assistants and latter sent out on suitable in-service training arrangement to acquire the much needed higher degrees ands academic knowledge. Not only does education cement the social and economic changes that are taking place, but it also opens up the whole populations around the world to the information and messages.

(II) The delivery systems of information are undergoing profound changes today. We watch the satellite television, AIT, ALJAZERRA and CNN that instantly bring the timely news and reports into our room. I read the international editions of newspapers around the world in the mobile sets, ipads, phone, blackberries, and other new technologies on internet.

All these happened in the last decades. What is the implication of these for marketing in the next millennium? Marketing education must avail itself to these changes.

Business and management schools must be connected to the internet, to avail themselves on the varied marketing information available now all over the world. Schools must be connected to the world wide web.

Management schools must be kept up with the computer technology in the new millennium. This will give marketing education a competitive edge. Lecturers must be sensitive to and respond to rage rapid transformations in technology. Let them all be linked with computer, internet, Email, where information can be obtained without leaving the offices and lecture rooms. Internet appliance and ICT knowledge is very necessary.

There is the need to provide industrial working experiences for marketing students. The suggested alternatives to direct placement in companies should be:

(a) Placing students on campus from where they commute to places of work, provided the institution is located in an industrial area, to offer sales and marketing places to students. Students might visit the companies on Fridays and Saturdays only, thereby eliminating accommodation problem and reducing cost and enhancing efficiency for supervision by lecturers. We can borrow a leaf from the college of education.

(b) Supervised visits by all final year students to marketing and advertising companies should be arranged. Federal Polytechnic Ilaro does that now. This will raise the awareness of the students in the marketing profession, and offer them the opportunity of interacting with industry practitioners.

(c) Students should be encouraged to go into free lance sales/marketing. No salary should be paid, but the company can provide pocket expenses and access to its facilities and knowledge of the experienced sales staff.

(d) There should be a very close interaction between academic and industrial practitioners, so that mutual respect would be developed. Successful ex-students in the industry should be invited to share there experiences, problems and prospects.

(e) To further enhance marketing education and make it more relevant. Opportunities should be increased for interaction between students and teaching staff/lecturers, with our viable marketing companies by:

(i) Exposing students and lecturers regularly to seminars, workshops, symposia and talks to be given by a top marketing practitioners from our leading companies.

(ii) Arranging educational visits to companies by students.

(iii) Working out exchanges programmes between lecturers and the companies,, whereby the lecturers can spend short periods in the companies, and company marketing executives can be in residence at our companies to give seminars.

(iv) The much talked about sabbatical leave by very senior lecturers, could be spent in the companies to observe practical marketing assignments.

(v) Government should assist in tackling the problem of scarcity and high prices of locally produced textbooks by:

(vi) Providing tax and other incentives especially finances to lecturers and publishers to stimulate local production of textbooks and academic materials.

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The Relationship between Church Marketing and Church Growth: Evidence from Ghana

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Abstract- This paper explores the impact of church marketing and its effect on church attendance growth. Evidence was gathered from the analysis of a randomly-drawn sample size of 132 which involves 12 pastors, and 120 members from six charismatic churches. Results from the calculated Pearson correlation indicates that positive relationship exist between 'church promotion' and church attendance growth although regression results show that among all the variables considered in the study, it is 'Radio PR' that plays a major role in influencing the growth of churches in Ghana. The study concludes that 'Radio PR tool' has been the most effective tool influencing church attendance growth in Ghana.

GJMBR-E Classification : *JEL Code: M39*

THERELATIONSHIPBETWEENCHURCHMARKETINGANDCHURCHGROWTHEVIDENCEFROMGHANA

Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:

The Relationship between Church Marketing and Church Growth: Evidence from Ghana

Sarpong Appiah [α], Dr. Gabriel Dwomoh [σ] & Mrs. Lydia Asare Kyire [ρ]

Abstract- This paper explores the impact of church marketing and its effect on church attendance growth. Evidence was gathered from the analysis of a randomly-drawn sample size of 132 which involves 12 pastors, and 120 members from six charismatic churches. Results from the calculated Pearson correlation indicates that positive relationship exist between 'church promotion' and church attendance growth although regression results show that among all the variables considered in the study, it is 'Radio PR' that plays a major role in influencing the growth of churches in Ghana. The study concludes that 'Radio PR tool' has been the most effective tool influencing church attendance growth in Ghana.

I. Introduction

This research posits that using marketing elements to promote religious services has become a top bracket business in Ghana. This is occasioned by the upsurge of autonomous, non-centralized, independent established religious movements in Ghana. This situation has favoured marketing of religious activities in Ghana. Although church founders and leaders postulate spiritual reasons for the emergence and expeditious growth of these religious movements, other research has shown that the pivotal reason of their emergence is basically economic. When religious adherents go to see men and women of God' who are implied to develop power, predict the future, explain the present and uncover the past, they pay for the supposedly religious services rendered. Thus, religion is now one of the easy means of achieving riches rather than a means of making people better citizens for a healthier society, hence the need to market their activities. Ghana, like other nations in the third-world, has been witnessing the ascendancy of autonomous and non-centralized religious groups and movements in the past few decades. The country is a fertile ground for all kinds of religious movements. Despite the reasons for the foundations of these religious groups by their founders, there appear to be a common notion that the pivotal reason for the emergence of these religious groups is commerce. But most founders of the independent religious groups would hardly accept this fact. For instance, in a pilot survey conducted by the researchers, none of the founders of the religious groups identified commercial tendencies as a motivational factor for the commencement of religious groups.

Commercial tendencies of the many religious groups in Ghana have of late become overtly evident that it cannot be safely ignored. Religion has been largely seen in Ghana as a source of making money hence Ghana has been described as basically a money-worshipping nation by Rt. Rev. Dr. Yaw Frimpong-Manso (Ghana Dot.com, 2009). The money-business in colours of religion finds a comfortable place in many churches in Ghana today. Religion has been twisted as it were to suit the intents and purposes of the users. This is what Obiora (2004) describes as: 'Holy' Deceit – the art of trading in God's name. The nutty trend for money has made some people willing to commercialize religion for their own benefits and interests. Many vulnerable people have fallen into the trap of this unholy merchandize. A detailed survey of the effects of religion in human society according to Xavier's (2004) is that religion has a tremendous power both to heal and to harm. On the positive side, religion has led to great achievements in the history of humanity. In Ghana for instance, religious groups and organizations led the foundation for formal education that ushered in the era of Western Civilization. For example, Opoku Ware senior high school, Aggrey memorial and Adisadel College are among the numerous schools which were introduced by religious groups particularly the Catholic Church. Apart from this positive aspect of the increasing number of churches in Ghana, it is also noted that certain aspects of religion enable people to be compassionate, truthful, disciplined, understanding, peace loving, responsible, creative and open minded (Mc Daniel and Cooper 2002). Despite this positive aspect with the increasing number of Churches in Ghana, in the history of humanity, religion has been experienced as one of the easy and ready tools that can be manipulated for diversified intentions and purposes (Santos and Matthews 2001). For instance, a brief survey of the Bible shows that the Hebrew religion supports the killing of people in the name of God. In the Israelites wars of Jericho recorded in the Books of Joshua, the invasion of the city of Jericho led to putting everyone to death except the family of Rahab at the command of the Lord (Numbers 26:3 KJV). It must be noted that there are no religious

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crises in Ghana but what is prevalent in the Ghanaian religious realm is what influences the sustainability and growth of these churches when they are established by individual people? In answering such a question, the study seeks to set up the following hypothesis based on the various literatures which the researchers have gone through.

H_1: There is relationship between church advertisement and church attendance growth.

H_2: There is a relationship between word-of-mouth and church attendance growth

H_3: There is a relationship between church Radio PR and church attendance growth.

II. Literature Review

One aspect of marketing that many researchers have not concentrated much is "ecclesiastic marketing" and according to Sherman and Delvin (2001) it refers to the application of marketing in order to spread a religion, to attract proselytes and to obtain their loyalty and that is increasingly used by different religious groups, through specific institutions such as churches or praying buildings and missions in order to get the wanted answer from a target market. We consider this definition of church marketing being too commercial, referring to religion as a normal service, not as a social one. Another view, of Christian origin is offered by Prehn(2001) which states that religious marketing is a serving measure that consists of a sum of activities (every action and process that tells the story) involved in moving the Salvation good (produced by God through the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ) in order to help the one who intends to become consumer(a lost human being) to accept this Salvation. The limits of this approach lies in two aspects. The first one regards the fact that religious marketing is analyzed only from a Christian perspective. The second aspect is related to the fact that it refers only to the "spiritual" exchange. In reality, church marketing can be used by any Church or religious organization, and the pursued goals can be less grandiose (for example, fundraising).In the opinion of Stevens et al. (2004), church marketing means analysis, planning and management of the voluntary exchange between a religious organization and its constituents, with the aim of satisfying the needs of both parties. Religious marketing focuses on analyzing the needs of its constituents, on developing marketing programs to satisfy those needs, on offering them at the right place and time, on effective and efficient communication with the constituents and on attracting the necessary resources in order to support the activities of the organization. The authors describe the "constituents" of a religious organization as being members, employees, participants, supporters and all other persons affected by the organization. This definition is considered to be too inward oriented. Religious marketing can be used also in missionary missions, or proselytism, the action being oriented to some groups outside the respective church. Horne and McCauley (2005) conceptualize church marketing and stated that it refers to "understanding, creating, communicating and delivering consumer related values. This is a modern definition, which underlines the creating value role of marketing, but it is too general. Chuck et al (2005) in adding his voice to what is meant by church marketing see it as a process by which concrete decisions are taken (regarding what religious organizations can or cannot take in order to fulfil their mission). Marketing is not selling, advertising or promotion, though it may include all of them. Marketing is the analysis, planning, implementing and control of carefully formulated programs, in order to determine voluntary exchange with specific target groups, in order to accomplish the missionary objectives of the organization. In other words, marketing may help a religious organization to fulfil its goals, by interacting with different groups.

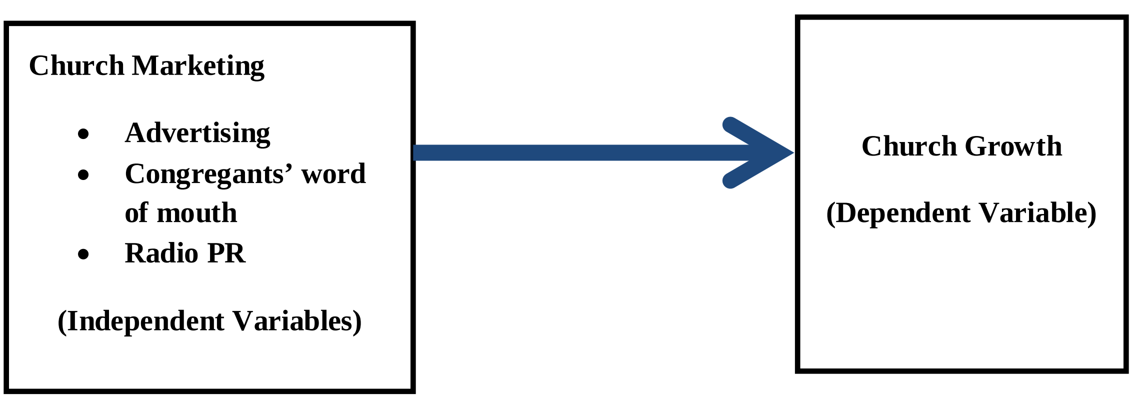
a) The Church Marketing Process and Commercialization of Religion in Ghana

It is obvious that all religious organizations have a strategic thinking. Modern marketing offers the necessary instruments to a continuous and complete process, whose result is favourable to the organization that uses it. Studies show that clergy opinions towards these strategic instruments are very diverse (they vary from one country to another and from one religion to another).On one hand, Sherman and Devlin (2001) studied the Church of England's clergy's opinions regarding strategic marketing planning and the results were not very favorable. On the other hand, Newman and Benchener (2004) present the results of survey of American protestant churches that indicate that 91.8% of the churches have mission statements, 70.5% have vision statements and 63.9% have official declaration on their values, philosophy and doctrines. Baron and Kenny (1986) declared that even though the debate whether religious organizations should embrace marketing concepts continues, yet the use of management and marketing practices by churches appears pretty often This lack of concordance between the declarations and the actions of religious organizations may lead us to the belief that the real problem is the unfavorable image of strategic actions, as a result of the way they are used in the business world. There are innumerable cases in Ghana where religion has been used as a commodity for merchandize particularly among the independent religious groups. All over Ghana and the world generally, 'marketing' God is fast becoming a top bracket business. When you go to see a "man of God" who develops power, sees past, present and future, you pay the gate fee and also the consultation fee. That is only a preamble. Johann Tetzel, a Dominican Friar was one of the commercial masters of the indulgence. He offered a formula that wiped up the religious sentiments of the people who accept to pay whatever amount they could afford as a price for indulgence. It is also alleged that Tetzel attached to the sales of the indulgence that even the sins which a man intended to commit would be forgiven of indulgence sent to his Archbishop. Luther condemned among other things the sales of indulgence on moral and theological grounds. The comer cialization of indulgence tore Christianity apart as many considered this irreverent trade sacrilegious. Nearly five hundred years after the scandal and abuse of indulgences, Christianity is still witnessing immense commercialization in religious matters, William & Alan (2002).

b) Marketing Church Products/Services

Just like other organizations that market product and services, churches also offer products/services and market them to their congregation members. One of such products according to Gainer and Padanyi (2002) is fertility. In linking this to the Ghanaian situation, one may realize that most Ghanaian Communities are Patriarchal. Payments for bride prices are high. Women are expected to be productive in childbearing otherwise the whole bargain of marriage would be considered a lost and a "bad market". Women go to any length to ensure that they get children. The religious climate often leads most women to seek help from Spiritual churches. The Spiritualists often explain the reasons for such infertility within a religious context. Items are usually required to perform rituals of religious nature. This is another hot spot for merchandize. These religious vendors of fertility are only too willing to utilize the opportunity to make money by marketing the church using any of the communication tools to tell the outside world what they can do in terms of fertility. Another product/service marketed to congregation members is salvation. Salvation can have a double meaning within a religious context. In otherworld sense, it can be described as where one attains eternal bliss with God. In this sense, the condition for achieving it is righteousness of life. In another sense, it is moving from a state of danger to a peril-free one. Such Peril could be provoked by natural phenomena like a storm, hunger, sickness or it could be caused by a human enemy or a malevolent deity.

Salvation is not cheap to get, it must be paid for and using advertising and other communication tools play a significant role for churches to communicate to the outside world that they can excellently provide this service. Last adopting marketing communication strategies, one of the most common product/service marketed to congregation members is healing. In the state of ill health, a desperate client is willing to pay any amount to get well. Now just like other communication tools employed by marketers such as advertising, customers recommendation and public relations to attract customers to patronize in the products or services offered by these companies, it is evident from the literature provided by Foreman and Sargeant (2001) as well as Hill and Hood (1999) that churches also adopt these communication tools in order to sell these products/services to congregation members and also to attract more congregants to be loyal to the churches which they find themselves. Though looking at the comments by these authors that churches adopt these communication tools to market their products and also to attract more members, one need to critically look as to whether these communication tools really have positive impact on the patronage of these church products as well as church growth. In doing this, the researchers have set the theoretical framework for the study as:



The theoretical framework above shows the relationship between these independent variables and the dependent variable. As can be seen, the independent variables are advertising, church member recommendation and public relations whilst the dependent variable is church growth.

III. Methodology

The study hinges on two main sources of data, namely primary and secondary. The secondary data which constitute the core of the literature review are drawn from textbooks, journals, articles, previous researches and media reports, and the internet. For the primary data the researchers drew them from the field and constitute the opinions of local and national pastors' and congregation members of Pentecostal Life Church International, Back To God Family International, Church of Patmos International, Faith Alive Ministries International, Power Chapel Worldwide and Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries. The researchers selected a branch of these churches drawn from different cities namely Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi and Akosombo to be the target population for the study. In all, two Pastors from each church were selected for the study to service the qualitative part of the study. With regard to the congregation members, using convenience sampling, 20 congregants from each of these churches numbering 120 in total was also used for the study. The main data collection instrument used for the study was interviews and questionnaires directed to the pastors and congregation members respectively. The interviews centred on the impact of church marketing on growth of their churches in terms of increase in number of congregation members. The questionnaires directed to the congregants focus on whether the communication tools employed by the church influenced them to patronize in the church services. The data obtained from the study was analyzed using SPSS (Version 16). In order for the researchers to check the reliability of the figures, this was done through Cronbach's alpha. Again, the use of likert type questions necessitated the use of this test to check internal consistency. The researchers also adopted Mean, Variance, Minimum, Maximum and Standard Deviation to check the characteristics of the sample selected for the study. Since there were multiple variables (Advertising, Congregants word of mouth and Public Relations) as against dependent variable (Church Growth), the study adopted a correlation and multiple regressions to check the characteristics and relationships among the variables. In doing this, data with different set of years 2007 to 2012 from these 6 different churches in relation to the amount of money spend on advertising, congregants' word of mouth and public relations (independent variables) and corresponding church growth (dependent variable) were obtained from these churches. This makes the number of observations to be 36 from these 6 different churches. The model specified for the study was:

$$Y=\beta 0+\beta 1X1+\beta 2X2+\beta 3X3 +e$$

Here

Y= Church growth

β0= constant variable

X_1= Advertising

X_2= Congregant's word of mouth

X_3= Radio PR

e = error

By this equation, effect of independent variables on dependent variable was measured.

IV. Findings of the Study

Data collected from the study with regard to the pastors showed that 11 members indicating 91.7% were males whilst 1 member indicating 8.3% was a female. For congregation members, 72 representing 60% were females whilst 48 representing 40% were males. On the age of respondents of pastors, 5 of them representing 41.7% were in the ages of 30-39 years, 6 of them representing 50% were in 40-49 and 1 representing 8.3% was in the age of 50-59. On the side of the congregation members, 100 members representing 83.3% were between 30-39 years, 15 representing 12.5% were in 40-49 and 5 representing 4.2% were in the age of 51-59. For the number of years they have been in the church, the responses of the pastors indicated that 2 of them representing 16.7% have been in the church between 5-10 years, 8 representing 66.7% have been in the church between 11-16 years whilst 2 representing 16.7% have also been in the church between 17-22 years. On the side of the congregation members, 56 members representing 46.7% have been in the church between 1-10 years, 51 members representing 42.5% have been in the church between 10-20 years whilst 13 representing 10.8% have been in the church between 21-30 years. The Mean values, Standard Deviation, Minimum, Maximum and Variance for all these categories are shown below in Table 4.1 and 4.2

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Table 1 : Descriptive statistics of congregation members

	Age	Gender	NYIC
Mean	36.72500	0.600000	13.00000
Median	36.00000	1.000000	11.00000
Maximum	59.00000	1.000000	30.00000
Minimum	30.00000	0.000000	4.000000
Std. Dev.	6.022315	0.491952	5.967700
Skewness	1.616026	-0.408248	0.836910
Kurtosis	5.919682	1.166667	3.294096
Variance	36.268	0.242016	35.6134
Jarque-Bera	94.85350	20.13889	14.44082
Probability	0.000000	0.000042	0.000732
Observation	120	120	120

Table 2 : Descriptive statistics of pastors

	Age	Gender	NYIC
Mean	40.50000	0.916667	13.66667
Median	42.00000	1.000000	14.50000
Maximum	53.00000	1.000000	21.00000
Minimum	31.00000	0.000000	6.000000
Std. Dev.	6.259538	0.288675	4.097301
Skewness	0.181184	-3.015113	-0.222093
Kurtosis	2.600939	10.09091	2.754656
Variance	39.18180	0.083333	16.78788
Jarque-Bera	0.145280	43.32231	0.128747
Probability	0.929935	0.000000	0.937655
Observation	12	12	12

As was indicated from the study, in testing the reliability of the instruments used which is the questionnaires, the researchers used Cronbach's alpha to test the reliability. With 18 items in the questionnaire (N), for both the dependent and the independent variable, the values obtained from the Cronbach's alpha of these variables which can be found in table 3 shows that the instrument used (questionnaire) was reliable.

Table 3 : Reliability co-efficients

Variable	Cronbach alpha coefficient	Number of items
Advertising	0.969	5
Word-of-mouth	0.918	3
Radio PR	0.935	4
Church Growth	0.977	6

Interviews conducted with Pastors of the church used for the research indicates 10 representing 83% subscribed to the fact that adopting church marketing through advertising, word of mouth and public relations play a major role in expanding their church through increase in numbers of their congregation members. The other 2 respondents representing 17% could not provide specific answer to the researchers' questions since to them they have not witness any tremendous growth in terms of increase in number of congregation members although they have spent money on advertising and other means of making their church known to the general public.

a) *Correlation Analysis*

The results of the Pearson correlation used to test the relationship between the variables are presented in the table below:

	X1	X2	X3	Y
X1	1			
X2	0.567703	1		
X3	0.23519	0.051264	1	
Y	0.078841	0.284383	0.606388	1

The table shows that advertising (X1), congregants' word of mouth (X2) and public relations (X3) correlate positively with church attendance growth (Y). This actually support the interview that was done by the researchers with majority of the pastors selected for the study that, marketing communication tools adopted by their churches has a significant role in terms of increasing the number of congregation members which signifies the growth of the church.

b) Regression Analysis

Regression table measures the amount of total variation in dependent variable due to independent variable. The table below show the regression for church attendance growth.

	Coefficient	Standard error	t Stat	P-value
Intercept	78.20086316	14.66284276	5.33326753	1.3975E-05
X1	0.00434645	0.006693296	0.649373551	0.521792811
X2	0.002794015	0.002795174	0.999585153	0.326724025
X3	0.032579821	0.008072298	4.036003043	0.000425586
	Adjusted R Square		0.37661145	
	F		6.8399811	
	Observations		36	

From the regression analysis, one can see that the co-efficient of determination indicates approximately 38% of variability in church growth that can be explained by the exogenous variables. Again, the beta co-efficient of *X1* (Advertising) and *X2* (Congregants' word of mouth) show a positive association between them and church attendance growth though their *P* values show that they are not significant. Despite the fact that they are not significant, they had their expected signs as can be seen from the table above. The insignificant *p* values of advertising and congregants' word of mouth can be attributed to the fact that due to the influx of radio and television stations where churches do their advertisement, it becomes difficult for churches to get the timing right as to the right time people listen to a particular radio or watch a particular television station.

Again, the insignificant of the *p* value of *X1* can also be attributed to the fact that people tend to focus on their favourite programmes when watching or listening to radio programmes at their leisure times and therefore place little or no attention when church advertisement is made. Perhaps they see this advertisement as nuisance hence they perceptually block them. It therefore follows that though churches may see advertisement as a tool which positively affects attendance, however, it may be due to 'situational source of self relevance' if even they witness increasing number of congregants. Hence the role which advertising plays can be deemed as insignificant.

The insignificant of the *p* value of *X2* means that congregants' word of mouth is not an influential variable to the growth of churches in Ghana. This can be based on the fact that there is dissonance between testimonies about the church when the spirit of word-of-mouth is invoked. For example, a congregant who recommends a church to a friend about getting a healing may decide not to continue with the church when the recommended person's expectation is not met. It therefore means that churches effort in strengthening the power of word-of-mouth should not see much investment as the tool is weak in developing its set goal.

With regard to Radio PR, at 99% significance level, *X3* plays a role in influencing church attendance growth. This implies that as resources are invested in Radio PR systems, it has a positive effect on church growth attendance. The significance of this variable to the dependent variable can be attributed to the fact that Radio PR enjoys positive feed-back from the prospects perhaps due to the benefit of 'Linguistically power' that establishes the spiritual benefits of the church in the long term memory (LTM) of the prospects. It was established from the study that the peak time for Radio PR works is between the hours of 10: pm and 5:30 am. It is therefore interesting to know what really keep these prospects awake at such a time when nature demands their sleep. Though *X1* and *X2* are not significant based on the regression, from the correlation analysis, the researchers can conclude on the hypotheses set for the study as:

Hypothesis	Direction	Hypothesis Supported
H_1: Church advertisement has positive relationship with church attendance growth.	Positive	Yes
H_2: Congregants' word-of-mouth has positive relationship with church attendance growth	Positive	Yes
H_3: Radio PR has positive relationship with church attendance growth.	Positive	Yes

From this, we accept all the hypotheses that the independent variables has a positive relationship with the dependent variable (church growth) but the variable that is more influential to the growth of the church is Radio PR.

V. Conclusion

The main objective underlying the study is to assess the relationship between church marketing and church attendance growth using six different churches as case study. In achieving this objective, the researchers set three different hypotheses in order to assess if using marketing communication tools such as advertising, congregants' recommendation and public relation has any relationship with church attendance growth. Results obtained from the study through the calculated Pearson Correlation as well as interviews with Pastors of the churches selected for the study indicates that positive correlation exists between these independent variables and church attendance growth although in terms of their significance, it is Radio PR that plays a vital role in influencing the growth of churches members in Ghana. The positive correlation of the independent variables with the dependent variable made the researchers uphold all the hypotheses. On this note one can conclude that indeed there are present day commercial pastors who are really implementing Marketing tools in execution of their commercial agenda but whilst they have positive relationship with the dependent variable, from the regression analysis, the one that is significant in influencing the growth of churches in Ghana is Radio PR.

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Corporate Marketing Planning

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Abstract- Corporate marketing planning is the process by which an organization sets its long-term priorities regarding products and markets in order to enhance the value of the overall company. It is in corporate strategy, management identifies the business in which the company will be involved in the future by specifying the range of markets to be served and the kinds of products to be offered. In marketing corporate strategy decisions the critical question to be answered is in what markets will our particular resources be most effective in implementing the marketing concept. Once incorporate strategy has been chosen, management must develop a product mix strategy to identify the role each product is expected to play in building the value of business. The relative share of the firms resources to be devoted to each product of product line. This paper is focus on cooperate marketing planning.

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CORPORATEMARKETINGPLANNING

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Corporate Marketing Planning

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Abstract- Corporate marketing planning is the process by which an organization sets its long-term priorities regarding products and markets in order to enhance the value of the overall company. It is in corporate strategy, management identifies the business in which the company will be involved in the future by specifying the range of markets to be served and the kinds of products to be offered. In marketing corporate strategy decisions the critical question to be answered is in what markets will our particular resources be most effective in implementing the marketing concept. Once incorporate strategy has been chosen, management must develop a product mix strategy to identify the role each product is expected to play in building the value of business. The relative share of the firms resources to be devoted to each product of product line. This paper is focus on cooperate marketing planning.

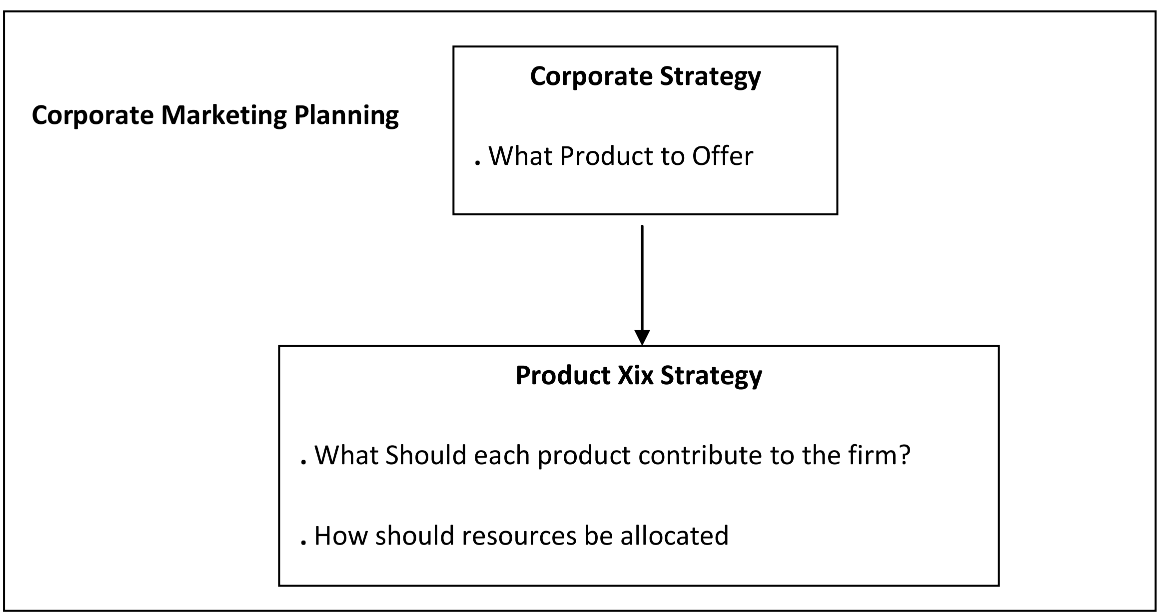
I. Introduction

Corporate marketing planning is the process by which an organisation sets its long-term priorities regarding products and markets in order to top-enhance the value of the overall company. Two kinds of management decision are involved in corporate marketing planning-corporate strategy and product mix strategy. In corporate strategy, management identities the business in which the company will be involved in the future specifying.

- The range of markets to be served.
- The kind of products to be offered.

In marketing corporate strategy decisions, the critical question to be answer is in what markets will our particular resources be most effective in implementing the marketing concept. Once a corporate strategy has been chosen, management must develop a product mix strategy to identify the role each product is expected to play in building the value of the business. In particular, this strategy will usually specify.

The relative share of the firm's resources to be devoted to each product or product line is expected to make toward building the company's value.



Elements of corporate marketing planning.

II. Corporate Strategy

When a new organisation is formed, it is often oriented toward the production or sale (or both) of a single product, a single service, or a line of closely related products and services and, frequently, the name of the organisation conveys the nature of the firms business.

Factors Affecting Corporate Strategy Environmental problems and opportunities: all organisations operate in a dynamic environment, which can create a variety of problems or opportunities in the firm's existing or potential markets.

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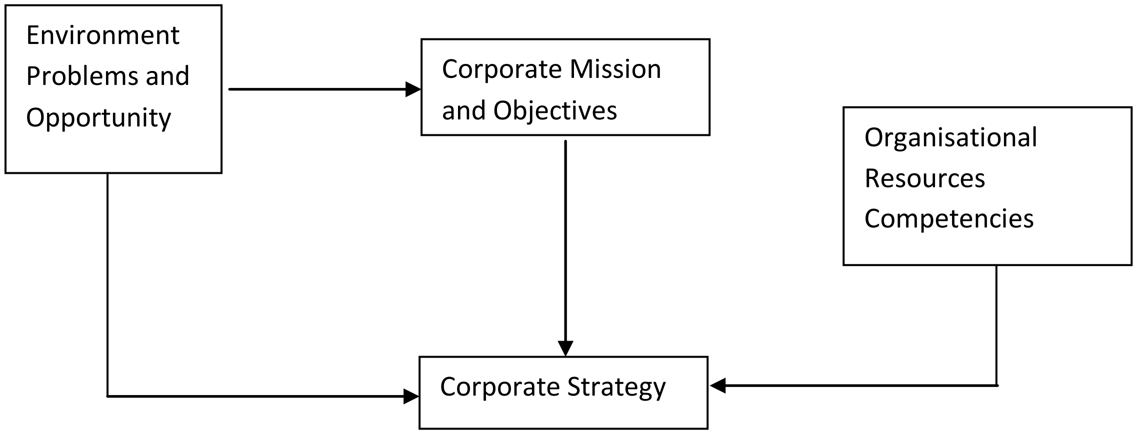


a) Factors Influencing Corporate Strategy

Specifically, managers should be aware of the possible impact of six major environmental forces.

1. Demographic Characteristics, such as the age distribution of the population, birth rates, population growth, regional population shifts, and the percentage of two-worker householders.
2. Economic Factors including inflation and unemployment rates, economic growth, raw material scarcities, energy costs, interest rates, import duties, and exercise taxes.
3. Social and Culture Values, such as attitudes towards health and nutrition, the need for self-expression, materialism, ecological concerns, product safety.
4. Technology, particularly development and anticipated changes that have an impact on the kinds of products available in a market and the kinds of processes (such as automation or the use of synthetic material used to produce these products.
5. Legal and Regulatory Actions, including such factors as regulations (and deregulation) regarding the types of advertising available to a product. Product to labelling and testing requirements, limitations regarding product contents. Pollution control, restrictions or incentives with respect to imports or exports.
6. Competition, which to a large extent is a function of the other environmental forces. Specifically, both the identity of competitors and the types of focus for examples, price-oriented versus technology-oriented of competition may change because of

- The entry of new firms especially foreign firms.
- The acquisition of a small competitor by a large, well-financed organisation.
- Deregulation, changing economic condition or new production processes which
- foster increased price competition.
- Changing social and cultural values or new technology which causes buyers to products or services previously considered non competitive.

An examination of these forces is essential to the development of corporate strategies because these factors will shape the attractiveness of various businesses. Often such factors will create new opportunities or lead to the rejuvenation of markets.

b) Resources and Competencies

In developing a corporate strategy, top management should also analyse the resources that will be available to the organisation. In the broadest sense, resources include

- Financial resources, such as cash reserves.
- Labour and managerial skills, such as the ability to produce high- technology products or to manage large advertising budgets.
- Product capacity and the efficiency of equipment.
- Research and development skills and patents.
- Controls over key raw materials, as in the ownership of energy resources.
- Size and expertise of the sales forces or distribution system.

Too often firms limit their evaluation of resources to the more tangible ones, such as cash and facilities. Yet management and marketing capabilities are often more important. For example, Frito-Lay's success in the snack business is due primarily to effective advertising management and its extensive sales force, which rotates and replenishes the stock in the retail stores. Another example is also of coca-cola company whose business is due primarily to effective advertising management.

III. BACKGROUND LITERATURE

a) Corporate Mission and Objectives

In most organisations strategic decisions are guided by some statements of corporate mission and/or corporate objectives, corporate mission refers to the broad purpose the corporate services and provides general criteria for assessing long-run organisational effectiveness. Consider, for example, the following statements expressing the mission of Hershey Food Cooperation:

As a major diversified company, we are in business to make a reasonable profit and adequate return on our investment and to enhance the value of our shareholders investment.... In seeking to balance our desire for profitable growth with obligations, which we have to in our other various constituencies.

- We pursue profitable growth by maintaining excellence in our current business.
- Growth opportunities are actively sought from within and outside the corporation
- in areas, which capitalize upon our strengths.
- We constantly arrive for positions of market leadership. Corporate objectives reflect management's specific expectations regarding organisational performance.

As the environment changes, organisations often modify their mission and objectives. For example, the elimination of many regulations in the banking industry and increase in the number of types of financial investment products (such as money market accounts) had lead many firms to broaden their mission.

In sum, the process of developing a corporate strategy is based on examining environmental problems and opportunities. Selecting corporate objectives that are consistent with these problems and opportunities. Examining the resources and distinctive competencies that can be used to implementing the strategy.

b) Types o Corporate Strategy

Organisations have two fundamental directions in which to proceed when selecting a corporate strategy; growth or consolidation. Traditional, organisations have pursued growth strategy, even when sales growth was not the primary corporate objectives. Essentially, a growth strategy is one in which sales growth (usually from new products and markets) becomes a vehicle for achieving stability or enhanced profitability, as well as sales growth.

Consolidation strategies in which firms seek to achieve current goals (especially enhanced profits through non growth means have accordingly, become increasingly popular.

The three strategies that focus on current markets are thus:

- *Market penetration:* The term market penetration refers to a strategy in which a firm expands its marketing effort to increase sales of existing products in its current markets. Market penetration is achieved by increasing the level of marketing effort (as by increasing adversity or distribution by lowering prices).
- *Products Development:* Product development strategies involve the development of new products for existing markets in order to:
- Meet changing customer need and wants.
- Match new competitive offerings
- Take advantage of new technology
- Meet the needs of specific market segments.

Vertical Integration: To enhance a firm's effectiveness or efficiency in serving existing markets, vertical integration strategies are selected. Such integration or intermediary (in forward integration). As a general rule, these strategies will be most appropriate when the ultimate markets are projected as having high growth potential, because the resources required to implement these strategies are usually expensive. Market Development: The market development strategy represents an effort to bring current products to new markets. Typically management will employ. This strategy when existing markets are stagnant and when market-shares increases are difficult to achieve because market shares are already very high or because competitors are very powerful. Market Expansion: A market expansion strategy involves moving into a new geographic market area. Many firms originates as regional competitors and letter move into other areas of the country.

Diversification: A strategy which involves both new products and new markets is termed diversification. This strategy is likely to be chosen when one or more of the following condition exists:

- No other growth opportunities can be stabilizes with existing products or markets.
- The firms has unstable sales of profits because it operates in markets that are characterized by unstable environments.
- The firm wished to capitalize on a competence.

IV. Presentation Strategic Alliance

Often a firm can only be successful in moving into a new market if it can acquire new resources or competencies in which cases, the firm's strategy may be to form a strategic alliance with another firm. A strategic alliance is more than a joint ventures. In the case of a joint venture, two firms essentially create a third entity which develops on its own.

In a true strategic alliance, two firms collaborate in a far more complete way by exchanging some key resources (although new entities may also be formed to enable both parties to enhance their performance. Typically, alliance involves exchanges of one or more of the resources are thus.

- Access to sales and distribution works.
- Transfers of new product technology.
- Production technology.

Consolidation Strategies: A major development (observable beginning in the mid-1980s) is the increased emphasis on consolidation led by large conglomerates, more and more firms are undoing some of their recent growth strategies. Basically, there are three types of consolidation strategies.

- *Retrenchment:* Retrenchment is essentially the opposite of market development. A firm reduces its commitment to its existing products by withdrawing from weaker markets. Generally, this strategy is pursed when a firm has experienced uneven performance in different markets. For example, many oil companies have decided to concentrate their gasoline marketing efforts in a few regions of the country.

- *Pruning:* Pruning occurs when a firm reduces the number of product development and occurs when a firm decides that some market segments are too small or too costly to continue to serve.
- *Divestment:* Divestment occurs when a firm sells off a part of its business to another organization. Because this usually means that a firm is taking itself out of a product line and out a particular market, divestment is essentially the opposite of diversification. A firm typically purses divestment strategies when management becomes aware that a particular business is not meeting the organisation objectives for it.

V. Product Mix Strategy

A corporate strategy provided an organisation with a basic direction by establishing the general product and market scope to be pursed. Given this scope, a firm usually elects to divert or prune businesses and products, which. do not fit the strategy, and to commit resources to these products and businesses, which do fit this strategic scope.

A product mix strategy helps management solve the problem of establishing priorities. Specifically, a product mix strategy is a plan that specifies

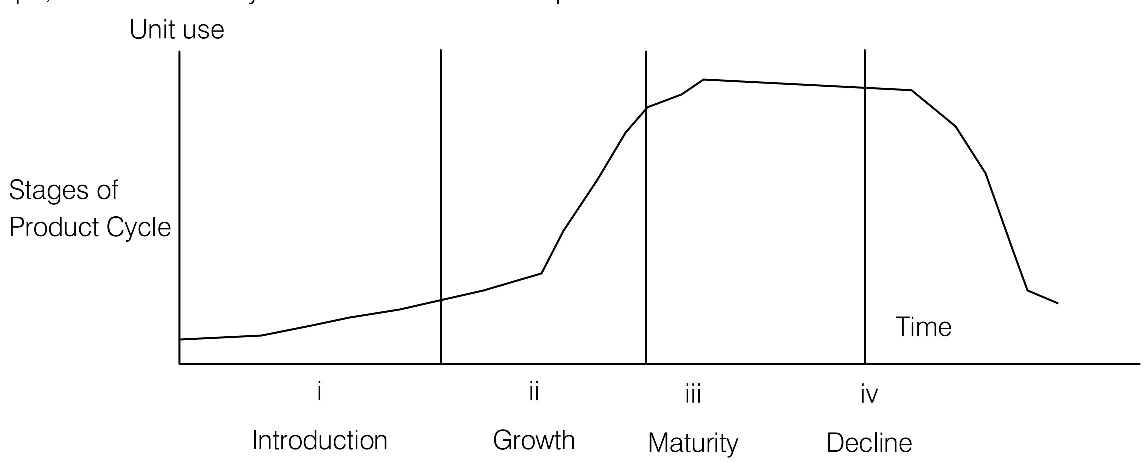
- How various products or business will be prioritised for the purpose of allocating scare resources.
- What objectives will be established for each product or business to ensure that the total corporate objectives will be met?

Top management can rely on two useful concepts developing a product mix strategy: The product life cycle and product portfolio models.

VI. The Product UFE Cycle

The product life cycle (Plc) concepts play an important part in the development of a product mix strategy. It helps managers to identify the significance of sales trends and to assess the changing nature of competition, costs, and market opportunities over time.

The product life cycle (Plc) represents a pattern of sales over time, with the pattern typically broken into four stages.



The four stages are usually defined as follows:

1. *Introduction:* The product is new to the market. Since there are therefore no direct competitors, buyers must be educated about what the product does, how it is used who it is for, and where to buy it.
2. *Growth:* The product is now more widely known, and sales growth rapidly because new buyers enter the market and perhaps because new buyers find more ways to use the product. Sales growth stimulates many competitors to enter the market, and the major marketing task becomes to build market share.
3. *Maturity:* Consumers are now knowledgeable about the alternatives, repeat purchaser dominates sales and product innovations are restricted o minor improvements.

As a result, only the strongest competitor survive, it is very difficult for the weaker firms to obtain in distribution and to increase market shares.

4. Decline sales slowly decline because of changing buyer needs or because of the introduction of new products, which are sufficiently different to have their own life cycle.

VII. The Corporate Plan and Middle Management

The corporate marketing plan is important to marketing managers in two respects. First in most organisations, marketing plays major role in influencing corporate and product mix strategy. Second, all marketing personnel are responsible in one way or

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another for developing and implementing the marketing strategies and programs necessary for achieving corporate objectives and product objectives.

VIII. Recommendation

In deciding which corporate strategy to select, it is important to identify a firms distinctive competencies that is, an organisation must have the specific resources required to be successful in the specific product and market areas in which it will compete.

In selecting these objectives, portfolio, models and the product. Life cycle is useful tools. In general, product objectives should be determined on the basic of a firm's competitive strength in the market and on the attractiveness of the market as measured by opportunities for growth and profitability.

IX. Conclusion

Corporate strategies provide the blue print for the long-term development of a viable, profitable organisation by establishing the markets be served and the products and services to be offered. Corporate strategies are selected on the basic of an analysis of environmental factors (especially market growth), corporate resources, and long-run objectives.

Product mix strategy is an essential element in corporate marketing planning because it forms the bridge between corporate strategy and the development of marketing strategies and programs on a product objectives, which indicate the role each product is expected to play in meeting the firms feature growth and profitable requirements.

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Measuring Service Quality of Internet Service Providing Firms in Bangladesh

By Meher Neger, Bulbul Ahamed & Khaled Mahmud
Northern University, Bangladesh

Abstract - This study integrates past research and proposes a framework for measuring service quality of internet service providing firms in Bangladesh. The paper highlights the overview of internet service providing firms and identifies some features that are considered by Bangladeshi consumers for using internet service with the help of simple arithmetic mean method. Attempts have been made in the paper to measure the service quality using Parasuraman's SERVQUAL Model and determining the actual position of internet service providing firms depending upon five quality dimensions of different firms. The result reveals that consumers of Akij Online Ltd. are fairly satisfied on the empathy and responsiveness dimensions. On the other hand the consumers of Grameen Cyber Net Ltd. are fairly satisfied with the tangible and empathy dimensions. The study has also been done to prove that consumers of Link3 firm are fairly satisfied with the assurance and tangible dimensions.

Keywords: service quality, internet service providing firms, consumer perceptions.

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MEASURINGSERVICEQUALITYOFINTERNETSERVICEPROVIDINGFIRMSINBANGLADESH

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Meher Neger [α], Bulbul Ahamed [σ] & Khaled Mahmud [ρ]

Abstract- This study integrates past research and proposes a framework for measuring service quality of internet service providing firms in Bangladesh. The paper highlights the overview of internet service providing firms and identifies some features that are considered by Bangladeshi consumers for using internet service with the help of simple arithmetic mean method. Attempts have been made in the paper to measure the service quality using Parasuraman's SERVQUAL Model and determining the actual position of internet service providing firms depending upon five quality dimensions of different firms. The result reveals that consumers of Akij Online Ltd. are fairly satisfied on the empathy and responsiveness dimensions. On the other hand the consumers of Grameen Cyber Net Ltd. are fairly satisfied with the tangible and empathy dimensions. The study has also been done to prove that consumers of Link3 firm are fairly satisfied with the assurance and tangible dimensions. The paper also identifies some influential factors which are helpful to form positive attitude among the Bangladeshi consumers to internet service providing firms by using percentage method. The implications of these findings can be applied to the enhancement of competitive position of different internet service providing firms in the competitive market.

Keywords: service quality, internet service providing firms, consumer perceptions.

I. Introduction

At the present time computer is very important in our everyday life and internet service is needed for globalization and for changing the environment, society and business. It helps us in the field of education, business, official function, telecommunication, recreation, space station and so on. The term "measuring service quality" is used to form attitude by long-term, overall evaluation of performance. This study is conducted to find out the service quality of internet service providing firms in Bangladesh which are influenced with total attributes and some quality dimensions of the product or service. Product or service quality is an important competitive weapon in the global market place. Although the concept has been reviewed extensively, various studies have examined the construct from different vantage points. For example, in the field of psychology product quality is seen as the innate excellence of an entity (Peterson and Tolibert 1976; Pincus and Waters 1975); economics has related it to profit minimization and information asymmetry (Akerlof 1970; Heinkel 1981; Rothschild and Stiglitz 1976); and service quality has looked at it with an attitude formed by a long-term overall, evaluation of performance. Mainly, consumers serve as the ultimate judge of quality in the marketplace. Even well decorated, freedom of service can fail if they do not fit consumers' perceptions of quality.

Consumers make decisions about the quality of products or services based on a systematic process of acquisitions, evaluation and integration of product or service quality dimensions. The quality dimensions are important from marketing perspective as they can have different important influences on attitudes of consumers toward a product or service. With the help of overall attitude toward the service, marketers can implement appropriate marketing strategies to achieve market share. Multiple researchers have found a relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. However, at the present time internet service providing firms have been constantly expanding their service by providing multiple services together in one offering for the consumer. Besides, different competitors are available in Bangladeshi markets. As people of the third world country, consumers are very much price conscious but simultaneously they consider the quality of the product or service. The quality of the service can increase with maintaining some quality dimensions. Consumers' basically expect desired service from the internet service providing organizations of Bangladesh.

The study has tried to measure service quality of internet service providing firms in Bangladesh on the basis of some quality dimensions. Those dimensions have also been analyzed in this study clearly. The paper is organized as follows: Section 1 focuses on introductory issues, Section 2 analyzes the objectives of the study, Sections 3 reviews the literature relevant to quality perception and competitiveness in the market, Section 4 discusses the methodology of the study, Section 5 discusses the service quality measurement procedure, Section 6 depicts the findings of the study and Section 7 concludes and recommends. Finally, limitations of the study and future research directions are discussed in Sections 8.

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II. Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study is to measure service quality of internet service providing firms in Bangladesh. The specific objectives of the study are stated below:

- to identify the factors that exert influence on forming positive attitude of Bangladeshi consumers to internet service;
- to examine the service quality of internet service providing organizations based on SERVQUAL model;
- to determine the different attributes which are considered by Bangladeshi consumers while using internet service.

III. Relevant Literature Review

Wheatley and Chiu (1977) conducted a study to examine the influence of price, store, product and respondent characteristics on perceptions of quality. Carpet was chosen for evaluation. Two price levels, three colours, two levels of stores, and respondents were classified based on income and education levels. Regression analysis was performed to test hypothesis. The results support that high quality was associated with a high price, high prestige store, and a dark colour. There are obviously many voids in present knowledge of how buyers form quality judgments. Not enough is known about what leads to the assessment of quality of some products on the basis of different cues. Dodds and Monroc (1985), in their work entitled "the influence of price and brand information on subjective product evaluations" used the headset player college students as sample units.

MANOVA was conducted to analyze perceived quality and perceived value and ANOVA was conducted to analyze willingness to buy. Perceived quality of a product increases if/as price increase is confirmed. Odd and even prices are not perceived by subjects differently is also confirmed. Perceived value showed the hypothesized effect in the low price level but failed to act consistently for indicators in the medium and high price treatments.

The study (Arone & Grace, 2004) was investigated brand dimensions specifically attributed to branded services and explore issues related to how the dimensions are used in decision making for consumers, and the, extent of relationships between brand associations, brand attitude usage intentions. Findings indicate that there are distinct dimensions that are relevant to consumers' minds when considering decisions regarding service brands. It is also shown the brand attitudes do relate positively to consumers intention to use (purchase) specific brands over others.

After the review of mentioned literatures it is clear that all the articles discussed are about different branded products and their attention toward service items. We know that products have their physical evidence but services have their no physical evidence. Services are intangible. So, to measure the service quality of internet service providing firms this remains an unexplored field. Besides these literatures considered some attributes; but still there are some quality dimensions which serve to measure service quality of internet service providing firms yet to be explored. Moreover, in our country no depth research is conducted so far in this regards. So this study tries to fill up this gap by using some quality dimensions for measuring service quality of some selected internet service providing firms.

IV. Methodology of the Study

a) Firms Selection

At present, there are many internet service providing firms in Bangladesh. Among these, the firms having 30% or above response out of total respondents have been selected for the convenience of the study. This information has been collected from 160 respondents where approximately 70% are students and the rest 30% are professionals. Table 1 reveals the names of internet service providing firms that are considered by the consumers. When the respondents were asked about the different internet service providing firms the names of 9 firms came to their mind at that moment. From table 1, it is found that Akij online Ltd. Grameen Cyber Net Ltd. and Link3 have got the highest importance.

Table 1 : Consumers' opinion on different internet service providing firms which are available in Bangladesh market

No.	Firms' Name	T R	TRD	%
1.	Akij online ltd.	160	150	93.75
2.	Grammen Cyber Net Ltd.	160	145	90.62
3.	Link3	160	90	56.25
4.	Librabd.Net	160	45	28.12
5.	BTTB	160	42	26.25
6.	Ranks IT	160	40	25.00
7.	Khulna Vision	160	39	24.38
8.	ISN	160	35	21.88
9.	Raj ISP	160	32	20.00

Source: Field Investigation, December 2009

Where, TR = Total Respondents, TRD= Total Respondents' Response

b) Sample Respondents

Since sampling frame of the respondent is unavailable, probability sampling method for the research purpose is not appropriate. So for time and budget constraints, the data have been collected on the basis of convenience sampling method with 250 desired sample sizes. Total 250 respondents who have directly or indirectly influenced for receiving internet service are used as sample respondents in this study. Among 250 there are 200 students of BBA and MBA from the department of Marketing; University of Rajshahi, who have been taken into consideration for the convenience of the study. Rests of the data have been taken from 50 different professionals such as: IT offi\cers, Teacher at various positions of the University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh and from some business users of University area.

c) Types of Data

In order to achieve the specific objectives of the study, primary and secondary sources of data are used. The relevant primary data have been collected from the respondents directly through a set of structured questionnaires. The majority of the secondary data have been collected from unpublished thesis paper (Neger, M., 2009) of the researcher, various publications, newspapers and published books etc.

d) Data Collection Method and Procedures

Data have been collected from students and professionals through a set of structured questionnaires. In the surface page of the questionnaire, the purpose of the study is well described, after the surface page of the questionnaire, the respondents are asked to turn the page including information regarding the quality dimensions (Appendix A) of individual internet service providing firms those are usually providing the internet service in Bangladesh. Here, it has been used Seven-point scale ranging from 1 to 7, 7 indicates “Absolutely Essential” and 1 indicates “Not at all Essential” for measuring consumers’ expectations about service quality of internet service providing firms. The researchers have also used Seven-point scale ranging from 1 to 7, 7 indicating “Strongly Agree” and 1 indicating “Strongly Disagree” for measuring consumers’ perceptions regarding five service quality dimensions.

e) Data Analysis Procedures

Simple statistical tools have been used to analyze the data. Statistical tools including simple arithmetic means, percentages method have been used. The SERVQUAL model has also been used as an instrument to measure service quality of internet service providing firms in Bangladesh.

V. Service Quality Measurement Procedure

The Parasuraman’s SERVQUAL model has been established as the most influential tool for measuring the service quality of a service providing organization. According to its developers, SERVQUAL is a diagnostic tool that uncovers a firm’s broad weaknesses and strengths in the area of service quality. The SERVQUAL instrument is based on five service quality dimensions that are tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The SERVQUAL instrument consists of two sections: a-22 items section that records customer expectations of excellent firms in the specific service industry and a second 22-items section that records customer perceptions of a particular company in that service industry (Parasuraman, 1988). Then by identifying the gaps between customers’ expectations of the service to be rendered and their perceptions of the actual performance of the service is treated as service quality level of different service providing firms (Parasuraman, 1988). That means, SERVQUAL Score = Expectation Score □ Perception Score. After all, as was the case with satisfaction measures, SERVQUAL is most valuable when compared with a firm’s own past service quality trends and when compared with measures of competitive service quality performance.

VI. Findings and their Analysis

a) Results of Consumers’ Positive Attitude Based on Some Influential Factors

When a service receiver wants to receive the internet service, he/she also depends on service quality of the internet service providing firms. Another sense, the service quality also depends on some factors. Table 2 reveals that 24% respondents show their positive attitude to the internet service only for that “freedom of service”. The other factors for which the respondents show their positive attitude towards internet service are “reasonable service change”, “technical excellence”, “un-compromised security”, “round the clock help line”, as opined by 22%, 20%, 18%, 16% respondents respectively.

Table 2 : Factors influencing the formation of positive attitude of Bangladeshi consumers towards internet service

Sl. No.	Factors	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
1.	Freedom of service	60	24
2.	Reasonable service charge	55	22
3.	Technical excellence	50	20
4.	Un-compromised security	45	18
5.	Round the clock help line	40	16

Source: Field Survey, December 2009

b) Result of SERVQUAL Model and Evaluation Profile

Customers’ of internet service respond differently based on service quality. From the SERVQUAL model, it is clear that there are five dimensional stimuli that would help to measure the service quality of different service providing firms. Finally it would affect the formation of receiving intention that lead to receive internet service. Table 03 provides a set of evaluation scores, perception scores and SERVQUAL scores of Akij online limited, Grammen Cyber Net Ltd. and Link3 firms. The table suggests that the main quality dimensions on which the consumers of Akij online Ltd. Grameen Cyber Net Ltd. and link3 firms are generally satisfied. As far as the perception scores are concerned, the consumers of Akij online Ltd. are fairly satisfied on the empathy and responsiveness dimensions. Incorporating expectations into the SERVQUAL score indicates that improving the assurance, reliability and tangible dimensions respectively should be the top priority of Akij online Ltd.

On the other hand, the table suggests that the main quality dimensions on which the consumers of Grameen Cyber Net Ltd. are fairly satisfied with the tangible and empathy dimensions. Incorporating expectations into the SERVQUAL score indicated that improving the reliability, responsiveness and assurance dimensions respectively should be the top priority of Grameen Cyber Net Ltd.

After that the table also suggests that the main quality dimensions on which the consumers of links firm are fairly satisfied with the assurance and tangible dimensions. Incorporating expectations into the SERVQUAL score indicates that improving the empathy, reliability, and responsiveness dimensions respectively should be the top priority of Link3 firm.

Table 3 : Service quality of different internet service providing firms based on SERVQUAL Model

Dimension	Akij online Ltd.			Grameen cyber Net Ltd.			Link3		
	Expectation Scores	Perception Scores	SERVQUAL Scores (Ex.- Pe.)	Expectation Scores	Perception Scores	SERVQUAL Scores (Ex.- Pe.)	Expectation Scores	Perception Scores	SERVQUAL Scores (Ex.- Pe.)
Tangibles	4.60	4.51	0.09	4.75	4.95	-0.2	4.56	4.79	-0.23
Reliability	4.99	4.74	0.25	4.69	4.50	0.19	4.92	4.55	0.37
Responsiv-eness	5.41	5.48	-0.07	4.93	4.65	0.28	4.71	4.31	0.4
Assurance	5.22	4.18	1.04	5.11	4.95	0.16	4.79	5.10	-0.31
Empathy	5.16	5.26	-0.1	5.21	5.80	-0.59	4.70	4.66	0.04

Source: Field Investigation, December 2009

c) *Results Of Consumers' Consideration Based On Intrinsic And Extrinsic Attributes For Using Internet Service*

Table 4 reveals that all the respondents consider five attributes which affect consumer mind for using internet service of the five attributes; "reasonable service charge" has got the highest importance, weighted average, being 4.26 for it. The other important attributes are (i) easy access and technical excellence (weighted average being 4.04); (ii) corporate image (weighted average being 2.72); (iii) guaranty/ warranty (weighted average being 2.66). The last attribute guaranty/warranty falls below weighted average of 2.66; hence, it is not important to the respondent.

Table 4 : Considering attributes for using internet service

Attributes	Responses						
	Not important(1)	Below important(2)	Average important(3)	Above Average important (4)	very important(5)	weighted Average	Ranks
Easy Access	0	20	50	80	100	1010/250 = 4.04	2
Corporate Image	60	50	55	70	115	680/250 = 2.72	3
Technical Excellence	0	20	50	80	100	1010/250 = 4.04	2
Guaranty/ warranty	75	45	40	70	20	665/250 = 2.66	5
Reasonable service Charge	0	10	45	80	115	1050/250 = 4.2	1

Source: Field Survey, December 2009

Not e: Weighted average is calculated given weight 1for "Not important" to 5 for "Very important"

VII. Concluding Remarks

This study is conducted empirically to measure service quality of internet service providing firms based on Parasuraman's SERVQUAL Model. Internet service is considered as sophisticated service item in our country. The consumers have more or less knowledge about the different quality dimensions of internet service that lead the service quality of individual internet service providing firm. Parasuraman's SERVQUAL model has been applied for three internet service providing firms which are widely providing the internet service in Bangladesh. Five dimensions have been selected as determinants of firm choice. The findings highlight the need to gain an understanding of the impact of quality dimensions and their contribution to the service providing firms' preference individually.

Finally, the measurement of service quality of internet service and managerial implementation of internet service providing firms have become top priority marketing issues in the recent years, according to the growing literature on the subject. Based on the findings we put forward the following recommendations:

i) The managers can take various strategies such as, maintaining and developing new quality dimensions, operating effective promotion etc. for gaining the competitive advantage on the basis of service differentiation.

ii) Employees of those firms should participate in scheduled training courses and we should note that behavior of employees is often instrumental in bringing a desired outcome.

iii) The firms should try to identify customers' needs and work to satisfy them. It means that managers need to redefine goals and policies, modify the organizational structure, reengineer job and design necessary specifications, likewise training, and monitoring, rewarding and punishing employees.

VIII. Limitations and Future Research

There are some limitations of this study that future research should continue to test and refine. The study reveals that five quality dimensions are considered for measuring service quality of some selected internet service providing firms, which have five quality dimensions that always may not be true. There might be more dimensions, which could influence the consumers for receiving internet service like model variation, availability, home service etc. Therefore, further research may be conducted to assess service benefits and risks of each quality dimension of internet service considering more dimensions including exogenous variables. Besides, the major limitation of this study is that the study attempts to consider only three internet service providing firms. It would have been more representative if the total number of internet service providing firms of Bangladesh could have been taken under this study. But it is not possible due to financial and time constraints. It is the responsibility of the future researchers to overcome these shortcomings. Moreover, we used only Parasuraman's SERVQUAL model for measuring service quality in this field, so other researchers have the options to measure the service quality of internet service providing firms and can also use the other techniques in sampling and in measuring service quality.

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Appendix- A

Dimension 1- Tangibles (4 items)

1. Excellent companies will have modern looking equipment.
2. The physical facilities at excellent companies will be visually appealing.
3. Employees of excellent companies will be neat in appearance.

4. Materials associated with the service (such as pamphlets or statements) will be visually appealing in an excellent company.

Dimension 2- Reliability (5 items)

1. When excellent companies promise to do something by a certain time, they will do so.
2. When customers have a problem, excellent companies will show genuine interest in solving it.
3. Excellent companies will perform the service right the first time.
4. Excellent companies will provide their services at the time they promise to do so
5. Excellent companies will insist on error-free records.

Dimension 3- Responsiveness (4 items)

1. Employees of excellent companies will tell customers exactly when services will be performed.
2. Employees of companies give prompt service.
3. Employees of companies are always willing to help the service receivers.
4. Employees of companies are never too busy to respond to consumers' requests.

Dimension 4- Assurance (4 items)

1. The behavior of employees of excellent companies will instill confidence in customers.
2. Customers of excellent companies will feel safe in their transactions.
3. Employees of excellent companies will be consistently courteous to customers
4. Employees of excellent companies will have the knowledge to answer questions.

Dimension 5- Empathy (5 items)

1. Excellent companies will give customers individual attention
2. Excellent companies will have operating hours convenient to all their customers.
3. Excellent companies will have employees who give customers personal attention.
4. Excellent companies will have the customer's best interest at heart.
5. The employees of excellent companies will understand the specific needs of their customers.

Dependent Variables

Service quality of internet service providing firms (3 items)

1. Overall the customers are very satisfied with other facilities in internet service providing firms.
2. We would recommend the service patterns of internet service providing firms are fairly satisfied.
3. The main quality dimensions on which the consumers of some selected internet service providing firms are generally satisfied.

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Private Label – Retailers' Competitive Strategy

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Abstract - In today's market conditions there has been an increase in the power of retailers in the distribution channels for consumer goods; at the same time the competition between them has been intensified. Retail chains permanently explore and identify the sources of competitive advantage in order to benefit from them. This article focuses on retailers' private labels as a competitive strategy of the present day. The relationship between the degree of concentration of retailing and the share of private label goods is investigated based on empirical data. The factors facilitating private label goods to penetrate the market are outlined, and the benefits for retailers, manufacturers and consumers in developing such labels are discussed. The theoretical considerations are corroborated by examples from retailers' business practices.

Keywords: private label, retail chain, competitive strategy, economy private labels, image private labels.

GJMBR-E Classification : JEL Code: L81, M31

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I. Introduction

The development and consolidation of retail chains worldwide have made them the largest popular channel for communication with customers. The creation of private labels is one of the promising directions of communication of retailers with customers in today's market conditions. Besides, large retailers transform the power of the market position of the participants in the distribution channels in their favour, as it is retailers that can manage the entire distribution system to the highest degree in the consumer goods markets.

The above said implies the successful implementation of the private label strategy and the interest shown by powerful retailers. This strategy is one of the possible ways to differentiate retailers, as well as an important source of competitive advantage.
The aim of this article is to investigate on the basis of empirical data the retailers' policy regarding private labels as an important source of competitive advantage and to reveal the benefits of developing private labels for retailers, manufacturers and consumers.

a) *Nature and development of a retailer's private label strategy*

The competitive positioning of retailers in a rapidly changing market environment is implemented via a wide range of tools, among which private labels occupy an important place.

Private label strategy can be implemented only by large retailers; hence, there is a clear relationship between the degree of concentration of retailing and the share of private label goods. Therefore, a private label strategy is typical for countries of strong competition and significant concentration of retailers (See Fig. 1).

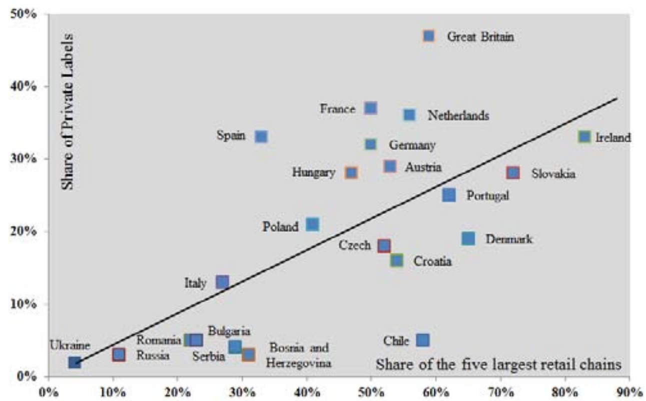

Figure 1 : Relationship between concentration of retailing and private label share, 2010.

Source: Regal, № 10, 2011, p. 31

The data shows that in West European countries, where concentration of retailing is traditionally high and the competition between retailers is being intensified, the share of private label products in retailers' commodity portfolios is large. This mainly refers to discount stores as private label goods are usually offered at the lowest prices. In Southeastern European countries, including Bulgaria, the concentration of retailing is still low and the private label share is small.

Private Label is a strategy of offering products, specially manufactured for a private label retailer and under its specification [1].

A cardinal change in the relationships between market players is being carried out in today's modern society. The role of consumers in the system of market relations is intensified and the impact of retailers' private labels is increased. The globalization of the world economic system enables the development of global competition in international markets, whose main features are: homogenization of consumption, global expansion of mega brands and development of global retailers. Over the last decade, in the market for consumer goods retailers, organized mainly as retail chains, have taken the initiative from manufacturers. One reason for this is the more pronounced competitive orientation of retailers. Most retailers, if not all, beginning with Wal-Mart and Carrefour, and ending with IKEA and Aldi, thoroughly and regularly study price, advertising, assortment, location, characteristics of buyers and all

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other aspects of a competitive situation. In this regard, retailers' private label strategy is identified as suitable under the conditions of growing market competition. Since the 1970s private labels have become an effective tool for increasing the profitability of business. The pioneer in the sphere of creation of a large commercial private label network in 1976 is the French retail company Carrefour. The use of a well-known and developed brand provides significant cost savings in marketing and advertising, allowing, eventually, a significant reduction in retail prices. Naturally, this important advantage is quickly evaluated by buyers. Due to the increased demand, the sales volume and profit of the retail chain are increased. The successful private label strategy is widely spread in many countries. According to the survey conducted by AC Nielsen in 2004, the volume of sales of private label goods in the total sales volume of retail chains in Europe is: in the UK – 41 %, in Belgium – 38%, in Germany – 35%, in Spain – 29%, in France – 25%, in Finland – 25%, in Denmark – 25%, in Sweden – 22%, in the Netherlands – 21%, in Norway – 18% and in Italy – 14%.

Author's own research found the following relationship: the quantity of public label goods in the retail chain is directly proportional to the development of the retail chain itself. In some retailers, e.g. Marks and Spencer (Britain), almost 100% of the goods are sold under a private label. The Swedish IKEA, which is the largest furniture retailer worldwide, is a similar case.

Another relationship that can be outlined is that discount stores offer a greater variety of private label goods compared to the other retailers. For example, the share of private label goods in the German discounter Aldi is approximately 90%. Customers willingly replace established brands with private label goods as they are of similar quality but the prices are 30-40% lower. Therefore, at the height of the global recession the turnover of these goods increased rapidly. The data from the Private Label Manufacturers Association shows that in 2008 the sales of branded fast moving consumer goods rose by 2% and those of similar private label goods in the USA rose by 10% compared to 2007 [2]. In order to meet the increased demand retailers are intensively expanding their assortment of private label goods, introducing new categories and experimenting with innovative products.

There are a number of factors facilitating private label products' penetration in the retail market.

First, the prices of private label products, which are generally cheaper and affordable, and at the same time the risk of poor quality products is virtually eliminated.

Second, the provision of private label products. They are generally available to consumers for a long time, and their distribution is well organized, as retail chains are interested in this more than in the movement of famous competing brands.

Third, profitability of private label products, which as a rule is relatively high for retailers and their pricing policy, is more flexible than that of the national and transnational brands.

Fourth, the features of retail chains which often represent stable oligopolies due to which they sell products of national and transnational brands at relatively high prices. At the same time, retail chains have enough resources to invest in the system of movement and to impose their private labels.

Ultimately, retail chains are more competitive, ensure a higher image, achieve a greater turnover, make cost savings, achieve higher revenue and profits and increase their intangible assets through their private labels.

Expanding their positions and accumulating reputation, retailers realize that they are essentially brands and can build a brand identity and create brand personality which is differentiated and sustainable [3].

There is still no generally accepted classification of retailers' private labels in scientific literature. An important criterion for their classification is the functions performed by the private labels, according to which they are divided into two types: economy private labels and image private labels [4] (See Fig. 2).

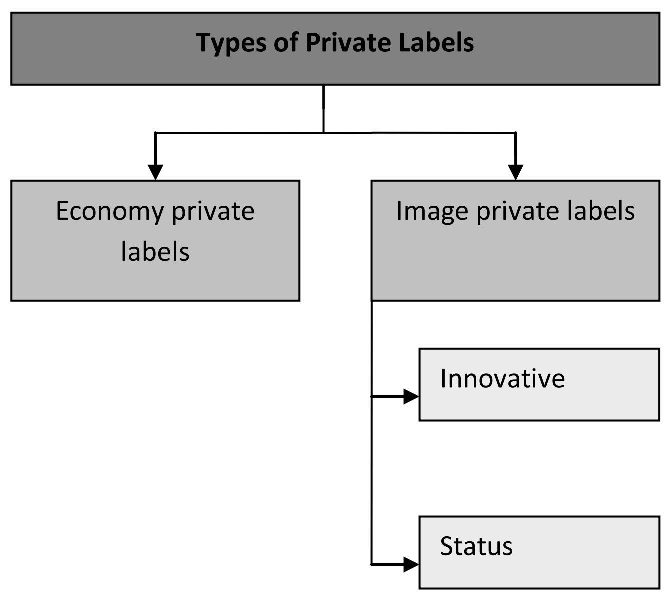

Figure 2 : Types of private labels according to the functions they perform

Economy private labels are the popular private labels of retailers and are oriented to customers who are price-conscious and mainly rationally-motivated to buy. They include primarily fast moving consumer goods; therefore this kind of private labels has the highest share in discounters and supermarkets. In fact, the traditional understanding of retailers' own brands overlaps with economy private labels.

Image private labels are the second type of private labels, which are subdivided into innovative and status. They represent a new trend in the brand strategy development and are created to enhance the favorable image of the retail chain at the expense of innovative and prestigious goods. Owing to their specificity, these niche solutions are designed for specific customer segments.

The innovative private labels are oriented primarily to customers-innovators who are highly interested in new goods. This is exactly the segment that enables their market entry. The large retailers have subdivisions that deal with scientific research and design, studying consumer demand and developing new products. Furthermore, they themselves often contribute to creating the demand.

The status private labels are oriented to the medium price segment and the premium segment. This premises the supply of expensive high quality private labels. They are generally supplied in hypermarkets and supermarkets, and the target consumers are interested in expensive quality goods, emphasizing the status of their owner. Ensuring a constant high quality requires a very thorough selection of a particular manufacturer and strict control over its operation. An example of a successful development of a premium private label is the President's Choice Premium coffee created by Canadian retailer Loblaw. The British retailer Tesco, which is second in sales revenues among retailers in Europe, has launched the so-called three-step approach to their private labels. It suggests that the retailer has private label products in all three price segments – low, medium and high. According to a GfK survey the number of private label items outside the lower price segment in Germany increased by 60% for the period 2006-2010 [5].

Summarizing what has been said so far it can be pointed that by creating image private labels and sometimes offering them at lower prices, the retailer pursues a strategic goal – to create consumer attachment to the retailer. Image private labels help to create a positive image, provide high confidence in the retailer and promote the sales of other goods.

b) Advantages of developing private labels

The intensive development of private labels is due to the advantages they provide to retailers themselves, as well as to manufacturers and consumers.

Private labels can be simply defined as profitable for retailers because they attract customers, generate turnover, allow them to have high profit margins and create customer loyalty. This makes them an important source of a competitive advantage for retail chains which develop their private labels. In a stagnant market they become a more appropriate solution being a cheap way for new product recognition. This is due to cost saving in advertising as retail chains rely entirely on their own advertising. The retailer's own image serves as a positive message to customers, and the outlets and brochures – as an advertising space. Furthermore, the positioning of their private labels in the stores is specially designated and attractively located. Retailers are seeking to position their private labels as the best value-for-money products. It should be emphasized that the guarantee of quality is crucial as it creates the consumer confidence in brands. Thus, it can be transferred to other categories of private label products of the same retailer, and also to the retailer's goods as a whole.

Private label goods of a retailer are traditionally offered at low prices, which led to their rise in the global financial crisis and the resultant recession. The aim of the retail chains to minimize losses has made them improve the strategies for customer relations, a key element of which are private labels.

Synovate, a leading global market research firm released in late August 2009 a survey of 26 markets through canvassing 17 300 people, which clearly demonstrated that consumers in most markets switch to retailers' private labels. This applies to products in 12 categories, such as dairy products, other essential goods, cosmetics and retailers' alcohol brands, including products in which this trend has been observed for the first time, e.g. coffee [6].

Supplying private label quality products at the lowest price is not an easy task. In order to achieve their goal, retail chains need to carefully choose manufacturers-suppliers of the goods that can meet their high requirements and quality standards.

The following important factors facilitate the effectuation of low prices:

- Large orders and the effect of economy of scale reducing the product costs;
- Negotiating maximum discounts with suppliers for the purchase of large consignments of goods;
- Professional management, adequate logistic scheme and presence of distribution centres allowing for a substantial reduction in operating costs;
- cost savings in advertising private label products.

Private labels are developed by retailers themselves. There are subdivisions in the organizational structure of large retail chains, which deal with the complex management of the chain's private labels and are incessantly looking for an opportunity to develop and expand them. They assign the developed product specifications to manufacturing companies usually selected via competitions. In turn, manufacturers must have a background and very good market positions to afford to produce under a retailer's private label. This reduces the risk for the retailer to produce private label products of low quality.

The manufacturers of a retailer's private label goods can also benefit significantly.

First, making a profit from the high turnover. The manufacturers of a retailer's private label product in many cases serve all (or most) of the chain's stores, although located in different foreign markets.

Second, protection against cheap competitive proposals.

The use of private labels as brands accompanying the manufacturer is a very good solution in this regard. Before the advent of retailers' private labels many manufacturers produced the so-called co-brands to protect themselves from competitors offering lower prices. These brands are sold at lower prices than the other brands of the same manufacturer in the same product category in order to attract price-conscious consumers. Thus, price increases do not necessarily cause a loss of market share. In the proliferation of retailers' private labels they can successfully play the role of co-brands.

If the retailers' private labels take up too great a share in the sales of a given manufacturer (over 20%), the risk for this manufacturer is serious due to the minimal profit margins and the possibility that a retailer may switch the supplier. Therefore, the manufacture of private label products can be chosen by the manufacturer as a way of further capacity utilization. Furthermore, it is necessary to establish proper partner relationships between manufacturers and retail chains in order to reduce risks.

The main advantages for the consumers of retailers' private label goods relate to the low prices of these products in an optimum quality/price ratio and also the purchase of goods of guaranteed consistent quality. Moreover, consumers procure the purchase of original goods due to the specific mode of organizing their production and distribution. This advantage increases its importance in image private labels.

The distribution of private label goods is most significant in Europe (i.e. Western Europe); at the end of 2008 they formed 28.3% of retail sales, and worldwide their share was 20% on average [7]. According to AC Nielsen private label sales will reach 30% of the global commodity turnover in 2020 [8].

The strategy which all large European and American retailers follow is to increase the private label share in their total sales, accompanied by the expansion of product categories which they cover. For example, Metro retail chain, along with its most famous food brand Aro, has three more food brands – Four Seasons for confectionery, Casa Roma for spaghetti, macaroni, etc. and Metro Quality for goods on the higher price list. Watson is a brand of black appliances, Alaska – of white appliances, Timor - of lingerie, Don Pablo – of different types of port wine, Charles House – of whisky, Budget – of spare parts and accessories. Clever, the private label of Billa is successfully positioned in all markets where the chain operates and, having an assortment of about 400 products, it is a powerful weapon against discounters. Also the performance of its about 80 private label products is very good – My (cosmetics), as well as Chef Menu (the convenience brand) [9].

In Bulgaria, the private labels of retail chains were not known until 8 years ago, but due to the turbulent expansion of West European retailers in the Bulgarian market and the increase in the level of concentration and competition in the retail sector, the share of the private labels of retail chains in their commodity portfolio is constantly rising. This finding is supported by the annual survey of GfK, which indicates that the value share of the private labels of retail chains operating in Bulgaria is as follows : 2008 – 2.8% , 2009 3.7 % 2010 – 5.9 %, and in 2011 it amounted to 11.1% [10].

The leading retailers in the Bulgarian market, such as Metro, Kaufland, Billa, Lidl and Carrefour, include the highest private label share (20-30%) in their product portfolio and their aggressive domestic expansion (especially Kaufland and Lidl) logically leads to an increase in the share of private label goods in the total retail sales.

The author's own survey of managers of leading retailers in Bulgaria shows that they include private labels in their main competitive advantages, along with service, product assortment, image and customer loyalty schemes [11]. It is private labels that provide the clearest differentiation of retailers because of their originality and uniqueness.

II. Conclusion

The survey of retailers' policies conducted regarding their private labels leads to the following major conclusions:

- The development and supply of retailers' private label goods is a significant competitive advantage, particularly in increased competition, economic crisis and narrow market;
- There is a direct proportional relationship between the degree of concentration in the retail sector and the share of private label goods;
- The quantity of private label goods in a retail chain is directly proportional to the development of the retail chain itself;
- The discount retail chains offer more private label products compared to the other retailers because they apply a low-price strategy;
- In order to enhance the effect, the retail chains had better diversify their private label strategy in the direction of supplying private label goods in the three price segments: low, medium and high;
- Retailers as well as manufacturers of such goods, and of course, consumers draw benefits from the development of private labels;
- The professional management of retailers' brand portfolio is a crucial factor for the competitive positioning of their private labels.

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Knowledge-Driven Decision Support System Based on Knowledge Warehouse and Data Mining for Market Management

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Abstract - Over the recent years, a great interest has appeared in studying " knowledge warehouse (KW) , decision support system (DSS) , data mining (DM) , and knowledge discovery process in database (KDD)" , taking into consideration that each of these fields is related to and influenced by the others. In order to manage an enterprise resources, there is a necessary need to build a DSS which helps the manager or the decision maker in the decision making and managing processes. While the primary goal of a (KW) is to provide the decision-maker with an intelligent analysis platform that enhances all phases of the knowledge management process , the (KDD) process should be applied to discover knowledge and build (KW) , where (DM) technique is considered the most important step in the process (KDD).

Keywords : *decision support system, data mining, knowledge discovery, knowledge warehouse, data warehouse.*

GJMBR-E Classification : *JEL Code: M31*

KNOWLEDGEDRIVENDECISIONSUPPORTSYSTEMBASEDONKNOWLEDGEWAREHOUSEANDDATA MINING FORMARKETMANAGEMENT

Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:

Knowledge-Driven Decision Support System Based on Knowledge Warehouse and Data Mining for Market Management

Dr. Murtadha M. Hamad [α] & Banaz Anwer Qader [σ]

Abstract- Over the recent years, a great interest has appeared in studying " knowledge warehouse (KW) , decision support system (DSS) , data mining (DM) , and knowledge discovery process in database (KDD)" , taking into consideration that each of these fields is related to and influenced by the others. In order to manage an enterprise resources, there is a necessary need to build a DSS which helps the manager or the decision maker in the decision making and managing processes. While the primary goal of a (KW) is to provide the decision-maker with an intelligent analysis platform that enhances all phases of the knowledge management process , the (KDD) process should be applied to discover knowledge and build (KW) , where (DM) technique is considered the most important step in the process (KDD).So in this paper , we merged the concepts of data warehouse (DW) and knowledge warehouse (KW) proposing and building a system of kind (knowledge-driven DSS) which depends on KW for managing (storing and retrieving) the knowledge for the benefit of the process of decision making and management of the market resources (items), where this study includes an application on a DW of marketing building resources (items).This study uses the data mining technique specifically its functionality (Association Rules Mining) in the knowledge discovery process and building KW. Eventually, the designed system was constructed and executed by using (C# version 2008) which is a visual and object oriented programming language. Good system results (knowledge) were obtained in a very little time taking two minutes approximately. This proves the efficiency of the proposed algorithms and our knowledge-driven DSS system in the supporting the market manager or decision maker to take accurate and right decisions for managing the market items in a perfect way.

Keywords: decision support system, data mining, knowledge discovery, knowledge warehouse, data warehouse.

I. Introduction

Decision Support Systems (DSS) increasingly become more critical to the daily operation of organizations [1]. Decision Support System (DSS) is an equivalent synonym as management information systems (MIS). Most of imported data are used in solutions like data mining (DM). Successfully supporting managerial decision - making is critically dependent upon the availability of integrated, high quality informationorganized and presented in a timely and easily understood manner[2]. Since the mid-1980s, data warehouses have been developed and deployed as an integral part of a modern decision support environment [1]. Therefore Data Warehouse provides an infrastructure that enables businesses to extract, cleanse, and store vast amounts of corporate data from operational systems for efficient and accurate responses to user queries [3]. Data Warehouse (DW) is one of the solutions for decision-making process in a business organization. But it only stores data for managerial purpose and it has no intelligent mechanism for decision making. This raises the issue of knowledge storage in organization for high capability decision support[4]. knowledge in the form of procedures, best practices, business rules, expert knowledge, facts within context, and processed data can be stored in logical structures accessible by computers. The logical structures in the knowledge warehouse to store knowledge are analogous to the system of tables that implement data storage in the data warehouse. Knowledge is applied through a layered representation that is readable by both humans and machines this representation is also a system executable that is portable and can be run on a computer to help make decisions and take actions [5]. The enterprise-wide information delivery systems provided in a data warehouse can be leveraged and extended to create a knowledge warehouse (KW). A framework of knowledge warehouse is introduced, which is enhanced form of data warehouse to provide a platform/ infrastructure to capture, refine and store consistent and adequate knowledge along with data to improve decision making in an organization [4]. The primary goal of a (KW) is to provide the decision-maker with an intelligent analysis platform that enhances all phases of the knowledge management process. Knowledge Warehouse (KW) architecture will not only facilitate the capturing and coding of knowledge but also enhance the retrieval and sharing of knowledge across the organization [3]. In order to understand, analyze, and eventually make use of a huge amount of data, Enterprises use mining technologies to search vast amounts of data for vital insight and knowledge. Mining tools such as data mining, text mining, and web mining are used to find

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hidden knowledge in large databases or the Internet [6]. Data Mining (DM) is the process of identifying interesting patterns from large databases. Data mining has been popularly treated as a synonyms of knowledge discovery in databases, alt hough some researchers view data mining as an essential step of knowledge discovery [7].

In this paper, mining tools are automate software tools used to achieve decision making process by finding hidden relations (rules), and predicting future events from vast amounts of data.

II. The Knowledge-Driven Dss

A knowledge-driven DSS provides specialized problem solving expertise stored as facts, rules, procedures, or in similar structures. It suggest or recommend actions to managers [8].

A KD-DSS is a knowledge driven decision support system, which has problem solving expertise. The KD-DSS can give suggestions or recommendations based on several criteria's. These systems require human-computer interaction. Advanced analytical tools like data mining can be integrated with the KD-DSS to find hidden patterns. Knowledge Driven DSS is also called as Intelligent Decision Support methods, and it is analogues to the knowledge warehouse strategy work. We choose KD-DSS model, because it has capacity to self-learn, identify associations between the data, and perform heuristic operations, if required. These abilities turn the DSS system into intelligent, increase the capacity of problem solving and improve suggestion accuracy. It is important to mention that the Knowledge representation play key role in KD-DSS. Well-defined knowledge representations include rule-based systems, semantic web and frame systems. A rule-based system contains rules in the database [9].

III. Knowledge Warehouse

knowledge warehouse (KW) can be thought of as an "information repository". The knowledge warehouse consists of knowledge components (KCs) that are defined as the smallest level in which knowledge can be decomposed. Knowledge components (objects) are cataloged and stored in the knowledge warehouse for reuse by reporting, documentation, execution the knowledge or query and reassembling which are accomplished and organized by instructional designers or technical writers. The idea of knowledge warehouse is similar to that of data warehouse. As in the data warehouse, the knowledge warehouse also provides answers for ad-hoc queries, and knowledge in the knowledge warehouse can reside in several physical places [10].

A knowledge warehouse (KW) is the component of an enterprise's knowledge management system. The knowledge warehouse is the technology to organize and store knowledge. The knowledge warehouse also has logical structures like Computer programs and databases to store knowledge that are analogous to the system of tables that implement data storage in the data warehouse [5]. The primary goal of a KW is to provide the knowledge worker with an intelligent analysis platform that enhances all phases of the knowledge management process [3][1]. Like the DW, the KW may be viewed as subject oriented, integrated, time-variant, and supportive of management's decision making processes. But unlike the DW, it is a combination of volatile and nonvolatile objects and components, and, of course, it stores not only data, but also information and knowledge [11].

The KW can also evolve over time by enhancing the knowledge it contains [3]. Knowledge warehouse provides the infrastructure needed to capture, cleanse, store, organize, leverage, and disseminate not only data and information but also knowledge [4].

IV. Knowledge Discovery Process

Knowledge discovery in databases (KDD) is a rapidly growing field, whose development is driven by strong research interests as well as urgent practical, social, and economical needs. The term KDD is used to denote the overall process of turning low-level data into high-level knowledge. A simple definition of KDD is as follows: Knowledge discovery in databases is the nontrivial process of identifying valid, novel, potentially useful, and ultimately understandable patterns in data [12].

Knowledge Discovery has also been defined as the 'non-trivial extraction of implicit, previously unknown and potentially useful information from data'. It is a process of which data mining plays an important role to extract knowledge from huge database (data warehouse) [13]. Data mining is the core part of the knowledge discovery in database (KDD) process as shown in the figure (1).

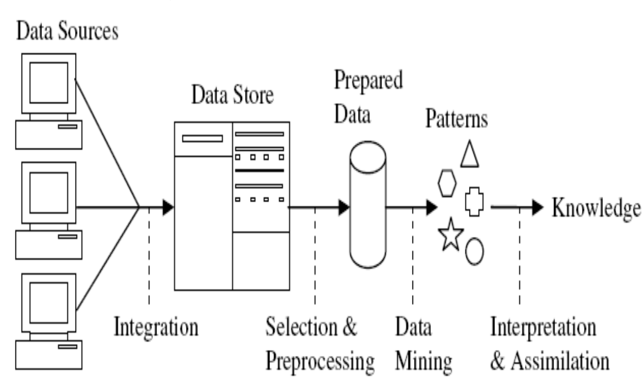

Figure 1 : The Typical Knowledge Discovery Process [13]

The KDD process may consist of the following steps: 1) data integration, 2) data selection and data pre-processing , 3) data mining as it will be explained in section 5; 4) interpretation & assimilation. Where data comes in, possibly from many sources. It is integrated and placed in some common data store like data warehouse. Part of it is then selected and pre-processed into a standard format. This 'prepared data' is then passed to a data mining algorithm which produces an output in the form of rules or some other kind of 'patterns'. These are then interpreted to give new and potentially useful knowledge. Although the data mining algorithms are central to knowledge discovery, they are not the whole story. The pre-processing of the data and the interpretation of the results are both of great importance [13].

V. Data Mining Technique

Data mining (DM) is one of the most important techniques that are used to discover required knowledge for intended enterprise.

Data mining derives its name from the similarities between searching for valuable information in a large database and mining rocks for a vein of valuable ore. Since mining for gold in rocks is usually called "gold mining" and not "rock mining", thus by analogy, data mining should have been called "knowledge mining" instead [14]. Data mining is the knowledge discovery process by analyzing the large volumes of data from various perspectives and summarizing it into useful information [15].

Data mining is the process of discovering interesting knowledge, such as patterns , associations, changes, anomalies, and significant structures from large amount of data stored in databases, data warehouse, or other information repositories [16]. Data mining refers to discover useful, previously unknown knowledge by analyzing large and complex" data sets. Data mining is defined as the extraction of patterns or models from observed data [12].

Data Mining, also popularly known as Knowledge Discovery in Databases (KDD), refers to the nontrivial extraction of implicit, previously unknown and potentially useful information from data in databases. While data mining and knowledge discovery in databases (or KDD) are frequently treated as synonyms, data mining is actually part of the knowledge discovery process [14].

The goal of data mining is to allow a corporation to improve its marketing, sales, and customer support operations through a better understanding of its customers. Data mining, transforms data into actionable results [17].Other similar terms referring to data mining are: data dredging, knowledge extraction and pattern discovery [14].

VI. The Proposed and Designed System

In this paper, we proposed a knowledge-driven DSS and it consists of several phases as shown in the figure (2). These phases are:

1. Collect data from different sources, these sources can be different files such as (Excel, Access, Word, Text files,…,etc.)
2. Data pre-processing
   This phase consists of the following three steps:
   a) Data integration
   b) Data reduction
   c) Data consistency
3. Loading the cleaning data after performing preprocessing steps into the data warehouse (DW)
4. Data selection for knowledge discovery phase
5. Knowledge discovery by applying Data Mining and association rule mining task in particular.
6. Interpret the association rules to discover and gain knowledge as output.
7. Represent the result which is knowledge using one of the visualization tools
8. Make decisions by investment and benefit from the output (knowledge) of the system through the DSS system interface.

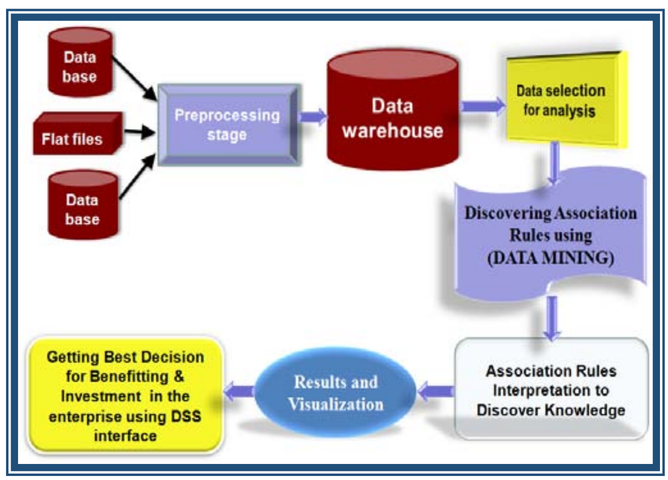

Figure 2 : The Proposed knowledge-driven DSS System

In the first step of the proposed system which is Data Gathering and Integrating phase , we have collected data about items sales of a building items market from several sources and files such as (text file, excel, access, …etc) that have been existed in multiple sales departments of the market. Where collecting data from different sources usually presents many challenges, because different departments will use different styles of record keeping, different conventions, different time periods, different degrees of data aggregation, different primary keys, and will have different kinds of error. So the data must be assembled, integrated in to one unified file which is (Microsoft

Access file) in our system to be ready for importing in to the C# environment for other data pre-processing techniques like resolving inconsistency and reduction.

In our proposed system, integration step led to emerging duplicated records (transactions) and inconsistent attributes which are processed in the data pre-processing phase by applying proposed algorithms of reduction and consistency techniques that are (Removing Duplication (Reduction) Algorithm) and (Resolving Inconsistency Algorithm). The cleaned and prepared data from pre-processing phase are loaded into the data warehouse (DW) which is a wide data store of the market that contains historical data and complete information about building items and has capability of modifying its data and ready for processing phase. In order to mine vast amounts of data in the data warehouse for discovering knowledge, part of the data should be selected and customized in the Data Selection phase, where we use the concept of data mart to select and customize the data for processing phase depending on the technique used for knowledge discovery. In Data Selection phase the set of items is selected for Data Mining and as input of the proposed (Index-based Apriori Algorithm) because the used technique is Data Mining and specifically the Association functionality. In the discovering knowledge phase, we use Data Mining and apply its Association functionality. The selected set of items is entered to the proposed algorithm (Index-based Apriori) for mining association rules. The number of mining association rules are different based on specified and entered min. count threshold for generating supported itemsets and min. confidence threshold for generating interesting association rules. The market manager to be able of taking decisions and managing the market resources, these rules must be interpreted for discovering knowledge to support the process of decision making.

In the Association Rules Interpretation phase, we proposed and used an algorithm named (Association Rules Interpretation Algorithm) applying a simple statistical method which is represented by substituting and counting the items in the antecedent and consequent of the association rules. The results of this system represent the discovered knowledge which are the predicted ratios of items sales for the next year. The results and visualization phase which we explain and discuss in the next section, visualizes the results graphically using Line Chart tool to provide the decision maker or the market manager with conceptual values (knowledge) supporting him in managing the market easily and in a perfect way.

VII. Implementation and Results

The proposed and designed system has been executed by using (C# programming language). So the implementation of the system is performed on phases. The system includes several interfaces to execute it easily and to support the manager or decision maker in the process of decision making.

The discovered knowledge in our system refers to the predicted ratios of sales for the items during a specified month in the next year based on statistic analysis applied on items' sales through the previous years stored in our marketing Data Warehouse (DW). Figure (3) shows the discovered knowledge.

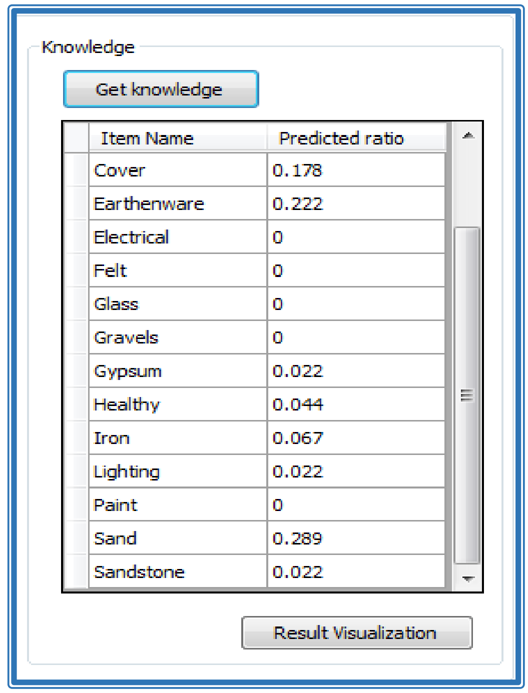

Figure 3 : The Result of The Association Rules Interpretation and Knowledge Discovering

The visualized results that have been illustrated clearly in figures (4), (5), (6) are for "January" of the next year. It is important to mention that these predicted ratios of items sales are being different by differing the min. count threshold and min. confidence threshold of the Index-based Apriori and according to the chosen specified month. Therefore, we executed our system and got various results (ratios) for "January" using three different min. count thresholds (2100, 2150, 2200) and three min. confidence thresholds (60% , 80% , 100%) as illustrated below in figures (4), (5), (6).

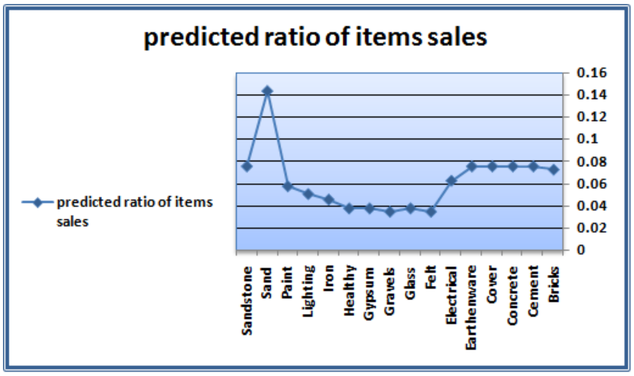

Figure 4 : Discovered Knowledge by Using Index-based Apriori with Itemset Threshold = 2100 And Rule Threshold = 60%

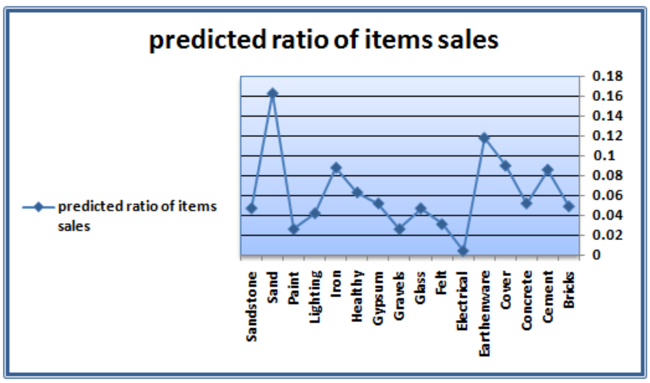

Figure 5 : Discovered Knowledge by Using Index-based Apriori with Itemset Threshold = 2150 And Rule Threshold = 80%

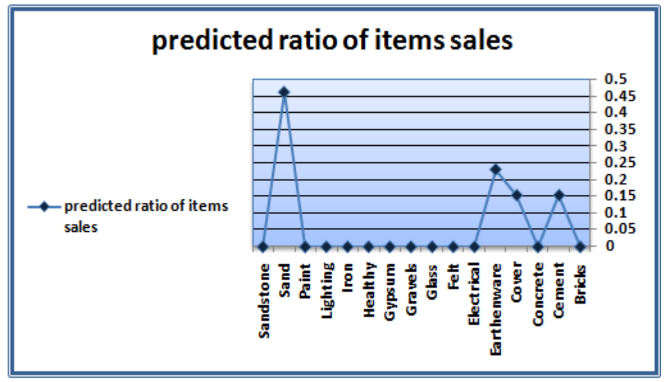

Figure 6 : Discovered Knowledge by Using Index-based Apriori with Itemset Threshold = 2200 And Rule Threshold = 100%

We used three various min. count thresholds (2100 , 2150 , 2200) each of which with three various (lower, mid, higher) min. confidence thresholds which are (60% , 80% , 100%), (70% , 80% , 90%) , and (50% , 90% , 100%) for executing the system to generate various number of supported itemsets and interesting association rules and getting various ratios of items sales , as shown below in table (1).

Table (1) shows various system results for "January" of the next year according to different min. count thresholds for supported itemsets and min. confidence thresholds for interested association rules.

Table 1 : The System Results According to Different Min. Count Thresholds for Supported Itemsets and Min. Confidence Thresholds for Rules for "January"

Items	knowledge (predicted ratio of items sales)								
	count thr. 2100, conf. thr. 60%	count thr. 2100, conf. thr. 80%	count thr. 2100, conf. thr. 100%	count thr. 2150, conf. thr. 70%	count thr. 2150, conf. thr. 80%	count thr. 2150, conf. thr. 90%	count thr. 2200, conf. thr. 50%	count thr. 2200, conf. thr. 90%	count thr. 2200, conf. thr. 100%
Bricks	0.073	0.075	0.105	0.051	0.05	0.122	0	0	0
Cement	0.076	0.071	0.095	0.091	0.087	0.149	0.133	0.152	0.154
Concrete	0.076	0.071	0.086	0.056	0.053	0.054	0	0	0
Cover	0.076	0.071	0.076	0.091	0.091	0.081	0.178	0.152	0.154
Earthenware	0.076	0.071	0.067	0.131	0.119	0.23	0.222	0.333	0.231
Electrical	0.063	0.056	0.057	0.005	0.005	0	0	0	0
Felt	0.035	0.039	0	0.03	0.032	0	0	0	0
Glass	0.038	0.042	0	0.045	0.048	0	0	0	0
Gravels	0.035	0.039	0	0.025	0.027	0	0	0	0
Gypsum	0.038	0.042	0	0.051	0.053	0	0.022	0	0
Healthy	0.038	0.042	0.019	0.061	0.064	0	0.044	0	0
Iron	0.046	0.049	0.038	0.086	0.089	0.095	0.067	0	0
Lighting	0.051	0.053	0.057	0.04	0.043	0	0.022	0	0
Paint	0.058	0.06	0.076	0.025	0.027	0.027	0	0	0
Sand	0.144	0.144	0.21	0.167	0.164	0.243	0.289	0.364	0.462
Sandstone	0.076	0.075	0.114	0.045	0.048	0	0.022	0	0

VIII. Conclusions

After the implementation of our DSS system and through the execution of the Index-based Apriori algorithm for association rules mining, and Association Rules Interpretation algorithm and from obtained results, we concluded the following:

1. Through the execution of our system, it is become explicit that the knowledge warehouse (KW) is smaller, more accurate and more close-fitting than the data warehouse (DW) because the knowledge that has been stored in the (KW) in the form of rules or patterns or any other forms is discovered and gained from large amount of data stored in the (DW).
2. The accuracy of discovered knowledge depends on the specified and used thresholds in the Index-based Apriori algorithm. The knowledge accuracy increases by decreasing the min. count threshold and min. confidence threshold, because using lower thresholds increases the number of supported itemsets and interested association rules which lead to get more accurate knowledge and support the manager or decision maker to take accurate decisions.
3. Reducing number of itemsets will reduce the number of generating association rules and lead to gain low quality knowledge.
4. Reducing number of generating itemsets and association rules will lead to shorten run time and will reduce the used space in memory. In order to reduce the used space in memory and shorten run time without reducing the number of itemsets and association rules, we have used indexing method for fast access through applying the proposed Index-based Apriori algorithm.

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Improving Customer Loyalty by Getting Rid of the Misunderstanding

By Zhao Shijie & Wang Lingfang
Guangdong University of Technology, China

Abstract- With the aggravation of the market competition, customer loyalty has become one of the most decisive factors that will affect the long-term profits of an enterprise. Misunderstanding of enterprise management in China is probably to be wiped out in our comprehension of customer loyalty only if we can correctly grasp its connotation as well as take effective strategies. And then, we can increase the loyalty of our customers and keep our business invincible in the fierce market competition.

Keywords: customer loyalty, misunderstanding, strategy.

GJMBR-E Classification : JEL Code: M390

IMPROVINGCUSTOMERLOYALTYBYGETTINGRIDOFTHEMISUNDERSTANDING

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Improving Customer Loyalty by Getting Rid of the Misunderstanding

Zhao Shijie [α], Wang Li ngfang [σ] & Zhang Depeng [ρ]

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Keywords: *customer loyalty, misunderstanding, strategy.*

I. Introduction

As far as the current enterprises are concerned, marketing success not only is measured statistically by the amount of their market shares but also should be reflected in how many loyal customers they have. Two American economists, Reichheld and Sasser (1990), have spent a long-term period in observing and analyzing many industries. As a result, they found that customer loyalty is much more important than market share in the process of determining profits. If the customer loyalty can rise by 5 percentage points, the profit increase will reach from 25 to 85 percent. At the same time, the cost of services enterprises which is provided for the old customer is decreasing year by year. More importantly, the loyal customer can recommend an enterprise's products and services to other consumers (Zeithaml & Berry, 1996), and are willing to accept to pay a higher price for the products and services of the enterprise (Dowling & Uncles, 1997). So we can say that the customer loyalty is not only one of the most important determining factors of an enterprise's competitive ability but also one of the fundamental sources of an enterprise's long-term profits.

II. The Overview of Customer Loyalty

a) *The Connotation of Customer Loyalty*

Customer loyalty is a multidimensional concept, which is a kind of consumer preference of products and services formed long time ago. What's more, it is also the organic combination of customer cognitive loyalty, affective loyalty, conative loyalty and behavior loyalty (Oliver, 1999). Therefore, we can consider loyal customers as those who can refuse preferential price provided by an enterprise's competitors, continue to buy the product or service of the enterprise and even promote them to others for free by obligation. The best customers are loyal ones. They not only cost less to be served, have the tendency to pay more than other customers but also act word-of-mouth to others for your company. Win loyalty, we are told, and profits will definitely follow (Reinartz & Kumar, 2002).

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b) *The Function of Customer Loyalty*

It can be concluded from the business practice that customer loyalty is the most valuable, reliable and stable assets of modern enterprise under buyer's market conditions.

The highly loyal customer is not only the key factor to gain the victory in enterprise competition but also the fundamental guarantee of the enterprise long period of stability. Its function can be mainly concluded to six effects as below:

i. *The profit effect*

The loyal customers will firstly continue to buy or accept the company's products or services, and is willing to pay a higher price to high-quality products and first-class service. Thus, the total sales and profits of corporation can be obviously increased.

ii. *The advertising effect*

The loyal customers are likely to become the enterprise's free advertisement propagandist intangibly by sharing his own consuming experience directly or indirectly to the surrounding people. This effect is far better than the advertising promotion in which the enterprise invests a huge amount of money. Therefore, it is commonly said that, "The best advertisement is a loyal customer."

iii. *The demonstration effect*

Once customer loyalty is formed, it will not only provide alternative model for the consumer psychology, consumer behavior and social way of the existing customers and potential customers but also arouse the desire for them to emulate. Moreover, it may enable the consumer behavior to be consistent and even lead to a popular phenomenon.

iv. *The cost-reducing effect*

By repeat purchasing, promoting and recommending to others, loyal customer can save the management and operation cost of the enterprises such as the expenses on advertising public relations, publicity and promotion.

v. *The safe-operating effect*

The loyal customers will be delighted to try new products or services of other enterprises, which makes the cross-selling successful. Therefore, it has consequently realized the diversification of enterprise management and reduced the management risk of the enterprise.

vi. *The competitive advantage effect*

The loyal customers will not only set a realistic barrier for other enterprises to enter the market but also provide a sharp weapon for the enterprise to start its exploration into a new market. This enables the enterprise to have a relative advantage ahead of its competitors in the market competition.

III. The Misunderstanding of Customer Loyalty

With the customer loyalty theory having been widely applied in many industries, the strategy of customer loyalty has become the intensively focusing issue of the nowadays marketing management theory. However, when many enterprise managers attempt to make out the connotation and extent meaning of the concept “customer loyalty”, they did not really get to the hard core of it. As a result, the misunderstanding regions of ideas and practice are formed. They can be listed as below:

a) *Misunderstanding 1: Customer Satisfaction is Equal to Customer Loyalty.*

In the course of business operation, a lot of people think than if a customer satisfies, he will continuously buy the products or services of a company. This is considered to be the formation of customer loyalty. In fact, customer satisfaction is a kind of mental activity during which a kind of pleasure can be gained after the customer needs are met. It stems from the comparing between the customer’s expectations and the perceived service performance. However, the continuously buying behavior of the loyal customer has its immunity. If a customer was satisfied with the products or services, it does not necessarily mean that he will buy the company’s products or services the next time. According to the survey of Bain & Company, among the customers which are satisfied with the products, there are still 65 to 85 percent of them will choose the alternative. It ought to be said that customer satisfaction is the necessary condition but not the sufficient condition for customer loyalty.

So, what is the real difference between satisfaction and loyalty? Experience tells us, as do the definitions in several dictionaries, that satisfaction relates to the result of a process. The process may be a sales process, product performance process, or a service process. Loyalty relates to a relationship. Customer loyalty does not occur, but satisfaction can occur immediately following a successful process. Loyalty can, in fact, survive a negative process (Helgesen. 2006). It means that loyal customers will continue to purchase from a company even though they may had a bad experience.

When you examine each of these words, it’s clear that customer loyalty is somewhat dependent on satisfaction, but satisfaction does not depend on customer loyalty. That’s the difference.

b) *Misunderstanding 2: Preferential Price is the Key to Improve the Customer Loyalty.*

Many managers think that price is the key to win customer satisfaction and build customer loyalty. Undeniably, benefits such as discounts, gifts and price concessions may increase sales and market share in the short term, but it rarely keeps customers really far away from competitors and let them become the sustained buyers of the enterprise. As a matter of fact, low prices will not help to build up customer loyalty because loyal customer often has lower sensitivity of the price. Instead, the original loyal customers will become price-sensitive customers, which will ultimately damage their own interests. At the same time, low prices have reduced the market barriers and enabled the other competitors to enter the market, which allows businesses to face more competitors.

Why would loyal customers be fewer prices sensitive? They may be, but then again, they may not. It depends on how important they think price is and on the value proposition that the brand offers. Although on frequent claim of brand-equity researchers is that brand loyalty and higher prices are positively correlated, this does not automatically mean that ore loyal buyers are less price sensitive. It may simply mean that these people buy a brand at a higher price because they perceive to be better. For example, usually a brand is clearly in only one price category. Less price-conscious people then have the opportunity to buy at either the cheaper or higher price depending on whether the brand can offer a good reason (functional or psychological) to justify its higher price. It is perceived brand value, nor brand loyalty, that drives price insensitivity.

Alternatively, loyal customers may come to expect a price discount or better service. In other words, what are the rewards to the customer for his or her loyalty? If we consider the double jeopardy relationship, thee loyal customers are likely to be slightly more frequent buyers and hence may expect a volume discount

c) *Misunderstanding 3: to Enhance the Market Share Will Increase Customer Loyalty.*

Entrepreneurs who have this kind of opinion have not made clear the difference between the concept of the occupation rate of market and customer loyalty. On the premise that in the same market, market share is the result of competition between the enterprise and its competitors, but loyalty is the reflection of customer share and customer continuous ratio. If the company is keen to increase market share, it will focus on developing new customers while ignoring maintaining old customers. In fact, the increasing of market share will instead deter the customer loyalty. The reason is that once the market share is increased, the enterprise must face all kinds of customer. The enterprise should satisfy different customers with different product or service. It is likely for them to ignore the customer who has the extreme potential to become a loyal customer, but allowing them to the competitors. Thus, the loss tends to be larger and more difficult to make up.

Pursuing market share can actually go against customer loyalty. Why? Because a substantial gain in market share can increase the diversity of the company's customer base. As a result, the company is forced to serve an increasingly heterogeneous base of customers with a homogenous set of products and services. This disparity can create a dangerous dynamic within the company; the service and attention once available to high potential customers are undercut and diluted to cater to an increasing assortment of less-promising customers.

Today's companies must manage a strange paradox: in the race to win market share and its promise of profit, a company risks (and often loses) the highest margin customers and in doing so worsens profitability rather than improving it. A company interested in building a solid, loyal customer base uses an approach different from that of a company interested in simply building market share. Loyalty building requires the company to emphasize the value of its product or services and to show that it is interested in building a relationship with the customer. The company recognizes that its business is to build a stable customer base rather than make a single sale.

IV. The Strategy to Improve Customer Loyalty

a) *Adhere to the Customer-Centric Approach*

Enterprises should take customer as the center of consideration and manage it as an important strategic asset (Griffin, 2002). They should also improve the levels of customer service by conducting systematic research on customer. What's more, they are willing to improve customer loyalty degree and enforce different strategies on customers of different values in order to bring long-term and stable profits for enterprises. Executives and management personnel of corporation should establish, adhere and perform this concept so as to achieve competitive victory and fast-growth. Haeir Large Sweet Potato washing machine is a typical case of it. Rural consumers reflect that Haier's washing machines often block the waterway while washing sweet potatoes. When market need exist, we must develop it as soon as possible. Thus, the brand-new washing machine emerged, which can only not do the laundry but also wash sweet potatoes. Although the Haier Large Sweet Potatoes washing machines didn't sale very well, it truly reflects the customer-oriented philosophy in the product development.

b) *Establish Customer Database*

In order to obtain customer loyalty, we should establish detailed and effective customer information database. We can track the transactions of customers through a database. Using the technology of database, we are able to obtain statistics, analyze and conduct date mining, which can effectively measure customer loyalty. The point of contact between business and customers should never singly come from the contact between customers and service personnel. This narrow contact will make enterprises vulnerable to the interference of information distortion. We can truly listen to the voices from customers only through completing customer service system, strengthening exchanges with customers and cherishing the affection we established with customers.

For the sake of improving customer loyalty, the establishment of the database should have the following characteristics:

i. *An identification system of core customer*

The most practical method to identify the core customers is to answer three overlap problems:

1. Which parts of your customers have the best prospects of gain and are the most loyal? We should especially pay more attention to the customers which have less price sensitivity, rapid payment, less service requirement, stable preference and regular purchasing habit.
2. Which parts of your customers have the largest share in the purchase of the product or service you are offering?
3. Which parts of your customers are more valuable to you than to your customers?

According to these three questions, we can get a clear core customers list, and these customers are the key managing object in the process of the enterprise implements of loyalty marketing.

ii. *A reference system of customer buying behavior*

If an enterprise makes good use of customer database, it can understand the preferences and the purchasing behavior habits of the specific customers when each service personnel is providing products and services to them, in order to provide more targeted and personalized service.

iii. *A management system of customer withdrawal*

An enterprise should do some research on the reason of customer withdrawal and learn a lesson from the experience. It should also use this information to improve its products and services. Finally, a normal business relationship should be established with these customers. Moreover, it also helps the enterprise to establish an image of good quality so that the customer will have an emotional tendency to buy the products and services of the enterprise.

iv. *Carry out surveys and assessments of customer loyalty regularly*

In terms of the understanding of the change of customer needs, companies with higher customer loyalty often have greater input. They always follow up on the needs and grievances of customers and then take corresponding measures. The customer loyalty survey should be repeated regularly. The results will directly affect all aspects of the strategy of corporation and have an enormous impact on its earning. As a consultant in Bein said in the "Harvard Business Review", a corporation will have an extremely high profitability if it has a loss rate of zero. In their view, if the loss rate of customer reduced by 5 percent, the profits of credit insurance company will grow 25 percent and the profit of banking corporation will grow 85 percent. Enterprises should regard zero customer churn rate as the goal and carry out surveys and assessment of customer loyalty regularly (Griffin, 2002). We usually take the most commonly used methods of investigation and assessment, including contact between managers and customers, visit that sales staff access to customers and analysis that enterprises made on customer's complaints, etc. They ensure that the enterprises' decisions will respect the views of customers.

c) *Improve the Internal Service Quality and Pay Attention to the Cultivation of Employee Loyalty*

A professor of Harvard Business School holds that customer retention and employee retention promote mutually. The reason is that the products and services which the company provides for its customer are performed by the internal staffs. Their behavior and the results is the direct source of the quality evaluation of customer service. A loyal staff will take initiative to care about customers, provide services enthusiastically to the customers and feel happy to solve problems for customers. Therefore, in the process of cultivating customer loyalty, enterprises should pay attention to the internal management of employees to improve their satisfaction and loyalty in addition to external marketing work.

d) *Maintain Good Customer Relations*

In the past marketing activities, an enormous part of the business is only focused on the way to attract new customers, while ignoring to maintain existing customers. The light of the enterprise management will be shaded on the period of pre-sales and undergoing sales. It arouses many problems in the after-sale service which we fail to find immediate and effective solution. Thus, there is a great loss of existing customers. However, you must keep adding 'new customer' in order to maintain business sales. This circumstance happens over and over again. For example, a company may lose 100 clients a week, while they get another 100 customers in the same period. Although it seems to have not any impact on sales superficially, actually they should spend much more money for these new customers on advocacy, promotion and so on. Obviously, it is more expensive than the costs to maintain the old customers. It is not economical. So it is very necessary to carry on customer maintenance and after-sale service.

e) *Make Reasonable Price of Products*

In the current consumption level of residents, price is still one of the key determinants of the customer consumption. So enterprises should strive to achieve the optimal value of the product and product high quality and inexpensive products to meet the customer's demand. Making the price of product should not only satisfy the terminal consumer but also leave a profit space for the dealers at all levels. If one of the two is not satisfied with the product price, the sales channels will be blocked.

f) *Increase the 'Threshold' of Customer Conversion*

Generally speaking, brands switching or vendors converting will face a series of tangible or intangible converting cost. It takes time and effort to find, understand and access to new products during the conversion of the purchase object. Moreover, they should give up the discount that they can enjoy while purchasing original product. At the same time, they are also likely to face some economic, social and moral risk if they change this using habit. Increasing customer conversion 'threshold'—the conversion cost can weaken the appeal of competitors and reduce customer withdrawal. The most commonly use strategy is the financial reward of loyal customers. For example, we can provide price preferential, discounts or gifts for the customers according to the frequency and quantity of repeat purchase. The second way is to provide effective service supports for customer. These supports contain quality assurance, operation training, maintenance and repair etc. So the customer perceived value can be increased. The third way is to establish a long-term partnership with customers by effective communication. There are a lot of flexible and diverse means of communication, such as setting up a customer seminar, customer club and the return line.

V. Conclusion

To sum up, in order to improve customer loyalty more effectively, the enterprises should get rid of the misunderstanding of customer loyalty. What's more, they should have analyze the customer psychology carefully and consider a variety of factors comprehensively according to their actual situation. If you want to establish a successful business enterprise and want a stand in the market, you must consider customer loyalty as the pursuit of business objectives. Thereafter, you should be eager to improve constantly and set the ultimate goal of your enterprise to cultivate more loyal customers.

VI. Acknowledgements

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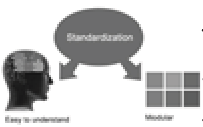

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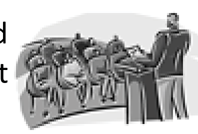

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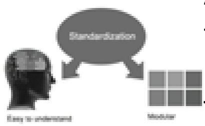

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Papers: These are reports of significant research (typically less than 7000 words equivalent, including tables, figures, references), and comprise:

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(b) A brief Summary, "Abstract" (less than 150 words) containing the major results and conclusions.

(c) Up to ten keywords, that precisely identifies the paper's subject, purpose, and focus.

(d) An Introduction, giving necessary background excluding subheadings; objectives must be clearly declared.

(e) Resources and techniques with sufficient complete experimental details (wherever possible by reference) to permit repetition; sources of information must be given and numerical methods must be specified by reference, unless non-standard.

(f) Results should be presented concisely, by well-designed tables and/or figures; the same data may not be used in both; suitable statistical data should be given. All data must be obtained with attention to numerical detail in the planning stage. As reproduced design has been recognized to be important to experiments for a considerable time, the Editor has decided that any paper that appears not to have adequate numerical treatments of the data will be returned un-refereed;

(g) Discussion should cover the implications and consequences, not just recapitulating the results; conclusions should be summarizing.

(h) Brief Acknowledgements.

(i) References in the proper form.

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30. Think and then print: When you will go to print your paper, notice that tables are not be split, headings are not detached from their descriptions, and page sequence is maintained.

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- If you desire, you may place your figures and tables properly within the text of your results part.

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- In spite of position, each table must be titled, numbered one after the other and complete with heading
- All figure and table must be adequately complete that it could situate on its own, divide from text

Discussion:

The Discussion is expected the trickiest segment to write and describe. A lot of papers submitted for journal are discarded based on problems with the Discussion. There is no head of state for how long a argument should be. Position your understanding of the outcome visibly to lead the reviewer through your conclusions, and then finish the paper with a summing up of the implication of the study. The purpose here is to offer an understanding of your results and hold up for all of your conclusions, using facts from your research and generally accepted information, if suitable. The implication of result should be visibly described. Infer your data in the conversation in suitable depth. This means that when you clarify an observable fact you must explain mechanisms that may account for the observation. If your results vary from your prospect, make clear why that may have happened. If your results agree, then explain the theory that the proof supported. It is never suitable to just state that the data approved with prospect, and let it drop at that.

- Make a decision if each premise is supported, discarded, or if you cannot make a conclusion with assurance. Do not just dismiss a study or part of a study as "uncertain."
- Research papers are not acknowledged if the work is imperfect. Draw what conclusions you can based upon the results that you have, and take care of the study as a finished work
- You may propose future guidelines, such as how the experiment might be personalized to accomplish a new idea.
- Give details all of your remarks as much as possible, focus on mechanisms.
- Make a decision if the tentative design sufficiently addressed the theory, and whether or not it was correctly restricted.
- Try to present substitute explanations if sensible alternatives be present.
- One research will not counter an overall question, so maintain the large picture in mind, where do you go next? The best studies unlock new avenues of study. What questions remain?
- Recommendations for detailed papers will offer supplementary suggestions.

Approach:

- When you refer to information, differentiate data generated by your own studies from available information
- Submit to work done by specific persons (including you) in past tense.
- Submit to generally acknowledged facts and main beliefs in present tense.

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Methods and Procedures	Clear and to the point with well arranged paragraph, precision and accuracy of facts and figures, well organized subheads	Difficult to comprehend with embarrassed text, too much explanation but completed	Incorrect and unorganized structure with hazy meaning
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Discussion	Well organized, meaningful specification, sound conclusion, logical and concise explanation, highly structured paragraph reference cited	Wordy, unclear conclusion, spurious	Conclusion is not cited, unorganized, difficult to comprehend
References	Complete and correct format, well organized	Beside the point, Incomplete	Wrong format and structuring

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