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Highlights

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Discovering Thoughts, Inventing Future

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The Importance of Managing Customer Service, Safety Quality and Benchmarking of Airports and Airlines to Enhance the Performance and Customer Loyalty

By Ngaveena Davahran & Dr. Rashad Yazdanifard
Upper Iowa University, Malaysia

Abstract- Customer service, safety quality and benchmarking are all important aspect that airports and airlines should take into account. There are several importance, drawbacks and ways to manage each of these components .It has been found that all these three components are interrelated to one another, somehow to promote better performance. This is because with benchmarking, an airport or airline will be able to improve its performance, better performance means more customers, and more customers' means more expectation of good service and proper management of safety. All of these expectations needs to be fulfilled in order for them to feel secure and at the same time would be more willing to come back in the future.

Keywords: customer service, safety quality, bench-marking, airport, airline.

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Ngaveena Davahran [α] & Dr. Rashad Yazdanifard [σ]

Abstract- Customer service, safety quality and benchmarking are all important aspect that airports and airlines should take into account. There are several importance, drawbacks and ways to manage each of these components .It has been found that all these three components are interrelated to one another, somehow to promote better performance. This is because with benchmarking, an airport or airline will be able to improve its performance, better performance means more customers, and more customers' means more expectation of good service and proper management of safety. All of these expectations needs to be fulfilled in order for them to feel secure and at the same time would be more willing to come back in the future.

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I. Introduction

Customer service, safety quality and benchmarking have been few of the important concerns of airports and airlines worldwide. There has been a greater significant in prioritising customer in order to enhance the benefits in the industry. Through the airport announcement of trade publications in the aviation industry, customers understanding of what service quality is, has become a source of proof to ensure that managers of this field knows how essential they are (Fodness, 2007) Scholarly and researchers have routinely evaluated customers opinion on the service quality of airports in order to benchmark it to the achievements targeted, and the thoughts of the consumers will allow the path for enhancement and in hand bypass the possible loss of prized passenger (Fodness, 2007). Benchmarking is a term that is used to define the vital tool of planning to aim, improvise and achieve a desirable goal that is logical. Therefore it has to be a continuous action in trying to discover the most suitable form of system that will bring the organisation to a remarkable performance. Thus airport benchmarking has many reasons to be implement in order to improvise their performance both externally and internally that will eventually even improve their profitability. As for the safety and security, it is a form of protection that has been a crucial focus by every government. This is evident due to the many devastating attacks by terrorist such as the September 11, 2001 attack that still seems fresh to everyone especially to the citizen's of the United States of America. Due to that incident, the US airlines went through a major financial loss of approximately $3 billion (Rhoades, 2006). Therefore all three of these concerns are somehow interrelated to one another to enhance and boost each other in terms of performance, quality and security of an airport and airline.

II. Customer Service

Customer service has been an important part of any business organisation. In fact it has become a world of customer orientated business today, showing how important treating customers truly are. There has never been a lack of proposals and opinions on how to improvise the standards of customer service (Rhoades, 2008). Maintaining current customers and establishing relationship with new customers is vital to any business approach (Bamford, 2007). However every customer has their own perception of what customer service should be hence there are a variety of concerns that has to be taken into account when an organisation is trying to manage its customer service. As for airports and airlines, customer service can be divided into many parts. There are also difference in terms of preferences according to different nation, for example for the American's, authenticity and comfort of the flight are the key to satisfaction, while for the Korean passengers, risk determinant predictions are one of the type of customer satisfaction that is preferred in an airport and airline (Bruning, 2009). Customers always distinguish an airports and airlines service by the performance and how precisely the organisation has performed in accordance to what have been promised. (Tsantoulis, 2008). It is also important to know that customers do not only analyze the service in terms of what they perceive, but they would also correlate it with the different experiences they had with different airport organisations, and from that they would choose the best provider.

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III. Managing Customer Service

There are many ways that this industry is able to combat customer dissatisfaction which is by letting their customers know of the available cheapest fares, make sure to keep the passenger up to date if there is any form of flight delays or even cancellations, expending the baggage restrictions, showing concerns toward the delayed passenger by providing some consolations for the inconvenience and most importantly is to acknowledge promptly to any complaints given. Mistakes are bound to happen in any sort of situations and in any type of organisations. Hence in the airport and airline industries, when it does happen customers are hoping to receive acknowledgment in the time of need, good support to be provided by the employees which at the same time has be courteous, knowledgeable and provides warm attentions. These are some of the vital steps to be taken in order to maintain customer's certainty that the management is prioritising customer's satisfaction (Rhoades, 2006). Whenever there is a downturn in the service which will be accompanied by customer's complaints, the complaints should be handled efficiently, quickly and properly. This is extremely important to ensure the satisfaction and retention of customer to the industry, and at the same time promote customer loyalty. Hence one of the strategies to be implemented to increase customer satisfaction is to always include service recovery.

IV. Measuring Customer Service

The quality of customer service is able to be identified through the conduct of surveys whereby, it is a process of giving out question to usual customers on some of the common problems and concerns of customer service satisfactions. These surveys are usually managed by organisations such as Frequent Flyer. Typically the type of questions that are usually asked in these surveys will bring out ten elements such as schedule performance, signing in to the airport, lodging services, relaxing chairs, location of the exit gates, internal design of the aircraft, flight attendants, after services provided by flights, meals availability and programs for persistent passengers (Rhoades, 2006). Another method that has been used to measure the quality of customer service is by analyzing the delays. European Commission has noticed the duty to identify the sources of delays in airports and airlines using the (CODA) which stand for Central Office for Delay Analysis. This has been an important intention done by the government in order to overcome the frustrations gone through by customers.

V. Internet and Technological Usage to Promote Customer Service

Internet has also contributed to the enhancement of the service provided. Customers are now able to print their own tickets and bag tags without having to wait in long waiting lines which can also be another reason of poor customer service satisfaction. As for the assistants of customer service, handheld computer such as the Ipads are being used to speed up the procedures that requires waiting in long lines by the customers. Thus this has allowed the management to exceed customers' expectation in terms of frequency and speed of service provided by using the available technology that the world has to offer today. Although internet has its own benefits in improving service quality, but it also has its own disadvantages that most airlines are undergoing today. The available information on pricing that is online is now making it much easier for customers to contrast prices and choose the lowest, hence low cost carrier (LCC) are much likely to benefit from this (Kumar, 2009).

VI. Research on Customer Service Quality

Researchers have also implied that customers evaluate the service quality in accordance to 5 distinctive categories that are the tools under the SERVQUAL which are reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. The greatest emphasis that must be placed among the five dimensions would be the reliability because a customer wants a service that they are able to trust and depend on. However, sometime research's that are conducted to monitor customer service provided are not information's by the actual customers itself (Fodnes, 2007). However it has been determined that within an organisation, its performance of customer service and satisfaction of customers shows a great correlation (Bamford, 2007).

VII. Loyalty vs. Dissatisfied Customer

Sometimes customers that are not satisfied quietly decide to change to a different airport provider or spread out negative opinions of the industry to other people which is worse then switching to another provider. When dissatisfied customer turns into having an unpleasant relationship with the organisation, their word- of mouth would give out a devastating negative impact. (Saha, 2009). But there are a few main reasons on why sometimes customers are actually hesitant to directly approach to the airport management and give out the complaint. Authors Dube, Maute and Singh have identified four key points to why customers are reluctant out the complaint. Authors Dube, Maute and Singh have identified four key points to why customers are reluctant in complaining. First is that they assume that the organisation will not respond in the first place, second customers don't intend to face the person responsible of the dissatisfaction, third they are worried of how time consuming and high effort are needed to complain and lastly, some of them are actually unaware of their rights as a consumer to give complains towards any dissatisfactions. Despite this, it is vital for the management of any airport and airlines to always effectively resolve customers concerns and frustrations. This because it's always better to have loyal customers rather than to create a 'terrorist' customer that would tarnish the reputation of the organisation at any opportunity given. The degree of loyalty can be also determined by the unfavourable emotional experience that passengers go through during a service which has been identified in current research studies (Petzer, 2012). With proper handling of the negative experience, costumers would move towards becoming a more loyal one. When customer dissatisfaction has dropped, this will also inevitably cause higher customer loyalty and when customers are loyal, they would start recommending to people. Thus this will be a great deal and way of multiplying brand value and not to forget it is also considered a form of free advertising for the organisation. It is now quite obvious that when customers are satisfied this will in hand encourage the return of customers to do more business with the organisation, and at the same time make them give suggestions to others (Nadiri, 2008). Hence there is no uncertainty that the accomplishment and growth of the airline and airport industry is strongly related to its service quality (Chau, 2009).

VIII. Successful Airline Customer Service

Currently, international airports have been investigated massively in term of their performance and productivity (Tseng, 2008). In the findings, it has been identified that there are airlines that have actually practised making sure that customer service is at its best and at the same time, continuously making the effort to improve its performance. For example would be the Singapore Airline (SIA). (SIA) have won ample of awards such as best cabin crew service proving that the organization makes sure to take care of its customers. (SIA) focuses on giving excellent service and making sure to continue benchmarking to improve performance. The company has been active in assuring that they keep exceeding the expectations of their customers. (SIA)'s Singapore Girls (Wirtz, 2008) is another interchangeable role in identifying the airlines service. Most other airlines have yet to be able to brand their crew as successfully as the (SIA) which gives them another competitive advantage. Another key to the top notch customer service provided by (SIA) is because of their emphasis on training their employees. They have implemented the longest and thorough training of as long as four months. (Wirtz, 2008). Another airport organisation with excellent customer service would be the British Airway (BA) where the organisation has actually launched a 'Customer First' campaign as early as in 1983. This proves that customer service has long been a concern of the airport and airline industry. (BA) campaign was done with proper findings of what consumers expect when it comes to personalized service. Southwest airline is also another organisation that has a notable and impressive customer service performance record. This airline makes sure to always be on time, give efficient delivery of customer's baggage's and not to forget to always smile (D.L., 2007). As for the Emirates airlines which is a Dubai established airline, their customer service is known to be outstanding with a slogan of ''Exploring outstanding service, Technology and Comfort' showing their commitment of making sure their passengers have a good experience travelling (Markillie, 2008). To prove how well the service provided by the Emirate airlines, in 2010, a survey was done to compare 7 large scaled airlines that consist of Air France, British Airways, Emirates, Etihad Airways, Qatar Airways, Swiss Air, and Virgin Atlantic Airways (Sundaram, 2011) and the results have rated Emirate as the best in providing service.

IX. Procedural and Convivial Services

Customer also perceives airport and airline according to the two different types of service that are provided which are the procedural and convivial. Procedural is a service that delivers the customers with quality service that the customers need through an outcome related method such as going through customer's profile or even by information that can be received through questions asked. While convivial service is a more interpersonal type of method used whereby the service providers are the main people that are responsible to identity the needs and wants of the customers. When a provider has this ability to distinguish different kind of emotions of customers, they will then be able to provide the best and most accurate service needed by each type of unique customers. Thus it is understandable that for those service providers that are able to nurture customer's emotions is most likely going to provide better service quality (Bel, 2008). As for the convivial service, it will also measure the quality of the communications between customers and the employees that will determine and give an impact towards the impression of the organisation (Babbar, 2008). Researchers have always undermined the relevance of the contact between customers and employee in order to provide good quality customer service. These two types of service are also useful in managerial perspective to manage human resource.

X. Low Cost Carrier (Lcc) vs. Full Service Airlines

Another aspect to be considered is the quality of service between Low cost carrier (LCC) and full service airlines. (LCC) have managed to penetrate into this industry due to the dissatisfaction that customers have gone through mainly with the cost of the flight tickets. This has open up the opportunities for (LCC) to enter into the market. As an example, in Europe, there has been a rapid extensions and increment of low cost airlines that has enable more people to now travel within Europe. The reputation and good deed of cost have always been preferred by customers. (Tiernan, 2008). This has caused the traditional carriers to undergo tough competition. They now have to either lower down their prices to challenge their competitor or increase their customer service quality that cannot be done by the (LCC) due to cost restriction. However in a traditional airline or more commonly known as a full service airline, customers expect more than the common services that are provided such as safety that is a usual expectation. (Suhartanto, 2012). Hence that could be another method of competing with the (LCC) and the same time an opportunity to provide better customer service. This will eventually help to gain more loyal customers whom are willing to pay for the prize of good quality customer service.

XI. Safety Quality

Safety and security of airports and airlines have been increasingly tightened due to the significant increment of risk such as terrorist attacks and maintenance problems. Because of that, the management of airports and airlines have taken this concern as extremely important to ensure that their customers are well taken care of and at the same time, it will enhance the organisations credibility. When it comes to spending for maintenance to increase safety quality, there has always been a sense of disagreement. Research has proven to show a stirring controversy because at one side of the report, it appears to be that when carriers spend more on the maintenance it shows a positive rate in reduction of accidents, while in another finding, such connections does not occur (Rhoades, 2006). However, though there are conflicts of agreement, there are also a considerable amount of reports that shows when more is spent on maintenance, safety problems do decrease at the same time. The safety rate can be determined by the amount of accidents that happens, air crash, pilot change, and the number of incident which will then be divided by the sum of departures in a yearly basis. Another method of identifying the relationship between the cost of maintenance and the quality of safety is by using the R2 which is used to measure the percentage of variance of both of the variables. It has been found that the carriers in Alaska as well as West America scored low percentage of R2, but at the same time it has to be noted that both of this carriers have also been alleged of lack of maintenance and inadequate records management. Despite that, most of the carriers show a positive relationship between the cost of maintenance and safety, hence as safety issues goes down the cost of maintenance goes up (Rhoade, 2006). However, spending alone on maintenance is not going to guarantee improvement in the quality of safety. This is because even thought how much money is spent on the maintenance, it will not improve the safety quality without the correct procedures, adequate trainings, and legitimate records. Hence money alone is not going to increase the safety quality. Another risk to the safety of this industry is the fatigue episodes such as sleep declination. (Perhinschi, 2010). It has been accepted generally that pilot exhaustion also causes an increase of accidents that distorts the safety quality that passengers are hoping for.

XII. Risk Management

Risk management is another method used to ensure the safety quality of airports. It uses cautionary indicators, and suitable ways of identifying possible threats. The identification is an important aspect of managing risk whereby it ensures the risk to be recognised, filtered and rank all the risk that can possibly occur during an event. Risk workshop are also organised in order to help in the identification and finding enough quick fix to ensure to alleviate the problem. In the airport industry, it is common to have checklist that can be electronic or on paper because it can help minimize the man made errors in a high risk environment. This practice has been considered as mandatory in some conditions and when that happens, it will become a part of flight protocol (Enoma, 2007). Hence risk management is a method used to aid the process of overcoming problems if they occur and at the same time try to keep them from happening. (MATRA) that stands for multi agency threat and risk assessments is one example of a system that is created to asses 5 trial airports in the United Kingdom (UK). After the trial had been done, (MATRA) is now carried out by every airport in the UK which gives a clear scheme to understand about safety and security. This system also acts as an assessment of risk in airports which consists of criminal to terrorist activities, determining the flaws in the current safety of the airport and to establish strategy to manage risk. All of the airports in UK have its own representative members of (MATRA) from the stakeholders, ministry, and specific security operations that are keen in being a part of the system.

XIII. Facilities Management and other Security Enhancement

Earlier planning to manage risk can minimize the problems in hand but it will not remove it completely (ENOMA, 2009). But other than that, another method used to manage the safety quality of airports is through the Facilities Management (FM). Its purpose is to ensure that safety and security of the airport which relies upon the capability to distinguish, correspond and handle circumstances that are threatening. This will assist in supporting the airports management objectives. Hence FM has a significant role in handling the safety and security of airports. Airports that are redesigned to facilitate the safety and security will be inspected to see if it is suitable with the framework of the organisation. In times of distress, the airport has facilities to be provided to the passengers as well as their loved ones. During emergencies, the allocation of passengers, feedback on panic attacks or natural disasters are the duty of the airport management. Police forces are also sometimes divided into branches to be involved in the safety and security of airports. For example the Scottish police force have specific department that specialises in securing the airports under the (BAA SECURITY) team. Hence they are also considered part of the labour force in the airport. Their job is to ensure the airport is secure by enforcing security patrol, security fences and to scan the baggages and belongings of passengers. Security and the safety of airport has been a concern to many and that is why every passenger are required to go through screening, not just for their belongings but also screening of their body through x-rays and detector machines. These machines help detect any form of metal that could be dangerous to be carried on board.

XIV. Benchmarking

As stated previously, benchmarking is a form of tool to improvise the performance of a certain organisation. The process requires contrasting between an industry to another to help obtain important details and methods to help the industry to undergo internal and external benchmarking. When it comes to airports, continuous progress has been a crucial and vital goal worldwide. For benchmarking to work, a point of reference first has to be identified. This means the management group has to decide whether to focus on external or internal benchmarking. Internal benchmarking would be, within the airport, comparisons are made to measure the difference in performance achieved by the different departments within the airport. As for external benchmarking, it would be focusing on improving an organisation while comparing it to the competitor of the airport. Benchmarking has been done in terms of cost and financial data's, how competent the airport economic is, and on the conducts of retails. Many airport organisation have used ample of approaches in benchmarking according to the levels of its departments. For example would be swapping of data among the dominant European airport such as Frankfurt and Amsterdam. This is a type of external benchmarking since these two airports are competitors that exchange information to improvise their operations (Graham, 2006).

XV. Sustainable Benchmarking

Other than that, environmental performance has also been a recent concern of benchmarking of airports. In every management system, sustainable business management has recently been a popular key topic to be discussed due to the rising degradation of the planet. It is quite evident that most of the economic developments and activities have given a significant environmental damage, thus airports that contain a bigger amount of materials and population would definitely somehow contribute to a lower sustainability (Upham, 2005). Therefore for the airport and airline industries, it has been a priority to be measure and improve its environmental concerns of being more sustainable. These industries are now regularly measuring the degree of its environmental consequences, making environmental objectives as well as targets to be achieved. Environmental sustainability reports have been known to have inadequate proper information that is important and necessary to be given for correlation purpose. Details required in the report tend to disregard the paramount points to provide as standardised indicators of the environmental performance. It can be said that the environmental feature of preparing a report in the airport and airline industry is the same to a non- standardized form of a quantitative performance of the environment (Upham, 2005). By having a uniformed reporting, benchmarking would be easier to be used for comparing and at the same time aid managers and stakeholders to make decisions and evaluate the actual performances. Nonetheless there are still a few reliable methods and indicators to measure the sustainability, for instance the Heathrow Airport Holdings which is also known as BAA. BAA is the operator to four British airports that is based in the United Kingdom. It evaluates its environmental sustainability through the standardised Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) that has produced a guideline for a sustainable reporting application. As for different countries such as Germany, its German Airport association (ADV) produces its own guideline that allows the airports within Germany and others such as Zurich airports to proceed in accordance to it. Hence it is clear that there is no unified guidance when it comes to a sustainable environmental benchmarking. However the usual types of indicators of environment that is commonly measured are noise and air pollutions such as carbon dioxide and nitrogen dioxide, the usage and wastage of water, recycling activities, and most importantly waste treatments.

XVI. Drawbacks of Benchmarking

Despite all the efforts of benchmarking to improvise the performance, without a proper insight of how the organisation works, it will affect how the airport or airline will operate and in time increase the cost of operations (Allen, 2007). The beginning period of benchmarking was never always easily done especially in the public region. The establishment of this tool was viewed with hesitation and disbelief in allowing a change within the organisation that were prominent within the workplace. (Allen, 2007). Other problems of benchmarking would be that all the data and reports that are available could be not relevant and the language which conveys the information's are usually very hard to understand in order to implement it. Hence it is an unfortunate situation for benchmarking to proceed, because for an improvement to occur, a reliable, easy to understand and relevant source of information must first be given. Another limitation of airport and airline benchmarking would be partial benchmarking. Partial benchmarking is when information's comes from data that are easily accessible and is given in exchange rather than what is actually required which is the tested and verified performance measure (Graham, 2006). Hence the term partial is used because only the available and convenient information's are given that can be puzzling because only the "partial' or in other words the chosen ones are shared. Ever since benchmarking started to be more widely accepted and used by many airports and airlines, the organisations are requiring and are more interested in using a more systematic and econometric plan to gain a better perceptive on how to develop its performance.

XVII. Other Reasons for Benchmarking

More managers should also be open to using benchmarking. Benchmarking is known to be another method of management strategy that can be applied in measuring the performance of the organisation, budget, improvise, enhance and motivate a better plan to boost the capability of the industry. Once the managers have identified on how and what can be used as managerial purpose, they can then use is to help achieve the goals set and that will be the reason on what and why they should engage in benchmarking the industry. Furthermore the tensions and constraints of the management to convey a reformed performance along a varied dimension of actions have multiplied in the recent time. This is due to the need and perceptions that the airport and airline industries have to be independently sufficient in terms of finance. Hence this could be achieved if changes are made within the industry and thus would be able to attain the success of being self sufficient financially. Currently airports and airlines have changed from focusing in operational objectives to management which is why financial return is indeed an important expect in the present day. It has also turned into a more commercialized industry than it was before. Moving towards a more private and commercialize industry, the need to show a continuous development in its performance, has escalated (Fry, 2005) ever since the requirement and interest towards airports and airlines has developed from the connection on ineffective operations and the rise of its cost

XVIII. Discussion

Based on all the findings, there are major importance of managing airport in terms of benchmarking, customer service and safety quality. Benchmarking has had its success in developing the performance of airports and airlines. Indeed without the attempt to improvise, an organisation will not be able to grow. Hence through benchmarking, it provides a mechanism to establish a better standard of performance. The external and internal benchmarking is an interesting way of improvising the industry because it is important to not only learn from the competitor's performance but it is wise to also check on their own flaws as well. Benchmarking has also made it possible to run a more sustainable system. In the recent year, the environment has been contaminated by the globalization and growing of many new industries. However airports have been known to be one of larger scale cooperation that will contribute to be bigger range of pollution. Although there is yet to be a universal method to measure the sustainability standards of an airport, but the awareness and some measures have been taken into action such as the (GRI). By taking these steps sooner or later, there will eventually be a universal form to measure sustainability, because stakeholders such as customers are known to be more willing participate in an organisation that is concern with the environment .Through the findings, it has also been discovered that though benchmarking has its benefits, but to implement it has been a hassle due to no standardized form of data information that needs to be given (Graham, 2006). Despite the drawbacks faced, benchmarking is indeed something for the management of the airport and airline to look into in order to identify, compare and improvise their current system. By doing so, it can only do more good than harm. Manager must therefore always be open to benchmarking to ensure continuous excellence that will also at the same time attract more customers.

Other than that, when it comes to customer service, it definitely has to be among the top priority of the airport and airline industry, because without customers there is no business. Hence customer satisfaction is a vital key to the retention of customer and gaining their loyalty at the same time. Having loyal customer is much cheaper than trying to gain new customers therefore it is wise to always ensure that they are satisfied. There are ample of ways for each different airport and airlines to be able to deliver good customer service such as how Emirates airline provides fresh new ideas to enhance their customer satisfaction, such as private first class suites and their passengers are even able to use their mobile phone on board (Nataraja, 2011). This is not the only way to ensure the best for the customers. Many other airports and airline have performed a significant good job in doing so, but all in their own and unique ways that goes up for the same purpose. Trying to avoid dissatisfied customer is an essential point to be noted. This is because an angry customer is able to perform his or her rights to damage the reputation of the organisation. That kind of degradation can cause major losses, whereby even the trust and loyalty of certain customer could be put to risk as well. Hence treating customer is the most important component and the key for it to survive the market.

Moreover, airports and airlines have also been more pressurized to make sure that their safety and security are tight. This has been one of the most popular concerns ever since the major terrorist attack that has been targeting airports and airlines to sadly cause the lost of many precious lives. Due to that, passengers/ customers are more concerned if the airport and airline that they are going to are doing enough to ensure their safety are taken care of. For that reason, these industries have been multiplying their efforts to make sure that they are able to at some extent provide proper safety and security to their customers. This has been done by creating many risk management systems to identify the root of the problem and find the best ways to handle and avoid when the risk actually happens. Hiring outside forces such as the police department to be a part of the security system has also been a valuable procedure to help reduce the risk of attacks. By looking at all three main components which are the customer service, safety quality and benchmarking, it can be said that they are actually all interrelated to one another. Benchmarking is a system to enhance the performance of the airports and airlines. When this is achieved, more customers are willing to do business with them. When that happens, customers will be expecting good quality of customer service as they are now a part of making sure the organisation stays alive. However customers do not only want good services these days, but at the same time their safety has been a major concern as well. Hence all three of these key points of an airport and airline management are therefore interrelated at the end of the day to ensure that they perform well and most importantly they gain the trust and loyalty of their customers.

XIX. Conclusion

In every airport and airlines industry there have been many challenges to be faced and overcome. However with the existence of proper management of good customer service, safety quality and well used benchmarking, the industry will be able to perform at its best. Every organisation is bound to make mistakes. However these mistakes are also going to be the reason of improvising the whole management system. Benchmarking has to start being more widely practiced by airports and airlines worldwide to obtain better standards. Without it, it would be difficult to find the errors of the organisation and to develop from it. Most importantly is the customer. Good customer service is the key to customer satisfaction. Happy customer will become loyal customer and loyal customers' means more profitability. Hence it is the dream of any business organisation to achieve that. In order to do so, the airport and airline industry must always find ways to promote their concerns towards their customer. Providing good service is not the only component of satisfying customer and enhancing the performance of the airport but the safety and security has been a vital part of maintaining the organisation as well as the customers trust. When airports and airlines are capable of managing its safety and security well, it will not only boost the confidence of their customers but at the same time promote it to be better known and more establish in the eye of the public.

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Characters with Disabilities in Brazilian Telenovelas: Almost Invisible Consumers

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Keywords: people with disabilities, cultural texts, brazilian telenovela, consumer behavior, qualitative research.

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Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:

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Marina Dias De Faria [α] & Leticia Moreira Casotti [σ]

Abstract- Although important vehicles of culture and of society's values and perspectives, cultural texts represent little explored possibilities in the research focusing on the behavior of consumers with disabilities. In Brazil, telenovelas, or evening TV drama series, present as suitable cultural texts for such studies, in view of the importance of this type of programming as material that both crosses class lines and has national penetration. The objective of this study was to discuss how the consumption decisions and practices of people with disabilities are presented in Brazilian telenovelas. To achieve the objective, 22 Brazilian telenovela scenes showing characters with disabilities in situations of consumption were reviewed. The results of the study call attention to the need for companies, public institutions and society in general to review how they address these almost invisible consumers, who are often overlooked as potential customers and excluded from public policy actions.

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I. Introduction

Cultural texts such as music, movies and TV drama series constitute important conveyers of the prevailing perspectives of the society that produces and consumes such products. For this reason, cultural texts have been defended and used in academic research on consumption and culture (Askegaad, 2010; Hirschman, Scott & Wells, 1998; Kozinets, 2001). When it comes to cultural texts related to consumer experiences involving people with disabilities (PwD), however, the dearth of studies is conspicuous, especially when one takes into account the recurrence of characters with disabilities in dramaturgy (Norden, 1994). Goodley and Bolt (2010) assert that, given the current socio-cultural context, analyses of disability based on cultural texts are needed all the more.

From a socio-hegemonic conception of the disabled person as someone who is useless and/or worthy of pity, people with disabilities are represented in cultural texts based on the corresponding stereotypes, thus constituting the structuring of a mechanism of oppression (Darke, 1998; Nelson, 2003). In the case of feature films, commonplace are representations of people with disabilities that depict prejudice and the difficulties of inclusion and accessibility; indeed, such difficulties do reproduce many of the problems faced by such individuals in situations of consumption. DePoy and Gilson (2010), for example, mention a scene in the documentary, Vital Signs: Crip Culture Talks Backthat presents a scene in which an airline attendant tries to accommodate a deaf-mute in a wheelchair. In other cases, the bias is masked as ostensible humor. Barnes (1992) discusses a series called The Young Ones to show an example of comic scene of consumption: a blind character tries to buy a bar of chocolate in a supermarket, and everything ends up in a veritable frenzy, involving the customers and supermarket employees.

In Brazil the heavy production of telenovelas has established a consistent output of cultural products based on which Brazilian nationality is problematized, identity is established, and individual / family / group behavior patterns are discussed via a pedagogy coordinated by the media (Hamburger, 2005; Oguri, Chauvel & Suarez, 2009). Joyce (2012), studying the representation in Brazilian telenovelas of racial issues, argues that telenovelas are excellent research tools, not only with regard to the way they seek to portray the daily life of Brazilians, but also because telenovelas are open works that viewers can influence as the plot unfolds.

Silveira (2010, p. 2) believes there are three levels of investigation that make researching the representations of people with disabilities (PwD) in Brazilian telenovelas a worthwhile pursuit: "the studies of media representations; the political importance of these representations as portrayals of the theme of inclusion; the importance of the telenovela as programming in as much as it is both national in scope and cuts across class lines."

The focus on Brazil for research on consumers with disabilities is currently of particular relevance, as the country prepares to host major international events, including the World Cup in 2014 and the 2016 Olympics Games, and must concern itself with meeting the demands of tourists with disabilities as well as Paralympic athletes (Faria & Carvalho, 2010). The neglect of people with disabilities in Brazil occurs despite the fact that such individuals account for approximately 24% of the population, representing more than 45 million people with disabilities. Of these, some 16 million have serious or very serious disabilities (Brazilian Institute of geography and statistics, 2010).
In light of this scenario, the present work aims to discuss how the decisions and practices of consumption of

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people with disabilities are presented in Brazilian telenovelas. The research undertaken here follows the transformative research paradigm, as interpreted by Mertens (2007). Transformative research arises from a dissatisfaction with the way in which the dominant paradigms of scientific research address issues related to socially disadvantaged and/or excluded individuals (Mertens, 2009). For Mick (2006), who illustrates his arguments with examples from studies focusing on PwD, the adoption of the transformative paradigm in marketing represents the first step towards consumer research as something that is for the benefit and welfare of humankind, and not just companies.

II. Conceptual Background

a) *People with disabilities in cultural texts*

For Norden (1994), the relationship between a society and the cultural products it produces is reflective of a causal relationship: movies, TV series and telenovelas demonstrate aspects of the society that produces them, while in multiple ways society mirrors the values reproduced in film and other dramaturgical representations of such social grouping. Sandlin and Maudlin (2012) point out that a review of these texts can help understand the proliferation of stereotypes.

Stereotypic assumptions about people with disabilities are based on superstitions, myths and beliefs established over the centuries, which are inherent to our socio-culture and are reproduced by means of media communication and the products of the culture industry (Barnes, 1992). Harris (2002) argues that individuals who do not usually have contact with people with disabilities acquire their knowledge about disabilities from television and cinema. This author points out that the representations of these people in such media are predominantly negative.

A frequent problem with representations of people with disabilities in movies, according to Darke (1998), is the conception of a disability as a difficulty experienced by a single person. This view clashes head on with the current approach to disability based on a collective model, i.e., in consonance with an approach whereby social and political dimensions of the issue prevail (Vehmas, 2008).

As a rule, in cultural texts produced by the mainstream, there are three frequent possibilities regarding representations of people with disabilities (Cameron, 2007): (1) pathetic beings, worthy of pity, sometimes tragically comical; (2) sinister or vindictive beings, or beings marked by evil; and (3) individuals who exhibit great bravery in the face of the tragedy of their lives. Nelson (2003) presents two further possibilities of stereotypic images for people with disabilities in dramaturgy: (1) creatures who should not have survived and who would be better off dead; and (2) a dead weight; an individual incapable of interacting with his/her benefactors for the benefit of both.

According to Barnes (1992), there are ten prevailing media stereotypes of people with disabilities, especially in movies produced by the film industry: (1) people deserving of pity; (2) objects of the violence of others; (3) wicked / cruel / criminal individuals; (4) elements fostering an atmosphere of misery or degradation in the various scenarios encountered by other characters ; (5) supremely crippled; (6) targets of ridicule; (7) persons with disabilities as their sole and very own enemy; (8) burdens for their families; (9) sexual aberrations; and (10) individuals unable to participate in community life.

From a semiotic analysis, Harris (2002) points out two fundamental recurring structures for movies whose drama revolves around PwD. The first brings the following sequence of events: (a) a person becomes disabled; (b) the deficiency leads to self-pity; (c) the person with disabilities moves away from society; and (d) one or more people without disabilities show the person with disabilities that life is worthwhile. The second screenplay is structured as follows: (a) a person is born or becomes disabled; (b) the disability leads to bitterness, despair and/or violence; (c) the person with disabilities seeks to take revenge on society; and d) one or more people without disabilities come to the rescue of the PwD. Currently, as a function of the imperative of inclusion of diversity, images of people with disabilities in cultural texts should probably portray them in situations of enjoyment of the myriad opportunities offered by contemporary consumer society (Douglas & Isherwood, 2009). However, as discussed below, this is not what happens in the context of the cultural industry's recent representations of PwD in Brazilian telenovelas.

b) *Consumption and people with disabilities*

Mansfield and Pinto (2008) characterize people with disabilities based on the concept of consumption vulnerability, that is, people with diminished access to goods and services. This difficulty to play the role of consumers can be observed even when these people must get from one place to another: taxi drivers, for example, often choose not to pick up the disabled (Jain, 2002).

For Doessel and Williams (2011), from a socio-economic perspective, disabilities manifest themselves in the form of fewer available practices vis-à-vis the market for a given cohort of society, who remain on the sidelines of the main activities of production and consumption. Nicholson, Kulyukin and Coster (2009) argue that the removal of social conviviality and dependence with respect to other people limit consumption possibilities and opportunities for people with disabilities. Faria, Silva and Ferreira (2012), in turn, suggest that marketing theorists and practitioners may disregard people with disabilities as consumers.

Moreover, even in moments of leisure, people with disabilities must overcome barriers (Poria, Reichel & Brandt, 2011). Studying the consumption of leisure, Burns, Reichel and Brandt (2009) point out that the biggest obstacles for people with disabilities are not architectural barriers, but rather the barriers created by other consumers who harbor bias vis-à-vis the disabled. Emira and Thompson (2011) emphasize the negative effects that result from the lack of access to leisure in the development of children with disabilities and point out that some parents find it impossible to involve such children in leisure activities.

Still with regard to children with disabilities, increasingly common is the defense that such children should study in regular schools. Inclusive education, however, is still in need of development in Brazil, especially with regard to teacher training (Anhão, Pfeifer & Santos, 2010; Iarskaia-Smirnov and Romanov, 2007). In an autobiographical work that recounts the experience of a father of two children with learning disabilities, Fournier (2008) laments of never being able to see his children going to school.

Rituals and consumption are key elements for building and maintaining the individual and family identity (Epp & Price, 2008). In line with this perspective, Baker (2006) argues that marketing academics should devote themselves to investigating how people with disabilities can build their individual and collective identities through consumption.

III. Methodology

In this study, fragments of culture industry products—Brazilian telenovelas, to be specific—are analyzed in accordance with the methodology proposed by Hirschman, Scott and Wells (1998), which is to establish relationships between consumption practices and cultural texts that represent such consumption.

Arnould and Thompson (2005) and Askegaard (2010) view cultural texts as tools to identify lifestyles, identities and ideologies. Mikos and Perrotta (2012) are proponents of analysis of television programs, with the goal to understand behavioral aspects; furthermore, Joyce (2012) believes that in the case of Brazilian society, telenovelas are prominent among such programming.

The collection of data for this study included cultural texts selected from Brazilian telenovelas (i) previously presented on open television channels and that (ii) cast people with disabilities as fixed characters of the series. The cultural texts collected for the survey were obtained via the Internet website YouTube. Hartley (2009) mentions YouTube as a powerful channel for reproduction and for the posting of cultural texts.

It should be acknowledged that not all telenovelas already produced by Brazilian TV that included characters with disabilities were included in the study. At the outset, sources were referred to such as Menescal, Michalawski, Lemos and Monteiro(2010), Postal (2008), Silva (2008) and Souto Maior (2006) to get access to information regarding telenovelas featuring PwD, which had excerpts posted on YouTube; then, via the smart search facility built into YouTube itself, additional telenovelas that addressed the same issue were found. In all, more than 250 scenes from 22 different telenovelas were analyzed, depicting a total of 28 disabled characters. In the analysis of the results, certain characters appear prominently for being the ones who are most strongly linked to introducing to the storyline discussions on consumption practices.

The treatment of data followed the steps below: (a) retrieval and selection of scenes; (b) syntactic analysis of the narrative via dynamic and concrete observation of scenic elements, such as actors and dramatic action; (c) analysis of the contexts of the scenes. The discussion of results followed the guidelines of categories of analysis recommended by Hirschman, Scott and Wells (1998). After selecting the scenes in which the characters with disabilities appeared in consumption situations, the dialogues of the characters present, the settings, and the scene objects were analyzed.

IV. Representation of the Results

a) *Characters with disabilities in Brazilian telenovelas*

To aid in the understanding of the representations of the characters with disabilities in the telenovelas, Table 1 was prepared, providing a general information framework for the 22 television series analyzed for the study.

Table 1 : Characters with disabilities in Brazilian telenovelas

Year	Telenovela	Free translation	Character	Disability
1978	Te Contei?	Have I told you?	Léo	Visual
1982	Final Feliz	Happy Ending	Rafael	Mental
1982	Sol de Verão	Summer sun	Abel	Auditory
1989	Sexo dos Anjos	Fruitless Pursuits	Tomás	Auditory
1993	O Mapa da Mina	Map of the Mine	Marquinho	Down's syndrome
1993	Mulheres de Areia	Women of the Sand	Tonho da Lua	Mental
1993	Renascer	Born again	José Inocêncio	Motor

1995	História de Amor	Love Story	Assunção	Motor
1997	A Indomada	The Untamed One	Emanuel	Mental
1998	Torre de Babel	Tower of Babel	Jamanta	Mental
2000	Laços de Família	Family Ties	Paulo	Multiple
2000	Laços de Família	Family Ties	Edu	Motor (temporary)
2002	Coração de Estudante	A Student's Heart	Oswaldo	Down's syndrome
2002	Coração de Estudante	A Student's Heart	João	Down's syndrome
2005	Belíssima	Beautiful	Jamanta	Mental
2005	América	America	Dudu	Visual
2005	América	America	Flor	Visual
2005	América	A Student's Heart	Jatobá	Visual
2006	Páginas da Vida	Pages from Life	Clara	Down's syndrome
2008	Água na Boca	Mouthwatering	Joana	Motor
2009	Cama de Gato	Cat's cradle	Tarcísio	Auditory
2009	Caras e Bocas	Making eyes	Anita	Visual
2009	Paraíso	Paradise	Zeca	Motor (temporary)
2009	Viver a Vida	Living Life	Luciana	Motor
2011	Insensato Coração	Foolish Heart	Pedro	Motor (temporary)
2012	Malhação	Workout	Jefferson	Motor
2012	Malhação	Workout	Felipe	Visual
2012	Vidas em Jogo	Lives at Stake	Miguel	Down's syndrome

b) Categories of analysis and interpretation

The act of giving gifts to people with disabilities. The act of giving harbors a high symbolic importance and may entail anxiety for the giver; moreover, the intensity of this anxiety is related to the characteristics of the recipient (Sherry, 1983). Maria Claudia Coelho (2006), an anthropologist, points out that when someone gives as a gift an object inappropriate for use by a disabled recipient, they are expressing a mistaken view about the disabled person. In the telenovelas analyzed, one can discern characters who appeared anxious and fearful with regard to failing to please when gifting a character with disabilities, in the belief that the disabled have tastes very different from those of other people. A scene from *Páginas da Vida* illustrates such a situation. The scene depicts Christmas Eve, and a family friend takes brings gift for the child with Down's syndrome:

HELENA (mother): She loved the gift.
GREG (friend): Great. I was so afraid of making a mistake; it's hard to know what she likes.
HELENA: She likes the same things that any girl her age likes.
GREG: Really? I thought it could be different for her.

The difficulty of giving gifts to people with disabilities is also portrayed from the standpoint of the recipient. Scenes were identified in which the characters with disabilities complain of rarely receiving gifts, corroborating an observation made by Fournier (2008). In *Caras e Bocas*, a scene between a visually impaired individual and her boyfriend shows how the character is surprised to get a present, suggesting this to be a rare occurrence:

ANSELMO (the boyfriend): I brought a gift for you, a gift that symbolizes my love for you.
ANITA (visually disabled): A gift! How wonderful! I almost never get presents.
ANSELMO: A Braille edition of a work by Carlos Drummond de Andrade.
ANITA: A book! It's been so long that I've received a book! And in Braille, too—so unusual!

This scene also portrayed other aspects that indicate differences in the exchange of gifts involving people with disabilities. Firstly, the dialogue emphasizes that books in Braille are scarce—thus pointing to consumption restrictions of the visually impaired. Second, closer examination of the scene reveals that the book was not wrapped in gift paper, despite the occasion representing an important milestone in the love story of the characters. This might suggest that the visually impaired individual would not know how to open the package or would fail to appreciate the wrapping, given their lack of sight.

Regarding the gifts given to the characters in the scenes analyzed, it is interesting to note that many have a direct association with the disability of the person. For example, the character Luciana in *Viver a Vida*, for example, received several gifts (mostly clothing) before being involved in an accident and becoming wheelchair-ridden; after the accident, however, she only receives gifts specifically related to the disability, such as an adapted bicycle and several wheelchairs. Jefferson, a wheelchair-ridden character in

Malhação, talks about this type of gift in an ironical tone in one scene in the telenovela:

NELSON (friend): Jefferson, I'm going to buy you a present. We're going straight to the store. Boy, you're not getting a wheelchair—you're getting a Formula 1 race car.

JEFFERSON: Who knew that the best gift that I could get would be a wheelchair.

Consumption decisions of people with disabilities. The analysis of the telenovela scenes showed that many characters with disabilities do not participate in decisions involving the consumption of goods and services—not even the simplest ones, such as choosing what they want to eat. An example of this situation occurs with the blind character Felipe, in *Malhação*. In family breakfast scenes, Felipe is always served by the maid who does not even ask him what he wants to eat or drink. In the same telenovela, a recurring scene is a convenience store where the characters buy their groceries. There, where Felipe always appears accompanied by the father and/or brother, he neither buys anything nor has any input regarding family consumption decisions. This dependency on others that people with disabilities seem to have in choosing what to consume had already been described in the literature (Doessel & Williams, 2011).

As regards the lack of independence of people with disabilities as consumers, exclusion from the labor market seems to be one of the main causes. Irigaray and Vergara (2011) point out that even when a PwD manages enter the labor market, they often hit the glass ceiling and are prevented from developing professionally. In the telenovela Caras e Bocas, one scene includes the following lines by Anita, a blind character, who alludes to work as a possibility for her to gain more independence as a PwD consumer.

ANITA: (...) I need a job.

GABRIEL (brother): (...) Why?

ANITA: I need to get a job. To buy my own stuff, choose what I want to have and not get what Mommy or you guys decide.

Other characters illustrate the lack of autonomy of disabled people as consumers. Jamanta, a mentally disabled character who appears in two telenovelas, dresses carelessly or sometimes in tatters; his invariably torn costumes vary little in terms of articles of clothing or color, which are usually washed out or pale. Jamanta is not represented in any situations that would require active participation in practices of consumption.

People with disabilities in the consumption of leisure services. Many telenovelas depict people with disabilities as individuals with great difficulty when it comes to consuming recreational products and services. Moreover in the academic literature, authors also argue that there are numerous barriers that PwD have to endure in order to enjoy leisure services (Burns, Reichel & Brandt, 2009; Faria, Silva & Ferreira, 2012). In *Malhação*, Jefferson, who is wheelchair-bound, regrets never being able to go to music shows now that he is of “crippled” and concludes that “fun is no longer possible when you're in a wheelchair.”

Sassaki (2003) emphasizes that besides the architectural barriers attitudinal barriers and service barriers are apt to hamper the PwD in moments of leisure. In the cultural texts analyzed here, attitudinal barriers were discernible in the relations between family / strangers and the PwD. In telenovela scenes, this type of barrier is made evident when the other characters demonstrate their believe that people with disabilities cannot attend leisure venues; in one such scene in *Laços de Família*, the wheelchair-bound Edu encounters a friend in a nightclub. The friend says they would expect to find anyone other than Edu there, given that he is in a wheelchair. At the end of the scene, Edu eventually concludes that he really should not be there and withdraws as though the environment were not befitting of him.

The literature emphasizes that leisure performs an important role in terms of inclusion of PwD, and that this is so especially during childhood (Emira & Thompson, 2011).In the novel *Páginas da Vida*, the (previously mentioned) Clara, a girl with Down's syndrome, was always portrayed as passing leisure time playing in a playground. However, in a later scene, a woman quips that the girl should not be in a place like that, since she “isn't normal.” In another scene from the same telenovela, a bookstore salesperson says she has no books for “kids like Clara.”

In the telenovela *América* the character's mother blindly accepts that the girl cannot go out to have fun, since the options for leisure would not geared to people with disabilities. In one scene Islene (Flor's mother), Feitosa (her boyfriend) and Flor talk together:

FEITOSA (mother's boyfriend): I'm going to take you to see an art exhibit of my gorgeous pictures.

FLOR (visually disabled): Me? To an art exhibition? What happiness! But ... Feitosa, what's a picture?

ISLENE (mother): She's not going to understand. She can't see. Better not to take her.

FLOR: Oh yes I can go! Jatoba says so. He said I can travel around the world, that I can go to museums. And that I can appreciate works of art for real.

ISLENE: Ah, Flor! Without seeing? Of course not!

FLOR: I can do anything!

FEITOSA: Yes you can.

ISLENE: Don't encourage her, because then it's me that has to deal with her frustration.

The dialogue illustrates the parents themselves as the creators of barriers to the leisure of their children with disabilities, as already shown in the studies of Emira and Thompson (2011). In another scene Flor does in fact attend an art exhibition, feels all the works with her hand and is touched by her emotions; the mother is amazed and finally understands the importance of providing this type of experience for her daughter.

In *Caras e Bocas*, the blind character, Anita, suggests that difficulties regarding leisure activities may originate in the dependence on both the family and the group of friends: "I've never danced. It's not common for a blind girl to go to a dance club. Nobody would take me" ... "I never come to the parks, but I love it. I don't come because my brother thinks it's too dangerous for me" ... "I'd never stood under a waterfall—no one has the patience to take a blind girl to these places."

Anita experiences a specific situation in the telenovela that illustrates the service barriers faced by people with disabilities to engage in leisure activities. On arrival at the hotel where Anita will spend her honeymoon, the receptionist hands her the room key. Then the receptionist realizes that Anita is blind, and says, "Oh, I do apologize! It's just that I didn't expect to see a blind girl here; it's quite uncommon." The lack of preparedness of the service providers depicted in the scene seems to be associated with the perception or reality that PwD do not patronize places of leisure.

However, positive experiences of people with disabilities were also encountered. In *Sol de Verão*, for example, a person close to the character with disabilities is taken aback with how he manages to enjoy a moment of leisure. In the scene, Abel, who is hearing impaired, is at a nightclub with his girlfriend, who admires his ability to dance by following the rhythm of the music. She asks him how he does it. Abel replies that is able to feel the vibration of the music by placing his hands on objects and that he pays attention to how others dance. In *América*, Jatobá, a blind man and his girlfriend go to a musical performance and he says that now that he is blind he likes such performances all the more: since he can feel the music better he gets even more enjoyment.

In *Viver a Vida*, the main character Luciana was used by the screenplay writer to discuss issues relating to leisure for people with disabilities. Luciana and her husband Miguel are to spend their honeymoon in Paris and, upon entering the hotel, the two talk about how good it is to stay in an accessible hotel and how uncommon this is. In her blog, the character talks about how Paris is accessible and points out that she only noticed the fact when she became wheelchair-bound.

LUCIANA: Paris just gets more beautiful. The city is really accessible to wheelchair users. The last time I was here, I didn't pay much attention, but, now, of course I'm much more aware of accessibility. And everything works perfectly well for those who get around in a wheelchair. All the streets have ramps, people are extremely polite, and every single cafe or restaurant we've been to so far has been accessible. Ah, our Brazil still has to make so much progress in that regard.

In another scene, the same telenovela addresses the problem of attitudinal barriers in leisure situations. The scene takes place in a restaurant, where a woman has her gaze fixed on Luciana, who comes up to her table and says, "Excuse me, but you've been looking my way so much I started wondering if we are acquainted," which the woman responds to assuming she does not want to be watched during a moment of leisure: "I was looking at you because I was moved by your suffering. Such a beautiful young woman in a wheelchair, and here all exposed in this restaurant, would be better off staying at home." This scene illustrates, albeit in an indirect way, the desire on the part of the general population for the disabled to remain invisible, to not show themselves in public.

Urban mobility. Accessibility by PwD to urban spaces has been increasingly discussed in the specialized literature as a factor either preventing or facilitating a full life in society and, by extension, practices of consumption. Beyond public transport, urban mobility implies being able to walk around easily, without facing discrimination based on personal characteristics. However, in the telenovela scenes analyzed, the reality portrayed falls short of that advocated by the various manuals on accessibility

For example, the character Jefferson, in *Malhação*, comes from a poor community and cannot leave home by wheelchair because of his neighborhood's steep, narrow and pot-holed roads. Em a *Viver a Vida* scene, the wheelchair-bound Luciana attempts to take a bus ride. After several fruitless attempts to wave down a bus, Luciana finally succeeds. However, the conductor immediately says:

CONDUCTOR: Be aware that this is going to take a long time. This is a long process.

LUCIANA: Do you get training on how to use this chair-lift?

CONDUCTOR: Of course not! But we'll give it it a try.

The scene continues with a discussion between Luciana and a passenger, who refuses to stop repeating how Luciana is messing up her trip and that she should get a taxi instead. This situation illustrates the lack of preparedness of the people who work with public transport and the attitudes of the larger society, which fails to include persons with disabilities. Sometime after the episode, Luciana's father buys a specially adapted car for her, a solution that is beyond reach of the vast majority of Brazilians.

Despite the difficulties of tackling obstacles in the streets, two visually impaired characters, in two different telenovelas, Anita (from *Caras e Bocas*) and Felipe (from *Malhação*), appear in several scenes walking about in the street without too much difficulty, aided by their walking sticks alone. In contrast, the visually impaired Jatobá (from *América*) relied on the help of a guide dog. Curiously, the same character also leads a scene in which he drives a car with the help of a couple of friends. Jatobá is thrilled to drive and tells how important it is to be able to do this again. Another scene

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shows Jatobá nearly falling while trying to get off a bus. The character indignantly complains, "They really don't think twice about people who can't see, do they? Does it really not occur to them that blind people have to work, study, and go to the mall just like everyone else?"

Barriers in consumption environments. In the telenovelas surveyed, the main problems regarding accessibility to retail stores are represented by the lack of accommodation by store workers, by architectural barriers, and impediments to seeing-eye dogs, despite the federal law that provides for the free movement of such animals.

Indeed, there are several scenes in the telenovela *América t*hat illustrate the issue of failure to comply with laws that provide for the free movement of these dogs. In one episode of the telenovela, Jatobá takes Flor to buy a dress; however they are barred from entering the store because the salesperson refuses to let the seeing-eye dog enter the establishment along with the characters. At a second store, although they do manage to enter, the salesperson becomes upset, does not now how to serve them, and ends up ignoring them, offering no assistance whatsoever. When they finally find a store where they good service is provided, the scene shows that PwD (as would people without disabilities) intend to return to the establishment in the future: "I'm going to tell my mother to always bring us here."

The complaint that laws exist but are not respected is also depicted in telenovelas, for example when blind characters seek, albeit without success, to get a Braille menu in a restaurant. The study by Faria, Silva and Ferreira (2012) regarding the experience of the blind consumer in Rio de Janeiro restaurants shows that even though provided for by law, the requirement for menus in Braille to be available was not respected by restaurants.

Also in regard to people with visual impairments in consumer environments, a scene in *Malhação* shows Felipe, a blind character, chatting with his girlfriend about the difficulties he encounters when choosing and making purchases. In the following scene, Felipe takes the girl to a store, blind-folds her and gets her to try and buy a cookie. Confusion ensues and the merchandise winds up on the floor.

A scene from *Páginas da Vida* also illustrates service providers' lack of preparation as a barrier to consumption by people with disabilities. Clara's speech therapist takes the girl to a bakery to practice some words, and asks the child to tell the seller she wants to buy some chocolate. When Clara makes the request, the clerk says he doesn't understand, and that it would be better of someone would "give the sick kid some help."

In relation to architectural barriers, in a scene from *Viver a Vida*, Luciana enters a luxury retailer and chooses some clothes; the saleswoman then warns her that she will have to buy them without trying them on because the changing room is too small for the wheelchair. Luciana becomes outraged and updates her blog with her bad experience:

> LUCIANA: Went to do a little shopping at the mall with my mom and Mia. Almost gave up, folks! I got very upset when I could not take my wheelchair into the changing room in one store. While I'd rather not mention the name of the store, I do want to point out that this is ABSURD! How can a store simply exclude a consumer? They think people in wheelchairs don't buy clothes? They think we go around naked? It made me very sad and angry. It's rotten to be embarrassed like that. My mother gave the salesperson a piece of her mind and we left.

The family and education of children with disabilities. In the literature of pedagogy, the discussion surrounding inclusive education has spanned many decades. Anhão, Pfeifer and Santos (2010) studied the benefits that living with children without disabilities can provide children with Down's syndrome. Over the course of several episodes in *Páginas da Vida (2006)*, the mother of a child with Down's syndrome appears in several scenes trying to get a school to let her daughter attend. Then, when she finally does finds a school, problems with the parents of the other children and the teachers ensue. In one scene, for example, a teacher says the girl cannot be treated like the others because she is disabled, and that, therefore, she does not not need to learn anything. In the following scene the mother says she is going to file a complaint with Public Prosecutor's Office; the principal replies that, although many parents have already threatened to take their children out of the school for not wanting them to study with Down's child, the school management has decided to allow the girl to remain. A favor or a right? The principal is presented in the script as someone who is good and tolerant in the face of the complaints from other parents, which appears to fairly reflect reality. In the literature, Wanderley (2008) highlights this behavior of construing "rights" as "favors" and claims that this type of attitude reinforces the process of exclusion of people with disabilities.

In another telenovela, in which the disabled character is blind, family and school are again a point of focus. Initially, the mother cannot accept that the girl attend a school, in the belief that it is dangerous for her to go outside her house. Then, at a certain point, she ends up agreeing to search for a school for her daughter. Some scenes show that the other students do not like playing with the blind girl and they laugh at the way she walks.

In *Malhação*, a series in which the school environment is the main backdrop for plot development, the visually impaired character is a newcomer from another city and causes divisiveness among the students in the new school. While the majority of the students refuses to study with the disabled student, a small group defends the blind boy and opposes the various students who want to stop him from attending their school. The blind character appears passive throughout the discussion, which only ends with the arrival of the principal, who assumes a staunch posture for the inclusion of the visually impaired student:

PRINCIPAL: Here in school, no student will be discriminated against. The process of inclusion has to start in school. I'm shocked that you young people are so prejudiced.

One result of this lack of alternatives regarding good schools that promote the inclusion of people with disabilities appears to be an early search for information in this regard on the part of the parents of such children. In the telenovela *Vidas em Jogo,* as soon as they discover that their unborn son will have Down's syndrome, the leading couple starts researching for information on schools and kindergartens that are willing to accept the child when the time comes.

V. Final Discussion and Contribution

How are the consumption decisions and practices of people with disabilities presented in Brazilian telenovelas? That people with disabilities are rarely portrayed situations of consumption in telenovelas was discernible. The focus of these characters, for the most part, is on their emotional relationships and in overcoming the difficulties posed by the disability, leaving aside issues involving consumption, seen as the purview of other "perfect" characters without disabilities. Outside of telenovela storylines, the scenario seems to be very similar: much is said of inclusion; however, businesses still do not see people with disabilities as potential consumers. Being an invisible consumer seems to pose problems for the construction of the individual and collective identities of people with disabilities, who, as the telenovelas portray, end up being distanced from the conviviality of others.

The analysis of the telenovelas revealed important aspects of how PwD are treated when they seeking to play the role of consumers. Portrayed in earlier moments of Brazilian political life as alienating and manipulative, telenovelas have become more respected by Brazilian intellectuals, who recognize their power to inform, polemicize and transform when representing—in addition to important national literary works—an ability to transpose scenes, albeit caricatured, of the daily life of Brazilians surrounded by issues ranging from the simplest to the most controversial.

Society seems to suffer from a conscious or unconscious refusal to see those who have some type of disability; however, the barrier appears to be lower when characters with physical or mental disabilities become part of telenovela storylines. Thus, telenovelas seem to be able to make society more aware of itself as well as of the groups who the targets of prejudices or indifference to people with disabilities.

Despite this important role with regard to the portrayal of persons with disabilities as consumers, the storylines of the telenovela still need adapting. The telenovela *Viver a Vida* is one of the rare examples in which a disabled character was used in scenes with product placement. It should be noted, however, that the character appears linked only to products that are directly linked to their disability. One obstacle for characters with disabilities to lead in scenes with product placement of products unrelated to their disability could be (i) the lack of interest on the part of companies to link their brands to people with disabilities or (ii) the invisibility that this group appears to have vis-à-vis the producers of goods and services.

On the other hand, the vast majority of the texts examined by this research have at the core of the storyline some type of complaint with respect to exclusion, prejudice or the oppression suffered by the disabled. Within that scope and, as we have seen, based on the stereotypes of people with disabilities in cultural texts studied by Barnes (1992) and Cameron (2007), Brazilian telenovelas seem to be more generous than the film industry in relation to representations of persons with disabilities. It should be noted, however, that this study did not seek to evaluate how effective are the attempts of the telenovela authors to denounce the problems experienced by PwD; rather, the work is an invitation to reflect on the public's predisposition to devote attention to such issues. A major challenge seems to be depicting in telenovelas people and problems that society prefers to remain invisible.

A complaint often portrayed in telenovelas, and that deserves mention, is with regard to the lack of investment in public policies for the social inclusion of people with disabilities. In the present article the discussion surrounding urban mobility presents several aspects that should be considered by the public sphere. Importantly, even with the World Cup in 2014 and the Olympics Games in 2014—moments of major global visibility in which tourists and athletes with disabilities will be commonplace in Brazilian cities—still rare are discussions regarding necessary investments in urban mobility in Brazil's metropolises. In the city of Rio de Janeiro, which will host the Olympics in 2016, although proposals do exist to improve urban mobility, these still appear to fall short of meeting the needs of people with disabilities.

The findings of this analysis of cultural texts based on telenovelas can assist companies producing goods and services as well as the institutions responsible for public policies to reflect on the needs of people with disabilities. Through the demands alluded to in the telenovela scenes, it is hoped that these consumers and citizens can be better served, without their rights being construed as favors or acts of charity. It is believed that this analysis can contribute to improving the well-being of people with disabilities by denouncing the fact that they are not seen as consumers even though their desires and frustrations are represented in telenovelas in terms of such simple everyday practices such as, for example, the ritual of exchanging gifts.

Also befitting is a reflection on the possible roles to be performed by telenovelas in order that they can contribute to a reassessment of meanings and values in a society in which watching and accompanying these storylines seems to be a national ritual. It is believed that the findings of this analysis of telenovela scripts that include characters with disabilities can serve as a starting point for further studies that make use of other methodologies. Questions regarding, for example, urban mobility, the importance of the family in the decisions of consumption of people with disabilities, and the act of giving gifts to people with disabilities, which were highlighted in the results of the study, deserve to be more fully explored.

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Creative Advertising; What is it and can it Create Positive Brand Images and Purchasing Possibilities?

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Abstract- This paper studies the meaning of creative advertising and can it create positive brand images and purchasing possibility. It discusses about how an advertisement qualifies as creative according to past researches, the elements involved in the qualifications, how it works and if it works. This paper also looked into the barriers of creative advertising which involves consumers' persuasion knowledge and the limitation of advertisements. This paper studied through various journal articles. Findings show that among the qualifications in past researches, originality would be the main aspect in creativity although the other three elements discussed; attractiveness, persuasion and strategy are equally important in an advertisement. Past researches showed that advertisements have limits, whether creative or not due to consumers' own chain of thoughts and knowledge. Although it is limited, advertisers still have a higher chance to boost up their purchasing possibility by creating a positive brand image through creative advertisements.

Keywords: creative advertising, purchasing power, originality, limitation.

GJMBR-E Classification: JEL Code: M31, M37

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Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:

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I. Introduction

Advertising as we know is an important element in the marketing segment in business. According to Merriam Webster online dictionary, the definition of advertising is "the action of calling something to the attention of the public, especially by paid announcements".

Advertisements come in many different forms. They come in newspaper columns, billboards, television, online social media, and mobile applications, events, campaigns and even during movies. Advertisement is a form of announcing a product by a company to the public. Creativity is an added ingredient to advertising. Dominic Twase said in his Milward Brown Point of View column that "Creativity can grab attention" (Twase, n.d). Every day, people are showered tons of advertisements wherever they walked or are at. It is very common to miss an advertisement unless is it something special, something that could grab the attention of the people. 'Creativity can allow an advertisement to get past the normal filtering process. Creativity makes people stop what they are doing and pay attention, even when they know they are looking at an ad' (Twase, n.d)

Reinartz and Saffert (2013) in their article 'Advertising: When It Works and When It Doesn't' cited Stephan Vogel, Ogilvy & Mather Germany's chief creative officer: 'Nothing is more efficient than creative advertising. Creative advertising is more memorable, longer lasting, works with less media spending and builds a fan community… faster.' Creativity is the soul of advertising and branding. It is what brings a significant difference between each other and grabbing the attention of consumers to bring about the awareness of a product by that particular company.

But Reinartz and Saffert (2013) raised a question being is 'Are creative advertisements more effective in inspiring people to buy products than advertisement that simply catalogue products attributes or benefits?" In many researches, creative messages only get attention and lead to positive attitudes about the products but it does not prove that they have the power to influence purchase behavior. (Reinarts & Saffet, 2013). The purpose of this study is to find out meaning of creative advertising and can it create positive brand images and purchasing possibility.

II. What is Creativity?

Consumers are people who spends on items and offering each company has produced. Consumer comes in all ages and therefore, each company/organization has its target markets and goals. All are different and therefore all companies have different approaches to their creativity.

For example, Coca-Cola company advertisement targets younger people, especially those in their teens or in universities because these people are the center consumers. Older people may not appreciate the drink and therefore their advertisements, especially in their "Open Happiness Campaign" centers more towards universities. The recent Coke Friendly Twist product was launched centering its market in universities to help bond freshmen (Coca-Cola, 2014).

For insurance companies such as Prudential, they would center their sales on older people who are largely in the working world; middle aged or the older aged group. Prudential came up with campaigns such

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as "Ribbons" and "Stickers" to help people realized that they need to invest for an after retirement insurance (Prudential, 2013).

So what is creativity? How does one address an advertisement as creative? Many past researches came up with categories to define creativity. Indiana University Communication researchers, Robert Smith and his collegues adjusted the definition "the extent to which advertisement contains brand or executional elements that are different, novel, unusual, original, unique, etc." Along with other researchers (Reinarts & Saffet, 2013; Stuhlfaut, 2006), there are four categories in which this literature review will center on which are originality, attraction, strategy, and persuasiveness.

a) Originality as an important creativity characteristic

Originality is a characteristic respected by many. People won't buy what you are showing if it is some shared idea or something that has been done before. People like to be amused, surprised and like to see new things. In which leads us to this category of creativity. Originality is what concerns most when it comes to judging for an advertisement award (Tony, 2008). Similarly to Koslow (2003) on his research paper which discussed "What is Creative to Whom and Why", in his literature review pages he wrote that 'if creativity is both an original and appropriate solution to a problem, then for high agreement on what is creative, judges have to agree on what is original and appropriate. (Koslow, Sasser, Riordan, 2003)

Originality comes with uniqueness, innovation and newness (Stuhlfaut, 2008). Advertising agencies regard creativity, especially originality, as the mission of the entire advertising industry and believe that originality should not be constrained and must be rewarded (Koslow, Sasse, Riordan, 2003). Although originality is a highly important characteristics, advertisers take risks in whenever creative campaign is involve that includes media choice and strategy.

In a journal article about Advertisers Risk Taking by four researchers Wang, Dou, Li and Zhou (2013) mentioned that there are two contextual factors that molds distinct creativity which are the product being advertised and the audience being targeted. Advertisements are known to be subjective about their messages. Many advertisers struggle with appropriateness with originality being the primary facet. Some advertisement may seem sensitive towards many issues such as religion, race, status quo and gender biasness.

b) Attractiveness of the advertisement

An advertisement's purpose is to grab the attention of the people. In order to attract attention, an advertisement has to stand out among many advertisements. So how does one company attract attention? Many advertisers seek ways to be creative to attract people. Because the advertising world is not new, many ideas has been used and it is common to see some advertisements have the same elements and style. People want to see more new things. They want something that people normally don't see every day and that is the key to grab a person's attention. Stuhlfaut (2006) has conducted a survey in his research paper about creative categories. Under the "attraction" response, participants describe creativity 'a visual uniqueness that invites the viewer and reader in, stirs thought or emotion, and engages the viewer or reader in an out of the ordinary way' (Stuhlfaut, 2006).

Packaging and product design is also a form of advertising. To attract the attention of customers, the product itself must be interesting enough to be announced to the world. It adds to the visual effects on consumers. Quoting from Xiaoyan Deng (2009), 'Good design uniquely differentiate (e.g., iPod vs otherMP3 players) a product. Companies mastering the art of design (Apple, Nike, and Target, just to name a few) have emerged as leaders in their respective markets' (Deng, 2009).

During the Brazil World Cup 2014, Pepsi came up with a commercial advertisement, Unbelievable where they placed fake grass that contains springy characteristics and enables players to bounce and do unbelievable moves. It is the combination of Parkour, the sport of traversing environmental obstacles by running, climbing, or leaping rapidly and efficiently (Merriam-Webster, 2014) and football. It creates a positive feeling towards the Brazil World Cup frenzy and also amazes those who play both sports. Although it amazes and grabs the attention, would it promise purchasing power during the World Cup? It may trigger purchasing ability due to the season when people watch at home or especially people who are in the stadium.

There are some researchers who believe creative advertisements may attract younger children. Robert and Catherine Angell (2013) did a case study using a method 'Draw, Write and Tell' with younger children to find out their response to advertisements. Their conclusion is that visual elements are important to children. Children are an important segment and marketers should explore children's thought and opinions and suggest using their method, 'Draw, Write and Tell' in their advertising context.

c) Strategies used in creative advertisements

Without advertising, companies may lose opportunities to communicate with their customers and their sales eventually will drop (Moon, 2010). Marketers constantly strategize to advertise their products and need proper guidelines to make efficient advertising decisions. Advertising decisions are made based on products, media type used, where to advertise and different period of time. It is similar or is based on the "4P" marketing mix elements which are price, place, promotion and product. Each company needs to outstand in order to make it work. All are essential to attract consumers.

Many companies have thought hard to advertise and gain awareness of the consumers that their product is essential to them. This is relatively subjective as consumers are different from each other and therefore, have different needs. It depends on the target market of the company. An example of a company that strategized to make consumers aware of their product significantly would be Prudential. There was a retirement campaign that they underwent in order to prove and to create awareness of retirement plans. They set up two challenges, “Stickers” and “Ribbons” in a family park where its target market, family, would be on a day off.

In the “Sticker” challenge, they created the awareness of the expectancy of old age, how long can you live in retirement and many discovered that people do live a long way after retirement age. In the “Ribbon” challenge, Prudential challenges the people on how much money they think they would need in their retirement age. A lot of people thought wrong. This is where Prudential manages to create the awareness it needs people to be aware of. It definitely creates a positive feeling for users who watched videos about it. The advertisement, instead of promoting how good the product is, its promotional strategy was to make consumer think of their future and look into their needs (Prudential, 2013).

A content analysis of Coca-Cola Advertisement on Six Countries done by Nick Bryant (2011) resulted that Coca-Cola advertisements caters to specific cultural values, displayed a common theme of festivity and happiness, something people of all cultures understand (Bryant, 2011). The Coca-Cola Company has been severely creative about how they advertise to pull in consumers, especially the breakthrough of sales in Australia where Coca-Cola noticed that their sales in that country weren’t going very well. It was after the ‘Share a Coke’ campaign that broke the ice and sales shot up tremendously (Coca-Cola, 2013)

Similar to Bryant (2011), Sara Edith Svendsen (2013) did an analysis on Coca-Cola’s latest campaign, ‘Open Happiness’. Her study seeks to find out if Coca-Cola Company lives out their company’s mission statement, values and vision has been implemented in the new found guerilla marketing strategy used by the company. ‘The result indicates that The Coca-Cola Company, through their “Open Happiness” campaign, have truly lived out who they claimed to be as a company by implementing themes, ideas and portrayals that clearly mirror what is stated in their mission statement, company vision and values’ (Svendsen, 2013).

d) Persuasivenessin a creative advertisement

An advertisement without persuasive power is no advertisement. An advertisement’s purpose is to persuade consumers and make them believe that they need and must purchase that product that is offered by many companies and manufacturers. Many different companies have different target market. Therefore, each advertisement are different in persuading.

As mentioned under “attraction” subtopic, children are significant targets in advertising. Milo advertisements involve children actor and actresses to pull in their target market, which are children. Milo showed how drinking their product would earn extra strength to play more after school and that parents would love to buy them the drink because it is healthy and gives strength to little children. Danniel Bargh, Anna R. McAlister and T. Bettina Cornwell (2013) wrote a research paper on “Paths to Persuasion when Advertising to Children. In their findings, children appear to feel favorably about an advertisement when they are highly involved and weak arguments are present (Bargh, McAlister & Cornwell, 2013).

Although it is known to be bad for health, advertisers will always find a way to make products look good in order to persuade customers to purchase. Take Dunhill, the cigarette advertisement in 2013. Advertisers want to advertise their latest Dunhill Mild which they claimed to have finer taste. Instead of showing the cigarette on the screen which has negative impact, it showed elements such as fire, fine taste and popularity to lure consumers in because of the popularity concept. Advertisements and promotions may influence never smokers to experience and perhaps even persuade experimenters to become establish smokers, especially young adolescence (Gilpin, White & Messer, 2007).

‘Advertising is the foremost communication tool used by marketers to persuade customers to buy or try the products and services (Kishari & Jain, 2014). Alexandra Aguirre-Rodriguez (2013) from Florida International University, Miami wrote in her paper ‘The Effects of Consumer Persuasion Knowledge’ that scarcity appeals is a persuasive pattern used by marketers. Some companies offer or advertise limited edition products to draw the people in to purchase. This strategy stretches from limited product offered to products that are only available for a limited amount of time. Advertisers often tout consumers that product will only be available for a limited time and it may cause popular demand.

Depending on the target market, only certain industries can pull off scarcity appeals. An example of scarcity appeals would be McDonalds in Malaysia. During the banana season, McDonalds have come out with a range of banana series of food which included the Banana Pie and Banana Ice Cream. McDonalds spread out their advertisements on billboards, newspaper and magazine. McDonalds does not only promote the desserts but also the main course. Over time, McDonalds has come up with many range of different burger flavors that will only stay for a limited period of time. Some succeeded in making to the official menu due to large demand but some products would not. In a higher class of purchase power, branded items such as Prada and Polo may have limited collector's editions.

III. Barriers of Creative Advertising

Many advertisers can maximize their profit, brand name and any aspect of business if their advertisements are creative enough to draw people in. In the past, simple advertisements are enough to convince people to buy products and not know the strategy behind it. Now in the 21st century, people have access of knowledge through the internet, courses and graduates of business classes. Advertisements don't work as they should now due to many reasons and they are the barriers in advertising. There are now more barriers in advertising and advertisers seek to know the barriers. Some researchers such as Aguirre-Rodriguez (2013) wrote papers regarding barriers of advertisements.

Common reasons that advertisements don't work is because of consumers' awareness of the persuasion and strategy methods used in advertisements. Consumers are harder to please these days because they got used to the advertisement methods and they are predictable. This is why advertisements must be creative enough to be different to make a difference. Another reason is that advertisements have limited effects on consumers.

a) *Consumer awareness/consumer persuasion knowledge*

Advertisements are marketers' way of persuading consumers to purchase more products. At times, advertisements are claimed to manipulate consumers' thought processes and influence consumer behaviors (Aguirre-Rodriguez, 2013). Not all tactics or creative advertisements would work on consumers. Customers now are aware and skeptical about the products that are being advertised. Consumers now are able to identify exaggeration points and that affects the emotion and flow of the advertisement. The phenomenon is called consumer persuasion knowledge. They lose effectiveness once the advertisement triggers consumers' suspicion of the advertiser's motives, awareness of persuasion tactic increases and persuasiveness decreases.

Consumers are now no longer ignorant although not all advertisement would fail to capture consumers' attention. The knowledge allows consumers to undergo filtration process. Therefore, advertisers now must be more creative and design their messages to minimize the skeptics with maximized positive impression (Shu & Carlson, 2014).Suzanne B. Shu & Kurt A. Carlson (2014) attempts to identify number of positive claims should a firm used to produce the most positive impression. The conclusion of their extensive experiments of conducting surveys was three claims as maximum that should be done in order for an advertisement to fall to the good graces of consumers and no more or else, it would trigger suspicion of consumers.

Although this is a barrier to advertising, advertisement is a source of information about the product and to persuade customers into purchasing the products. No matter how much of skeptical impression some may have on an advertisement, consumers would continue to purchase their needs. As mentioned before, there are some ways to persuade and pull in consumers. Prudential made the public aware by making them experience it themselves in campaigns and so did Coca-Cola.

b) *Limited effects of advertisements*

Advertisers believe that consumers that are exposed to advertisements changes their human cognition, emotion and behavior. Nyilasy & Reid (2009) I their research paper on "Agency Practitioners Theories of How Advertising Works" interviewed people who view the effects of advertising. In their discussion, the effect of advertising was said 'not seen as limitless'. Participants' view was that the power of advertising is especially moderated and determine by the consumers (Nyilasy & Reid, 2009).

Advertisements, no matter how creative, will have its limit as the purchase power is in the hands of consumers who make the decisions. 'Creativity is subjective. The interpretation of the advertisements varies from individual to individual' (Nyilasy & Reid, 2009). However, advertisers still believed in powerful advertisements would increase the probability of purchase power if they develop a positive attitude of the brand (Clow, Berry, Kranenberg & James, 2005). A study on the role of visual elements was carried out by Clow, Berry, Kranenberg and James (2005). 271 survey data was collected from different colleges. 'The result indicated that when creative use a generic creative message strategy, an emotional visual creates the strongest results, especially in terms of attitude towards the visual elements in the advertisement' (Clowe, Berry, Kranenbery & James, 2005).

Erik Modig, Micael Dahlen and Jonas Colliander (2014) investigated the roles of expense and effort of 'creative' versus 'efficient' advertising. Their studies indicated that excessive advertising creativity is one way of signaling effort' (Modig, Dahlen & Colliander, 2014). If a brand demonstrates superior creativity, consumers would perceive that the brand puts in more effort than the rest of other advertisements which is what makes it creative. It may increase purchasing power but in the end, it is an individual evaluation.

IV. Discussion

There are many ways to decide and judge if an advertisement is creative or not. In this paper, it has been found that a creative advertisement weighs highly on originality and attractiveness. Originality has a sense of newness and fresh ideas which people would stop and look because they have never seen such thing before. It creates a positive feeling about the brand. Attractiveness plays a huge role as well. If an advertisement is original but does not have any artistic value of attraction, not much of persuasion and strategy can be found in that advertisement.

Strategies are played by all advertisers in order to persuade consumers. As discussed in the subtopics, advertisements need to stand out in order to convince consumers. Based on the advertisement videos that were viewed during this study, one of the most impactful strategies are guerilla strategies. Events and campaigns designed by Coca-Cola and Prudential are very well thought. All elements play a part in an advertisement to make it work. Some studies in this paper showed that if an advertisement puts in effort, it would pay off.

Skeptics are always around to because consumers in the 21st century are far more armed and knowledgeable than their forefathers. As mentioned, companies have to find ways to persuade consumers and take away skeptical impressions by creating awareness, letting the public see for themselves about the product just like Prudential and Coca-Cola. Emotions, visual and feelings play a huge role in convincing consumers.

Although advertisements have limited effects on consumers due to filtration and consumers' own interpretations, powerful advertisements are still effective in increasing the probability of purchasing power as done in studies by researchers (Clow, Berry, Kranenberg & James, 2005; Modig, Dahlen & Colliander, 2014). As long as the advertisement creates a positive feeling and struck the emotional cord (Clow, Berry, Kranenberg & James, 2005), it would demonstrate creativity and perhaps increase purchasing power. In a way, advertisements must be able to be creative enough, different enough and attractive enough to gain the attention of consumers.

Further and deeper research or study can be done in form of survey to expand more on the knowledge of creative advertising, its barriers and effects on consumers and consumers' thoughts about creative advertisements. It would be a more extensive study to properly study and analyze the components of creative advertising. Perhaps cultural habits may play a role in barrier in creative advertising therefore, further studies is encouraged.

V. Conclusion

Creative advertisements are judge based on some criteria but the similarity among all the research papers are originality and the potential to attract consumers into paying the advertisement an attention. However, not all advertisement which falls under the creative advertisement criteria would be successful.

This study reveals that advertisements have a limit. Factors due to it are the consumers' awareness of persuasion on advertisements and consumers' filtration process that limits the ability of an advertisement. Some creative advertisements are so unique that it draws the attention of the public but some may fall short in convincing consumers to purchase the product.

It is true that advertisers cannot make consumers purchase things but they could increase the possibilities of purchasing power through creating an advertisement interesting enough to pull their attention and give a sense of positive impression on the brand. These interesting advertisements must be creative enough to attract consumers and elements to decide if an advertisement is creative or not would be related to the four discussed elements which are originality, attractiveness, persuasion and strategy.

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Celebrity Endorsement as a Marketing Tool

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Abstract- This paper explores the potential of celebrity endorsements as a marketing tool. In today's competitive market, companies and brands strive to distinguish themselves from the rest and gain leverage. Celebrity endorsement has been the popular choice for them to connect with potential customers and create awareness for them in the market. Here it is discussed how and why celebrities' influence and power is used to reach their targeted consumers.

Keywords: celebrity endorsement, celebrity culture, influence, press, brand.

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CELEBRITYENDORSEMENTASAMARKETINGTOOL

Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:

Celebrity Endorsement as a Marketing Tool

Lim Siew Foong [α] & Rashad Yazdanifard [σ]

Abstract- This paper explores the potential of celebrity endorsements as a marketing tool. In today's competitive market, companies and brands strive to distinguish themselves from the rest and gain leverage. Celebrity endorsement has been the popular choice for them to connect with potential customers and create awareness for them in the market. Here it is discussed how and why celebrities' influence and power is used to reach their targeted consumers.

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I. Introduction

With the FIFA World Cup going on in full force and broadcasted throughout multiple countries, the players have become celebrities in the own rights. And companies aiming to spread their influence have definitely taken note of these football players that has legions of fans. Many companies are going in full force to rope in star football players to endorse their brand. Cristiano Ronaldo, Neymar JR, Lionel Messi and Zlatan Ibrahimovic are one of the many football players that have multi-million dollar endorsement deals. These endorsement deals are with heavyweight names in the business world like Samsung, Adidas, Nike and Pepsi (News. com.au, 2014). Endorsement deals are not only limited to the sporting world. Many celebrities from the film, music and showbiz industry are selected to be the face of many company's brands or product.

Why are so many companies scrambling to get a celebrity to endorse a product? Here just might be the reason why. Elberse and Verleun (2012) set out to study the effects of sports celebrity endorsements to sales revenues. They compiled samples from over 300 brand endorsements and found out each sports celebrity were paid an average of $200 000 a week or $10m per annum which is equivalent to 4 percent of what these brands generated in a year. And when their endorser won a championship or secured a victory, sales revenues per week can be expected to go as high up to an $70 000 increase. With such a strong sales return, share prices went up to an average increase of at least 1 percent and market shares also saw an exponential increase. They also found out that by partnering with a celebrity endorser, some brands recorded a 20 percent sales jump. If a company was wondering if a celebrity endorser was worth investing in, the answer would be a firm "yes".

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II. Celebrities as Pinion Leaders with Social Media

When we go out to make a purchase, our decisions on which items to buy are usually influenced opinion leaders. Opinion leaders are defined as a group of people where consumers look to get a stamp of approval before making a purchase (Boundless, n.d.). Opinion leaders are usually people like your neighbourhood repairman, pharmacist or hairstylist. They would possess more knowledge about a product or service than the average consumer. They play an important role as they can change or shape how consumers view a product.

On a national and international level, marketers would turn to celebrities as opinion leaders. Celebrities make great opinion leaders as they have a huge following and great influence over their fans. In today's culture, celebrity has taken on a whole new different meaning. They are not only people that you admire but can be people you want to emulate. This is especially prevalent among the young, where they can now easily follow their favourite celebrities on social media such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram (Poo and Chia, 2009). Social media has not only been a platform used by celebrities to update their fans on their latest activities but has evolved to become something bigger. It has now become an outlet where they can share their opinions and voices to the mass media. Their influence is unwavering as celebrity tweets from Twitter can even be a headline on the pages of magazines and news outlets.

For companies aiming to promote their brand or product to a generation Y and X consumers, Twitter might be the answer. In a data study, (Ad Age, 2011) found out that a total of 84 percent of Twitter users are in the 18-49 age bracket. Unlike television advertisements where people are aware they are directly being sold something, Twitter seems to be a grey area. (Brand Republic, 2014) reported that 54 percent of Twitter users have not noticed an instance when celebrities have made a product or service endorsement and 25 percent actually welcomed it. Lastly a total of 26 percent have bought a product that was endorsed by a celebrity on Twitter, proving that it is effective. An example of an effective celebrity endorsement taking place on Twitter was when Internships.com paid controversial actor Charlie Sheen to tweet about their website. Although this pairing was a bit of a mismatch, Internships.com saw an immediate 95 000 clicks during the first hour it was tweeted. (Rexrode, 2011).

Facebook just might be the platform for reaching an older demographic. In a finding on Facebook users, (IStrategyLabs,2014)found out that users between the age of 35-54 remains the dominant group at 31.1 percent while users above the age of 55 saw an increase of 80.4 percent and now they represent 15.6 percent of Facebook users. In another study on celebrity endorsement, Facebook generated 50 to 100 percent more actions among users than compared to Twitter. Gullov-Singh (2011) explained that this is because social interaction was more likely to happen on Facebook because you could see who has liked or commented on a post. This encouraged people to join in the conversation on the product endorsed.

Another indicator that people regard celebrities as opinion leaders was this study that Nielsen (2013) conducted in America. It found out that 64 percent of users on social networking sites who follow a celebrity were four times more likely to follow a brand than a user who does not follow a celebrity. Celebrity followers were also more engaged in conversation with other consumers about their experience with the product.

III. Celebrities Generates more Interest and Positive Press

What happens when you have a great product but no press? Or you are a new startup company hoping to make new waves? Roping in a celebrity just might be the solution to all these problems. Getting a celebrity involved in public relations and advertising will definitely draw attention from reporters and other media outlets you would not have been able to reach without a celebrity. Tighe (2013) writes that this gives the opportunity for the company to create a background story involving the celebrity. To garner continuous interest, it would be beneficial for the celebrity to hold press conferences, interviews and photos of them talking about your brand or product. Releasing press content from the celebrity would get their fans, bloggers and social media users talking about it, therefore, generating a huge pool of potential customers. This way, you can maintain that marketing can be converted into sales and revenue returns.

Jessica Alba who has been hard at work promoting as the founder of her new venture, The Honest Co. is doing just that. The Honest Co. sells environmentally friendly and non-toxic baby products, skincare and household detergents. She has since managed to gather a $27 million investment from General Catalyst, Light speed Venture Partners, and Institutional Venture Partners (Perez, 2012). This is no easy feat, no doubt she is helped by the fact that The Honest Co. has a steady following from her fans which gives her an advantage. Her continuous publicity work has launched her products to chain retailers such as Target.

Another type of collaboration with a celebrity would be co-branding. It is a strategy in which two brands appear on a single product. Keel and Natarajaan (2012) explains that this would increase the perceived value of the primary brand when you bring in a second brand. In other words, the celebrity is providing star power to the provider brand. Some companies and successful brands still go on to a co-branding deal, even when they look like they would not need it. By co-branding with a celebrity, the brand would be able to extend their reach far beyond their own consumers but also to the group of consumers that are fans of the celebrity (McCarthy, n.d.).

One of the most successful and iconic co-branding was the one where Nike teamed up with basketball superstar Michael Jordan to release his line of Air Jordans in 1984. And 20 years after that, Nike released a commemorative pair of shoes called Powder Blue which had phenomenal success and garnered a $35 million sales on its first day (Badenhausen, 2014). Another worthy collaboration was when Bud Light hired Justin Timberlake as creative director to release their new beer, Bud Light Platinum. It had an extensive promotion period where it coincided with the release of his new single. Justin Timberlake also appeared in a 30 second commercial featuring the beer, which is no surprise why Bud Light Platinum was the best selling beer in the first quarter of 2012 (Kim, 2013).

IV. Potential Pitfalls of Celebrity Endorsements and Recommendations

Celebrity endorsement is not without fault too. Since the endorsement of the brand or product relies heavily on the image of the celebrity, a single slip up can cause collateral damage. Compared to the time when social media was not as prevalent, a celebrity just had to be paid to star in an ad campaign or a television commercial and that was it. But today, a celebrity's endorsement has to be extended to social media as well says Williams (2013). Celebrities have to align their image with the product they are endorsing or risk tainting the effectiveness of the endorsement (Helmig and Huber, 2008). Examples of celebrities who have lost endorsement deals after landing themselves in a controversy is Michael Phelps with Kelloggs, Chris Brown with Wrigleys and Kate Moss with Chanel.

There are also instances when the celebrity's personality or image is just not working along with the brand or product. Companies should take note as brand personality is directly proportional to trust and brand loyalty among consumers (Sung and Kim, 2010). For example, celebrity siblings Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen were the faces of the Got Milk campaign that promotes the dairy industry and a healthy diet. When it was discovered that Mary-Kate Olsen was suffering from an

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eating disorder, the campaign eventually had to be pulled off.

Before a brand decides to use a celebrity endorser, it is important to make sure that they fit into the overall marketing campaign and it reaches the targeted group of consumers. Therefore selection is a vital part of the process. Choosing a celebrity that has expertise on the product to serve as an opinion leader or which the targeted group of consumers aspires is a sure-fire approach to make sure your marketing campaign is effective (Seno and Lukas, 2007). If you are choosing an athlete to represent your brand, Shuart (2007) concluded that athletes who embody the role of being both sports hero and celebrity, such as Tiger Woods and Michael Jordan, are most likely to convince purchasing decision among consumers. Elberse and Golod (2007) confirms that hiring a top ranking athlete to endorse your brand results in the highest financial returns and also provides positive publicity in the long run.

To make the most out of celebrity endorsements, Pringle (2012) has determined that building a relationship between celebrity and the brand is vital. This can mean encouraging the celebrity to be more involved in decision making. Stout (2013) firmly agrees that managing a relationship can make the partnership a win-win situation for all. If you provide the celebrity with something other than just a cheque, they will be more committed to their endorsement duties. Thomson (n.d.) suggests that placing celebrities as creative directors and giving them more power in developing the product would also appeal more to consumers as they are more interested in the ideas that they bring to a product.

V. Discussion

Marketing strategies are varied and plenty, but here we discuss the use of celebrity endorsement. This paper takes a further look so that we can understand why celebrity endorsements work. Celebrities play a bigger role in our lives than ever before, enhanced by the use of social media. Coupled with the rising use of social media accounts among a diverse demographic, this gives opportunities for marketers a new platform of promoting their products. Celebrities make an effective opinion leader, with their influence spreading internationally they are able to shift consumer's purchasing decision and change their perception of a product.

Other than that, celebrities are able to generate a lot more buzz and press. Due to their large fan following, they can work this to their advantage by getting people talking or excited about a new brand or product. Co-branding with a celebrity can be the best option for ailing brands or one with a small consumer group. A celebrity presence can extend the reach towards a wider audience and transfer their popularity into the brand.

VI. Conclusion

As a conclusion, celebrity endorsement can be a valuable boost to companies who want a push in brand awareness or gain higher returns. But it is not without risk, companies have to be wise about selecting a celebrity that the public or targeted group likes as their image correlates directly with their brand. It is also important to note that a celebrity has to have their image aligned with the brand's image to be believable to consumers. As a result, companies who are in need of an influential individual can choose a celebrity to represent them. As long as companies have an interesting marketing strategy paired with the right celebrity, their representative and endorsement has an overall positive impact.

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Comparison on the Impact of Standardization and Adaptation on International Marketing

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Abstract- Study of the transformation of marketing solutions in the process of internationalization of a company acknowledge that the structure of marketing strategy in international markets is an evolutionary process and companies face a particular choice: to standardize or to adapt strategic marketing solutions. Seeking for successful international performance companies do not have to adopt one extremity. The objective of the international marketing strategy is to find an ideal combination of integration and rationalization of operations and solution systems in a global market. The goal of this article is to position international companies on a linear continuum revealing their overall approach towards standardization/adaptation, study the reasons influencing international companies' tactical attitude towards it, and lastly presents the primary managerial implications of the results. Furthermore, it identifies the reasons pulling towards adaptation or standardization into significant and peripheral; and present helpful insights towards practical application.

Keywords: *standardization, adaptation, international marketing.*

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Comparison on the Impact of Standardization and Adaptation on International Marketing

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Abstract- Study of the transformation of marketing solutions in the process of internationalization of a company acknowledge that the structure of marketing strategy in international markets is an evolutionary process and companies face a particular choice: to standardize or to adapt strategic marketing solutions. Seeking for successful international performance companies do not have to adopt one extremity. The objective of the international marketing strategy is to find an ideal combination of integration and rationalization of operations and solution systems in a global market. The goal of this article is to position international companies on a linear continuum revealing their overall approach towards standardization/adaptation, study the reasons influencing international companies' tactical attitude towards it, and lastly presents the primary managerial implications of the results. Furthermore, it identifies the reasons pulling towards adaptation or standardization into significant and peripheral; and present helpful insights towards practical application. This article provides marketing researchers and practitioners with an overview of the major factors that influence marketing tactical attitudes in international markets. This paper investigates the relationship between strategies of standardization and adaptation of the marketing mix and performance in an international context. Among the adaptation choices, price should be the first element of the marketing mix to be adapted, followed by promotion, product and distribution. This research also analyze degrees of adaptation to be applied to different segments, regions, and sectors, among other suggestions.

Keywords: standardization, adaptation, international marketing.

I. Introduction

As marketers observe around them, all they seem to notice in the broader marketing environment, is the confusion of change and the acceleration of doubt; a feeling that is rouse by the new millennium with all its promises – and threats - of epochal change (Vrontis & Thrassou, 2007). This confusion, change, and complexity are even greater within the international marketing environment. Taking into account of the existing internationalized market, companies have distinguish the internationalization of their activities as a approach to remain competitive. Decision-making relating to the international marketing mix has become crucial, specifically because of the influence this arrangement has on performance. Thus, many researchers had identified the need for research that relates standardization and adaptation to performance. Some researchers think that a relationship between standardization and performance does not occur. On the other hand, others have identified a positive link between the adaptation of the product and its performance (Birnik & Bowman, 2007). Hence, the understanding about the effects of these strategies on performance appears as a gap in the literature which this paper plans to fulfill. This discrepancy clamors for the formation of more concise and defined theories, approach, and strategic frameworks, since marketers need to know under which conditions each strategy turns out to be more sufficient, and under which circumstances such strategies drive to positive performance (Vinícius, Lívia D'Avila, Luis, & Engels, 2011).This paper studies the relationship between the role of the strategies of standardization and adaptation of the marketing mix and performance in an international context.

In the scope of international marketing, the argument over the degree of standardization or adaptation has occupied a important part of previous research. Previously, economic development focused on the surplus of exports rather than imports. Companies were concentrating on minimizing cost and increasing exports. Even so, due to changes in economic circumstances, companies recognized that cost minimization by itself is not sufficient enough. Throughout the evolution, companies became more consumer-oriented and more refined techniques were established and applied to determine and satisfy consumers' needs (Vrontis, Thrassou, & Lamprianou, 2009). Supporters of standardization perceived markets as increasingly homogeneous and global in scope and scale and believed that the crucial factor for survival and growth is a multinational's ability to standardize goods and services. Supporters of standardization agree that consumers needs, wants and requirements do not differ much across markets or nations. The general conceptual argument is that the world is becoming more similar in terms of environmental factors and customer requirements and irrespective of geographical locations, consumers have the same demands.

In contrast, proponents of adaptation pointed out the difficulties in applying a standardized approach and so patronage market altering and adaptation to

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meet the "unique dimensions" of distinct international markets (Vrontis et al., 2009). Moreover, followers of adaptation debate that there are an overwhelming amount of differences between countries and even between regions in the same country. It is claimed that marketers are subject to a number of macro-environmental factors, such as climate, race, topography, occupations, taste, law, culture, technology and society (Vrontis et al., 2009). Supporters of adaptation agreed that international companies should study how to alter their marketing strategy and tactics in order to meet market requirements.

Both schools of thought turn out to be sensible, logical and coherent, pointing up the advantages and benefits that an international company could obtain by applying either approach. It became impractical and incoherent when one focuses on the extreme position of either approach. Marketing reality for multinationals does not lie in either of these two polarized positions, as both approach are likely to coexist, even within the same company, product line, or brand (Vrontis et al., 2009). This article elaborates on current work on the subject to investigate the complicated interrelationship of different factors involved towards the application of standardization and adaptation. It provides valuable insights into the degree and nature of this relationship and determined practical issues relating to international marketing tactics.

II. Adaptation Versus Standardization

The major objective of a global strategy is management of the huge heterogeneities that appear beyond domestic borders (Vinícius et al., 2011). International companies, in their intention to expand their global existence and market share, increase profitability and to solve problems concerning the saturation of current markets, continuously search possibilities for expansion (Powers & Loyka, 2007). Within the arena of international marketing, when a company chooses to begin marketing products overseas, an essential decision is whether to adopt a standardized marketing mix with a single marketing approach in all countries, or to alter the marketing mix to meet the unique dimensions of each potentially unique local market. However, literature stating practical indication advises that companies make contingency choices, which pertaining to core determinants in each situation (Vrontis et al., 2009). International marketing is not equivalent to standardization in marketing processes. Although each element of this process is influenced by standardization, this can be only one of the approaches used by the company. Vinícius et al (2011) study found the following:

> "The approaches of international marketing follow three different aspects. The first is the concentration dispersion aspects, which identifies the organizational structure of the company. The second is the integration-independence aspects, which has to do with the competitive process encountered by companies. The third handle the adaptation-standardization aspect, which concerned the degree of alteration or standardization of the marketing mix elements." (p. 272)

When a company chose to broaden its operation into foreign markets, it should decide on either standardizing or adapting the marketing mix. This can be accomplish when the organization uses a single strategy in all the countries, or tailoring the elements to each market. The company's decision to standardize or to adapt its strategies is essential, since it affects the organization's primary approach to business and how it will compete. The study of both external and internal factors is important for the standardization/adaptation decision as well as international marketing strategy (Atanase, 2009). Some marketers conclude that adaptation of knowledge management practices brings successful payoff. Heterogeneity in national culture would have an effect on knowledge management practices. The larger the heterogeneity between cultures the larger the obstacle in knowledge transfer across cultures (Ang & Massingham, 2007). In contrast, some conclude that decision to standardize knowledge management practices, despite cultural heterogeneity, can still obtain a positive outcome.

The argument relating the standardization or adaptation of the marketing mix in various markets has been a focus of many researches. Researches about standardization evoked in analyzing the standardization of promotion, been followed by researches about product (Barbu, 2011). Recently standardization researches contain all elements of the marketing mix - product, promotion, price and distribution, although promotion and product have been given more concentration (Vinícius et al., 2011). Generally, standardization has been analyzed under two aspects - standardization of marketing processes and marketing programs (Cheon, Cho, & Sutherland, 2007). The former is related to the philosophy, principles, and technology used in outlining and executing marketing decisions (Vinícius et al., 2011). The latter - the aim of this paper - refers to the elements of the marketing mix. Standardization is the adopt of the similar marketing program in various countries or regions, respecting the product offered, the promotion engaged, the price incorporated and the distribution process chosen (Vinícius et al., 2011).

The major debate supporting the standardization approach is the view that the world is becoming more and more homogeneous, particularly as an outcome of the development in communication and technology. As a result, tastes and cultures are becoming similar; world consumers are sharing preferences, needs, desires and demands (Vinícius et al., 2011). This homogeneous of demands, together with united cultures and reduce of boundaries, companies would have opportunities to offer more standardized products, with standardized marketing programs (Irem, Bodur, & Yilmaz, 2010). Standardization, therefore, allows concentration on common segments, leading economy of scale and more uniform promotions (Heerden & Barter, 2008). Although such economies of scale, cultural and socio-economic heterogeneities among countries seem to oppose the standardization approach, sometimes demanding alteration to the market, and requiring more expenses to support the standardization decision (Vinícius et al., 2011). In any situation, the choice on standardizing or adapting must be established on the potential financial returns and risks incorporated for each alternative. The decision for global standardization will be desire only up to the point when a positive influence exists on the company's performance (Vinícius et al., 2011). However, huge heterogeneities between markets does exist, even in industrialized countries. In order to address these heterogeneities, alteration in design, packaging, price, or distribution of products is a necessity. Furthermore, viability, communication costs, media habits, heterogeneities in the range of distribution channels, intermediaries, financial resources and know-how may also cause problem (Vinícius et al., 2011). In short, absolute standardization can cause the company to fail when it comes to watching out of local consumers' needs, and might affects its alienation from the local market. In this situation, the standardization debate fall apart - particularly when taking into account the distinct heterogeneities between consumers, administrators and nations - and adaptation becomes a choice (Vinícius et al., 2011).

Most research argue that a standardized marketing approach is more likely to be executed for industrial goods than for consumer goods, as less adaptation is needed for industrial products than consumer products (Tan & Sousa, 2013). Moreover, some researchers have determined internal, organizational and managerial factors as important contingencies influencing the content of marketing approach. The first set includes the nationality of the company, the nature of its ownership, its international experience and its market share position (Yakhlef, 2010). For example, researchers advise a correlation between standardization and wholly owned subsidiary. With concern to managerial behavior towards international activities, such as the degree of centralization of decision-making and corporate orientation, the range of management's desire to approve foreign aspects was identify to affects the type of marketing approach used (Yakhlef, 2010). The management's point of view will affect the degree to which they standardize or adapt their marketing mix.

Economic freedom influence the environment by altering the driving force and learning of individuals, an issue that is of crucial importance in assuring economic efficiency. When economic freedom is homogeneous across markets, individuals and institutions encounter the similar environment across markets. Hence, if other circumstances permit namely that there are similarity in consumer response to the marketing mix, and transferability of competitive advantage, a great homogeneity in economic freedom will drive the marketer to pursue policies of standardization while a low degree of homogeneity in economic freedom across markets will restrain the marketer from pursuing policies of standardization (Viswanathan & Dickson, 2007). Industrial buyers may prefer standardized goods, because of the economies of scale, companies can implement lower prices while increasing quality and reliability. In addition, price standardization may advance export performance, especially if the domestic price is lower than the price in the export market or if the exporting companies can take advantage of the exchange rate between different currencies (Luis, José Luís Abrantes & Cristiana, 2008).

The fundamental for marketing standardization is the comparison of market operation in the home market to market operation in a foreign host market. Factors concerning the degree of standardization in a foreign market must be determined. Heterogeneities among countries cause international companies to view and form their marketing strategy on a country-by-country basis (Hise & Young-Tae Choi, 2011). Culture has no major effect on product, price, place and process (Hartmann & Vanessa Apaolaza-Ibáñez, 2013). Instead, the major effect is on promotional efforts, meaning that companies should adopt an adapted promotional strategy when penetrating a different cultural environment.

Transformational messages affiliate the brand with a unique set of psychological characteristics and thus are universal (Hartmann & Vanessa Apaolaza-Ibáñez, 2013). Contrarily, informational advertisements are more often localized, as they focus on consumers' practical and functional needs by highlighting product features or benefits. Standardization is a trade-off between the potential economic benefits of a standardized strategy, as well as the performance obtained by adapting to the demand of local markets. Moreover, researchers argue that different advertisements from different countries might create confusion amongst customers; thus standardized advertisements may help escape this (Hartmann & Vanessa Apaolaza-Ibáñez, 2013). However, advertisers may also encounter repression by national legislation. What is needed to be done is to determine the drivers of standardization perception and to create a campaign that fits their specific restrictions. An important strategic decision for international advertisers is whether to localize, by adapting advertising campaigns to common characteristics of local target audiences, or globalize, by producing standardized campaigns on an international or even global scale. Concentrating on the adopt of images of the natural environment in green advertising, research concludes that imagery should not be adapted to the climate, vegetation or scenery characterizing the target audience's geographic location (Hartmann & Vanessa Apaolaza-Ibáñez, 2013). Contrarily, it is acceptable to assume that a standardized practice of nature imagery will be an effective strategy. An effective international strategy should imply standardized brand imagery, built around graphic representations of pleasant natural landscapes, featuring pristine, lush green scenery and clear, sparkling water (Hartmann & Vanessa Apaolaza-Ibáñez, 2013).

Proponent of global standardization debate that consumers live in a globalized world in which nation-states are not the main determinants of marketing strategy; and in which consumer tastes and cultures are similar and captured through the foundation of standardized global products created by global corporations (Vrontis et al., 2009). Well-managed companies moved from focusing on tailoring items, to offering globally standardized products that were advanced, functional, reliable and low in price. International companies will attain long-term success by focusing on what everyone wants rather than concerning about the details of what everyone thinks they might like (Vrontis et al., 2009). First, it enables international companies to preserve a uniform image and brand identity on a global foundation. Second, it minimizes confusion among consumers that travel. Third, it enables the international; company to form a single tactical strategy. And, fourth, it allows the company to take advantage of economies of scale in production and experience and learning curve effects. A company can concentrate on product differentiation and adopt standardized marketing practices across various markets. However, because the competitive market structure and its offerings can vary across markets, implementing standardization consistently to all international markets could reduce differentiation as a competitive advantage (Schilke, Reimann, & Thomas, 2009). Under these situations, an adaption marketing approach is necessary to preserve the integrity of the differentiation strategy.

It is advised that online standardization helps in cost savings. Website adaptation is basically a costly undertaking. Integrating culturally responsive features in a website necessitates the recruitment of culturally experienced employee and expert linguists not only to engage in the initial design and launch of country specific websites but also to contribute constant analysis and interpretation of cues and produce insights from online dialogue and interaction with customers that live in culturally diverse environments (Rudolf, Sinkovics, Yamin, & Hossinger, 2007). The supporters of online standardization also believe that it will enhance the brand image of the company amongst its potential online customers. Moreover it is the preferred strategy to 'push' visitors through the conversion process from 'surfers' to 'purchasers' (Rudolf et al., 2007). This is important due to cost consideration as cultural online adaptation is rather costly and as long as the target conversion rate is not very high it can be accomplished by delivering a standardized online presence. Companies focusing cost leadership as a competitive strategy are more experienced in adopting standardization to improve performance because cost leadership and marketing program standardization have a uniform objective: to process advancement that expand efficiency (Schilke et al., 2009). Therefore, this competitive strategy and the company's marketing strategy enjoy a strategic fit and the potential for synergy.

The foundational support of the adaptation school of thought, is that the marketers is bound to a new set of macro-environmental factors, to different constraints such as language, climate, race, topography, occupations, education, taste, and to quite often conflicts resulting from different laws, cultures, and societies (Vrontis & Thrassou, 2007). It is distinct that people in different countries speak different languages; rules and regulations differ across national borders; most countries drive on the right, but some drive on the left. Moreover, there are other factors such as climate, economic conditions, race, topography, political stability, and occupations. The most significant source of constraints by far, and the most difficult to measure, are cultural differences rooted in history, education, religion, values and attitudes, manners and customs, aesthetics as well as differences in taste, needs and wants, economics and legal systems(Vrontis & Thrassou, 2007).

Proponent of this approach thinks that international companies should have to identify how they must alter an entire marketing strategy and, as well as how they sell, distribute it, in order to meet new market needs. Altering and adjusting the marketing mix determinants and marketing strategy are important and necessary to suit local tastes, fit unique market needs and consumers non-identical demands. High-context cultures such as Asia have consumer who are more likely to be influenced with advertising messages that are in transformational style, visual cues and have major information networks among family and friends and low-context cultures such as North America and North Europe who prefer an informational style, are more analytical/ action-oriented and adopt fewer personal networks (Krolikowska & Kuenzel, 2008). Research found that while there are similarities in how consumers in different countries define service quality, there are also reasonable differences, which would need adapting service quality to local tastes. Therefore, there is no magic solution or standardization in the transmission of service quality in an international retail setting (White & Absher, 2007). Training of employees and delivery of customer service should consider the unique experiences and histories of the country, the culture, and the marketplace. In establishing and determining quality standards, international retailers should take these differences in quality definitions into account in order to identify the optimum level of service quality (White & Absher, 2007).

Proponents of adaptation of marketing solutions claims that, despite the expanding globalization, differences of separate countries when taking measure of such dimensions as consumer needs, usage conditions, purchasing power, commercial infrastructure, culture and traditions, laws, and technological development are still very different, thus a company's marketing approach should be adapted to them (Monika Alimiene & Kuvykaite, 2008). It is clear that a company should take actions that arouse demand. It should adapt itself according to market requirements, and this should be done sooner or later. Business is not made in markets, business is created and executed in societies, thus it is important to acknowledge the needs of all those societies and to take them into account when forming and implementing business decisions (Monika Alimiene & Kuvykaite, 2008). Marketers, who focus the needs of adaptation, believe that strategy standardization is a new marketing "direction" (myopia) with the goal to simplify market reality as much as possible and to decline the conception of marketing. Theory of global standardization approach may determine bankruptcy for most companies, because cultural and other market differences includes separate products, their properties and usage possibilities may determine wrong marketing mix solutions of a company (Monika Alimiene & Kuvykaite, 2008). Proponents of adaptation also claim that the most significant goal of a company is not reduce of costs through standardization, but long-term profitability, accomplished by capturing different consumer demands in different countries and therefore assuring of higher sales. Proponents of the adaptation approach argue that only several markets may be measure as being completely the same, thus adaptation concerning national demands is necessary in order to attract consumers and to increase sales (Monika Alimiene & Kuvykaite, 2008).

For the objective of this paper, adaptation of the product is define as the degree to which its elements (brand, design, label, product line, and quality) are adapted to the external markets in order to adjust to the differences in the environment, consumer behavior, standards of use, and competitiveness (Griffith, Lee, Chang, & Calantone, 2014). Therefore, adaptation incorporates the adoption of particular strategies in each market, where the organization adapts its marketing mix to each environment. It incorporates the customization of strategies for different regions, based upon different factors. Adaptation is the adoption of marketing strategies with no common elements. Adapted governance strategies were expected to facilitate efficient and effective cooperation, and thereby improve export performance (Griffith et al., 2014). Vinícius et al (2011) study found the following:

> "Pricing adaptation concentrates on adjustment to the external market for many reasons, such as economic, political, and legal issues, price controls, transportation costs, market structures, demands, rates, taxes, trade barriers, pricing practices, etc. Distribution adaptation is linked to the adjustment of the company's channels to the foreign market, as well as the criteria for choice of the distribution system, transportation, budget and network. Lastly, promotion is associated with the adjustments in the campaign (e.g. idea/theme, media channels, objectives, budget, etc.) created for the new market in comparison with the domestic one." (p. 273)

The larger the market, the greater the degree of adaptation needed, particularly in terms of promotional efforts. A company has good reason to sustain the additional costs of adaptation due to higher sales derived from large markets (Yakhlef, 2010). Market factors are characteristics indicating actual or potential levels of demand. A concentrate on such forces strive to capture changes in customer composition, customer needs, customer base, customer preferences and market demand growth (Poulis & Poulis, 2013). This is specifically significant since external forces – as agents of change – may pose an implementation barrier towards an often desirable standardization strategy or may render the need for adaptation ignored (Poulis & Poulis, 2013). Proponents of adaptation states that the assumptions highlighting global standardization theory are contradicted by the facts. Not only are cultural and other differences very much still in the ascendancy, but marketing products in the identical way everywhere can scare off customers, alienate employees and blindside businesses to their customers' real needs (Vrontis et al., 2009).

There are three core phenomena that work to weaken a company's ability to standardize its channel strategy across international markets even when it is possible to standardize its product, price, and promotional strategies. First, though international company can ''set the rules of the game'' for their international product, pricing, and promotional strategies, culturally distant distribution behavior restricts a company's ability to unilaterally determine its international channel strategy based on its own cultural norms that underlie its distribution strategy (Dimitrova & Rosenbloom, 2010). In order to reflect the cultural distinctiveness of global channel members, an adaptive channel management strategy is necessity. The second phenomenon, distributive institution rigidity, forms a threatening obstacle to standardizing channel strategy because the distribution infrastructure present in any given country is relatively fixed (Dimitrova & Rosenbloom, 2010). Therefore, even large international companies are not able to effects the type of changes in a specific country's distributive infrastructure needed to accommodate a standardized marketing. The third phenomenon that weakens the adoption of a standardized channel strategy in global markets is international functional fragmentation strategy (Dimitrova & Rosenbloom, 2010). Foreign intermediaries in different countries seldom carry out similar marketing functions or distribution tasks. Consequently, companies operating in global markets need to tailor their channel strategies by assigning distribution tasks in any given country based on the capabilities of their intermediary channel partners to carry out the set of distribution tasks needed to produce products and services obtainable to final customers (Dimitrova & Rosenbloom, 2010).

III. Achieving the Right Balance

Some believes that the important question is not whether to standardize or to adapt marketing strategies, but how much to adapt them. The degree of adaptation of the product and promotion is greatly influenced by the company's characteristics, products and industry, as well as by the foreign market's characteristics (Vinícius et al., 2011). Thus, many researchers turn down the extreme adoption of only one or another strategy. Instead, they think that there is a need for the simultaneous adoption of both strategies, where the degree of standardization or adaptation should be determined by internal and external factors (Vinícius et al., 2011). The determination whether to standardize or adapt is not treated as a dichotomous one. For example, some academics propose that standardizing certain tactics and adapting others to different market conditions is significant. Standardization and adaptation is not an all-or nothing proposition, but a matter of degree. Heterogeneity among different countries does not approve full standardization. In contrast, the enormous costs involved in adaptation and the advantages of standardization, may not approve adaptation to be adopted greatly. There are three factors to investigate standardization/adaptation attitude: similarity of customer response to the marketing mix, transferability of competitive advantage and homogeneities in the degree of economic freedom (Vrontis et al., 2009). Even in countries with homogeneity cultures there are differences in customer needs and wants. Furthermore, standardization will be successful when the similarity of customer response and the degree of homogeneity in economic freedom is great and competitive advantages are easily transferable (Vrontis et al., 2009). The aims of decreasing costs and market complication lead companies to look at standardization, while customer orientation may persuade them toward product adaptation. Decisions on international marketing tactics were determined by a number of determinants. These determinants are categorized into "reasons" and "factors". Reasons are those behavioral aspects "pulling" multinationals' tactical behavior towards one or the other side of the continuum, while factors are those determinants affecting the behavior and its relative significance (Vrontis et al., 2009). Multinational companies should be simultaneously focused on the facets that need global standardization as well as on those demanding a local variation; combining elements of both strategies, standardizing the elements that bring advantages, and adapting those that capture the needs of the local market (Vinícius et al., 2011).

An approach that combined standardization and adaptation, i.e. to judge a company's development and marketing solutions "glocally" was proposed (Monika Alimiene & Kuvykaite, 2008). Aspects of the strategy of local, international, multinational and global marketing are include in the theory of glocal strategy. Maximize adaptation, alteration to conditions, heterogeneous and other characteristics of the local market are the goal of local marketing. Local market aspects are recognizes as significantly important for marketing solutions in local marketing strategy. International strategy enlarges local marketing strategy, adopting in foreign markets those marketing solutions of the local market that are also applicable for foreign markets, while the essence of multinational marketing strategy is to decide on some markets from many markets where it can adopt marketing solutions that have already been executed (Monika Alimiene & Kuvykaite, 2008). International and multinational marketing strategies acknowledge the needs to alter some marketing solutions to the needs of foreign markets, but their major goal is global development, i.e. companies that support these strategies firstly pursue to maximize standardization, similarities, homogenization, concentration and synchronization of marketing solutions, and integration, but they also recognized the likeliness to adapt those marketing solutions that are important for successful operation of the company in foreign markets (Monika Alimiene & Kuvykaite, 2008). While the goal of the global marketing strategy is solely to standardize marketing solutions at the maximum, to concentrate, synchronize and integrate marketing activities in all markets of the world, i.e. the results of the global marketing strategy is the same marketing solutions in the whole global market, while the outcome of international and multinational marketing strategies is marketing solutions that are the same in some circumstances and meanwhile in other circumstances adaptation of marketing solutions with regard to the unique market circumstances and characteristics is selected (Monika Alimiene & Kuvykaite, 2008).

Although the very broad adoption of the concept of global marketing strategy, regularly activities typical of international and multinational marketing are evaluate rather than of global solutions. Pursuing to escape ambiguity the conception of "glocal marketing" was proposed - it combines local and global aspects of marketing strategy (Monika Alimiene & Kuvykaite, 2008). This strategy vary from the global marketing strategy because it recognize the signification of local factors for marketing solutions, moreover, it includes also typical actions of international and multinational marketing. Glocal marketing includes a broader field of the company's marketing solutions than global marketing because glocal marketing solutions may be formed in operational as well as tactical levels, while the sole field of global marketing is the strategic level of decision-making because in the choice of tactical and operational levels the aspects of adaptation, heterogeneity, flexibility, etc. are evaluated (Monika Alimiene & Kuvykaite, 2008).

When investigating the latest study of marketing strategies when companies conduct their operation in foreign markets, it may be noticed that more and more researchers believes that global marketing solutions cannot be formed in the strategic level or these solutions should be indefinite enough since a altered competitive environment induce a smaller use of standardization and a bigger necessity to adapt to each market circumstances (Monika Alimiene & Kuvykaite, 2008). A company's marketing strategy should be integrated in all levels of decision-making, so strategic decisions of global marketing should not be against tactical and operational decisions and actions of the company. Standardization of global marketing solutions verifies the use of the same marketing mix in the whole global market, but global standardization is often not applicable to companies because of heterogeneities of language, culture, consumer preferences, laws and rules, marketing infrastructure and competition structure in different countries (Monika Alimiene & Kuvykaite , 2008). Full adaptation of marketing solutions is also not applicable because in such situation companies cannot use benefits supplied by scale economy, marketing knowledge and information attained in other markets. Thus, when making decisions about marketing activities when conducting operation in foreign markets, a company should take account of benefits and obstacles of standardization and adaptation and should pursue to incorporate those two approaches in its activities.

IV. Discussion

Both perspective of standardization and adaptation seem logic and coherent. However, the difference of the markets does not approve total standardization, and the huge costs of adaptation do not approve its use for the entire marketing mix (Vinícius et al., 2011). Marketers seem to escape the polarization of these strategies since their extreme adoption is disadvantage. This action is preserved by some marketers who repel the use of only one strategy for all markets. Maybe one of the determinants that make this a growing debate is that both standardization and adaptation consider their own view as being exclusive and predominant. Interestingly, findings support the presence and signification of both approaches, because research discovered positive relationships between both the adaptation and the standardization of the marketing mix, when related to performance (Vinícius et al., 2011). While distinctly investigating each of the variables of the marketing mix, it was discovered that the price adaptation is, among all the marketing mix variables, the one that should be concentrated on the most (Vinícius et al., 2011). The adaptation of product and promotion should also be treated as more significant than distribution adaptation. The major decision a marketer should make is not fundamentally which of the strategies to adopt, nor which approach to favor, but the degree of the strategy used. The companies also have to take into account its common strategy, the environment and market orientation. Generally, cutbacks of cost and market complication are the most typical reason for standardization, while the need to take care of the selective necessity of each market is a common impetus for adaptation (Vinícius et al., 2011). Findings also reveal that both standardization and adaptation strategies can coexist and cause responses on performance. Thus, the main choice is "how much", i.e., to what degree should each strategy be adopted. Some practical examples can portray these suggestions. For instance, companies such as Nike, Levi's and Coca-Cola are recognized as global, and they tend to view the world as a single market. But even these companies have adapted their marketing mix, sometimes in an indirect way. Coca-Cola, for example, sells virtually the same product all over the world: Coca-Cola. However, beyond this headlining product, its main strategy is diversification of products and their adaptation, encompassing all its consumers in the 200 countries where the company operates (Vinícius et al., 2011). In Japan, one of its major markets, its products consist of coffee, teas and even Real, a hangover cure. The adaptations also consists product descriptions, the ingredients, packing, line of products, and advertising campaigns (Vinícius et al., 2011). Even though there is a prototype product, local adaptations are still used.

The companies seem to standardize or adapt their tactics in different ways for different elements of the marketing mix. Reasons pulling towards the adaptation part of the scale are the political environment and the heterogeneities in physical conditions (Vrontis et al., 2009). Easier planning and control and stock costs reduction are the only factors with statistically important contribution to the model. It is amusing to discover that the standardized weight of the Adapt construct is almost twice in magnitude compared to the standardized weight of the standardize construct (Vrontis et al., 2009). It might be conclude that the necessity to Adapt is more powerful compared to the necessity to standardize. The greatest standardized weights for the Adapt construct are for the physical conditions and then for the political environment and the Laws (Vrontis et al., 2009). Market development has the smallest standardized weight. For a international company to be successful it should integrate ingredients of both strategies. International companies in their attempt to be efficient and enjoy as much as they can the advantages of both strategies, try, on the one hand, to standardize various marketing mix elements and marketing strategies but on the other hand, to implement adaptation in order to uphold marketing orientation (Vrontis & Thrassou, 2007). Success is not determine upon adaptation or standardization, but it is determine upon combining the two and discovering the right degree of standardization and adaptation across the marketing mix elements and marketing strategies for each country. It was determined that the most significant factors driving international companies towards international tactical adaptation are culture, market development, competition, laws, economic differences and differences in customer perceptions (Vrontis & Thrassou, 2007). International companies are conscious of the advantages related with global standardization. International companies standardize a number of marketing tactics. The most significant factors for standardizing are global uniformity and image, economies of scale and synergetic and transferable experience (Vrontis & Thrassou, 2007). It is therefore evident that even though international adaptation and global standardization of marketing tactics do take place, and can bring advantages, the choice on tactical behavior is not a dichotomous one between complete standardization and adaptation. The decision regarding these two polarized positions is a matter of degree.

V. Conclusion

The ongoing argument in international marketing as to whether companies should standardize or adapt their international marketing strategies and market entry methods remains to be a focal point of research in academic literature. It is also an important and growing interest for every international company and marketing practitioner. This paper has discovers that it is illogical for companies to pursue complete homogenization of the marketing mix, except under distinctly particular sets of situation and certain product categories. Yet, it is also true that the global market is becoming more homogenized - to a degree in fact - that international companies can market their products and services in the same way all over the world by adopting similar strategies with concurrent lower costs and the advantages of greater margins which correspond to expand profitability. The globalization of society is primarily a growing phenomenon influence consumers and companies everywhere. A phenomenon, though, which does not and cannot consider to a globalization of markets. In contrast, complete heterogeneity is also a misapplication, as many researchers have pinpointed, especially where ongoing and distinct heterogeneities present between different countries and markets and even more for consumer goods.

A critical question therefore is what should companies do when facing decisions in this area? Research found that on a tactical level an either/or approach is inadvisable and one likely to ruin businesses. In line with the empirical and statistical evidence, this paper introduced, further developed and elaborated on Adapt Stand approach, which encourages companies to standardize tactics where possible and adapt them only where needed (Vrontis et al., 2009). This is distinct from the glocalization term which point out to the organization that want and capable to think globally and act locally to fit the demand of different nations and cultures. While it is coherent to standardize where possible, unreasonable generalizations from one marketing condition to another should be escaped at all costs as every market and every customer could differ. Marketing practitioners should be aware that there is a fine line between the advantages of adopting a standardized approach, when possible and preferable and the risks of searching a level of required homogenization. It is also acclaimed that, marketers and managers are not making one-time one-off decisions. International companies can and do at the same time concentrate their attention and resources on aspects of the business that demand global standardization and upon aspects that require local responsiveness. When and where possible and needful operation should be standardized, however, processes in local markets may also need local flexibility. International companies must aim to search and preserve an equitable balance. This is not a direct task, particularly when dealing with the changes of environmental, competitive and market forces (Vrontis et al., 2009). Therefore, making decision on the "balance" between standardization and adaptation is difficult to accomplish and a challenging conundrum of a growing nature.

This paper has, however, emphasized that standardization and adaptation is not an all-or nothing proposition, but a matter of degree. It determined that the high costs incorporated in the international adaptive approach, together with the international companies' motive to obtain the advantages of standardization do not approve such adaptation to be adopted in an absolute manner. In addition, organizational differences, heterogeneity among different countries, macro and micro environmental factors as well as companies' motive to capture consumer's various necessity, do not approve standardization to be used broadly. International companies should therefore combined ingredients of both approaches, based on a definite perception of the dynamics of the served markets. Moreover, the paper found that the marketing reasons pulling towards adaptation or standardization do not uphold the same degree of significance in international companies' tactical attitudes. Genuinely, it was identified that they can be categorized into "significant" and "peripheral" ones; with the latter also influencing international marketing tactics, but to a lesser extent. The findings determined that "market development", "differences in physical conditions", "legal reasons" and "political reasons" are important towards adaptation, and they were termed as such (Vrontis et al., 2009). "Economic differences", "culture", "differences in customer perception", "competition", "technological factors", "sociological factors", "level of customer similarity" and "marketing infrastructure" were determined to have a smaller importance as reasons pulling towards adaptation and they were termed "peripheral reasons" (Vrontis et al., 2009). On the other hand, "easier planning and control" and "stock costs reduction" were determined to be the importance reasons pulling towards standardization; while "economies of scale in production, research, development and promotion", "global uniformity and image", "consistency with the mobile consumer" and "synergetic and transferable experience" were determined to be the corresponding "peripheral reasons" (Vrontis et al., 2009). Any company conduction operation internationally does not, and in fact should not, make a one-time decision between the poles of absolute standardization or adaptation. International companies, operating in diverse countries adopting different entry methods, must incorporate marketing tactics. Managers and executives should concentrate on aspects of the business that demand global standardization and aspects that need local responsiveness. The driving forces in either situation are the needs and wants of target markets and organizational resources.

It has been debated that the international market has become similar that international companies can market their products and services the same all over the world by adopting similar approach with resultant lesser costs and greater margins (Vrontis & Thrassou, 2007). In contrast, some researchers highlight the distinct heterogeneities between the markets of different countries, particularly those for consumer goods and debate in favor of adopting international differentiated marketing programs. International companies should not view the world as one single market. They should engage market research and identify their customers, their needs and wants. They should get to identify their customers and acknowledge their problems. Similarly, they need to acknowledge their unique external environmental constraints and advantages of standardization (Vrontis & Thrassou, 2007). Each element and sub-element of the marketing mix and market have to be investigated on their own benefits and drawbacks. Using primarily one-sided ideas for or against standardization and adaptation is not very wise, as in practice the degree of incorporation necessary has to be used in ways that take account of given situation. It is suggested that marketing practitioners engage first an internal and external environmental analysis to investigate a company's organizational position and industrial barrier in a single market (Vrontis & Thrassou, 2007). The advantages acquired from globalization should also be recognized. This paper contributes marketers and managers with a study of what affects marketing attitudes in international markets. Marketers will be better capable to determine the significance of the reasons, factors and elements of the marketing mix and any heterogeneity between them concerning to their circumstances. An insights and study of the above could bring advantages and guide international companies in developing international marketing planning and executing marketing strategy and tactics. The study and execution of the right degree of incorporation are important as it increases the possibility for international companies to remain competitive and marketing orientated within their industrial structure and international marketing field (Vrontis & Thrassou, 2007).

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An Analysis of the Standardization and Global Localization on Cross-Cultural Management from Communication and Source of Conflict Point of View

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Abstract- Cultural factor is recognized as a vital influence to communication as well as the key to success for a business. Cultural awareness helps organizational firm more efficient while behave cross-culturally to the international market. Meanwhile, the global business's environment has become excessively complex because of the continuous entry of new corporations and private entrepreneurs where they tend to expand their market-share as well as differentiate their brands in order to compete in the world marketplace. Studies have shown that multinational organizations have to emphasize on cross-cultural management while competing with other organizations for the purpose of global expansion. Hence, it is important that businesses in different countries to raise their level of sensitivity, understand and respect towards each other's cultural difference which would benefits them with the growth of their international business.

Keywords: cross-cultural management, standardization, global localization, national culture.

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Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:

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Foong Wei Yan [α] & Dr. Rashad Yazdanifard [σ]

Abstract- Cultural factor is recognized as a vital influence to communication as well as the key to success for a business. Cultural awareness helps organizational firm more efficient while behave cross-culturally to the international market. Meanwhile, the global business's environment has become excessively complex because of the continuous entry of new corporations and private entrepreneurs where they tend to expand their market-share as well as differentiate their brands in order to compete in the world marketplace. Studies have shown that multinational organizations have to emphasize on cross-cultural management while competing with other organizations for the purpose of global expansion. Hence, it is important that businesses in different countries to raise their level of sensitivity, understand and respect towards each other's cultural difference which would benefits them with the growth of their international business. This paper's provide an analytical framework and concise version of conclusion of the importance of communication and source of conflict in cross-cultural management whether marketers doing standardization or global localization.

Keywords: cross-cultural management, standardization, global localization, national culture.

I. Introduction

According to Lillis and Tian (2010), it is getting obvious that the cultural differences between countries, regions as well as ethnic groups are becoming stronger nowadays. In order to compete in global market, multinational company has to obtain the ability to manage knowledge to prevent financial as well as opportunity cost that caused by wrong decision. Standardization can be defines to a common approach to business throughout the world where adaptation of a business organization requires a different approach over the global market (Ang and Massingham, 2007). Standardization can be refers to the use of the similar marketing mix in as many countries across the globe as possible when a corporation operates beyond its national borders. Corporations that pursue standardization are referred to as Global Corporations and their strategies are referred to as Global or standardized strategies. On the other hand, global localization or adaptation is when a corporation modifies its marketing mix in virtually every country that it operates to suit national taste, preferences and culture. Most Multinational Corporations (MNC) practiced the global localized strategy. Cross cultural management will be a vital decision to a multinational organization; it is either a benefit to the organization or a cause of failure to the organization, the analysis of global localization or standardization to cross cultural management can be in the form of communication and source of conflict. Communication is recognized as one of the most important functions to master in any business in order to be successful because of increasingly competitive markets, particularly for organizations that doing business internationally.

According to Guang, T. & Trotter, D (2012), an organization's profitability is in part determined by its business communication strategies and skills. However, many top managers in companies working internationally somehow neglect the significance of the invisible barriers cultural differences which occurs in business communication where cultural factors play an vital role, functioning as invisible barriers. In order to reduce the negative effects of language diversity, multinational companies have formulated language policy, which is a much more formal way to decide which language to be use in corporate communication as well as documentation. Moreover, language policies should be aligned with the Multinational companies strategy to maximize their effectiveness (Luo & Shenkar, 2006; Marschan, Welch, & Welch, 1997 as cited in Born, F. V. D., 2010). Manager's decision making process of global expansion must involve the cross cultural management before a final decision is made to ensure zero risk to go globally. Not to mention that with the globalization of the economic, consumption, and also product activities are as well became important factors for managers to develop their sensitivity to the cross-cultural communication and decision making. Kotler (2008) had given out clear example to show the

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difference of standardization and global localization in the term of international advertising: International advertising in standardization form can be seen as utilizing the similar advertisement's messages across different countries where international advertising in adaptation form can be defined as using different advertising messages in separate markets across the countries. Moreover, the decision whether to standardize or to adapt can be occurs in many operational areas, for example: marketing strategy and human resources management. Thus, this research is to have a clear view of standardization and global localization to the cross cultural management in the communication and source of conflict point of view.

II. Standardization & Global Localization

The globalization of the world economies shows the importance of understanding of doing business in different countries to marketing managers. Multinational companies, in their effort to expand their global presence and market share, increase profitability and to overcome problems related to saturation of existing markets, continually seek opportunities for growth (Vrontis and Thrassou, 2007). Since the business communication is two ways interactive communications, the ability of marketers and consumers to communicate cross-culturally is very important in order to success (Guang and Trotter, 2012). Marketers will deliver information to the market, the market then collect, interpret, and put the information they gather from the markets to use. Failure to do so will lead to a loss of business. When going international, organizations have to go through and investigate the different degrees of two types of advertising strategies which are standardization and adaptation. Standardization for international advertising strategy can be defined as utilizing the similar advertising messages for an international basis, and since the international marketplace has become increasingly homogeneous, as a result the multinational company can standardized their products/services all over the world through identical advertising strategies, principally through the major influences such as TV, movies, as well as the Internet (Wang & Yang, 2011). The strong reason behind this position is that consumers in different countries are now sharing the similar wants and needs; therefore, they can be easily attracted and persuaded by universal advertising appeals. In addidtion, Backhaus and van Doorn (2007) claimed that standardization means a trade-off between the possible economic benefits of a standardized approach, and also the performance gains which attained by adapting to the needs of the local markets.

On the other hand, global localization or adaptation is an international advertising strategy which suggests that each market must be considered and must not be neglected. Not to mention that adaptations must be made accordingly due to the differences in each cultural background, economic status, legal conditions, as well as the foreign market media. According to Wang and Yang (2011), they have claimed that "academicians gradually shifted towards the contingency approach when using international advertising during the 1960s which indicating that whether to standardize or not is not a dichotomous decision, and that there are various degrees of international advertising standardization and adaptation (p.27)". The various degrees of international advertising standardization and adaption mentioned above is mainly depending on analysis of the factors which relate to the certain situation or environment at hand. In addition, Ozsomer, A. and Simonin, B. L. (2004) have claimed that customer similarity as an antecedent of marketing program standardization in both markets is a reflection of how the homogenization of markets is an important process underlying the feasibility of standardization. Czinkota and Ronkainen (1998) as cited in Vrontis, Thrassou, and Lamprianou (2009) have say that marketers are subject to a number of macro-environmental factors, for example like climate, races, occupations, law, culture, technology as well as society.

III. Communication: Managerial Perspective

Okoro (2013) had conducted some studies and stated that in recent developments of the globe, it shows that plenty of businesses are cultivating into global focus by producing, sourcing, importing, as well as exporting their goods and services around the world, which emphasize the intercultural communication and negotiation gain substantial to be prominence in this international business management. Not to mention that international business etiquette (the expected rules of behaviour for intercultural communication and management) has become tremendously important because of the mobility of people (Okoro, 2013). Chaney and Martin (2011) that is in charge of the analysis of the importance of a manager's self-conduct, physical appearance, and comportment have consistently stated that business etiquette is a major criterion while evaluating performances and the overall success in a global market. Etiquette consists of variety of behaviors, habits, as well as specific aspects of nonverbal communication. Furthermore, Yu and Cannella (2007) noted that with the tremendous surge in global business ventures these days, it is important to understand more about the different cultures and behaviors of each country in order to avoid managerial failure. According to Ochieng & Price (2010), communication is a metaphorical pipeline along where information can be transformed from one individual to another. Thomason (1988) as cited in Ochieng & Price (2010) has defined that ''communication as the lifeblood of any system of human interaction as without it, no meaningful or coherent activity can take place" (p.451). During this research, communication is seen as a professional practice from top managers where suitable tools and regulations to be applied in order to develop the utility of the data communicated, and it is also a social process of interaction between individuals. Ochieng, E. G. and Price, A. D. F. (2010) have come out with some statement stating that that trust between different countries is fragile, intangible, and generally difficult to quantify but it is inevitably essential in order to reach the success of multicultural teamwork. It emerged trust can be cultivated where there are good interpersonal skills and mutual respect between the project leaders and also their team members.

Moreover, language on the other hand is recognized as the generally agreed-on, and learned symbol system which commonly used to represent the experiences within a geographic or cultural community and acts as a carrier of cultural values (Samovar, Porter, & Jain, 1981 as cited in Born, 2010). Employees in the multinational company would also differ in terms of their native languages and level in the official corporate language which is English where there are some multinational organizations' employees do not speak English, for example the employees of the organization of City group. According to a research, Luo and Shenkar (2006) have claimed that language policies at secondary level are categorized into three scenarios. Firstly, the initial native's language from product's origin will be the parent's language, for example, a Japan-based Panasonic's subsidiary is using Japanese language in the United States. Secondly, the official language also is the local language, such as with the German-based Siemens' subsidiary in the United States, which uses English. Thirdly, the official language also plays as a third language. A clear example has shown where a Mexican subsidiary of Airbus with the headquartered in France is commonly uses English as the official language. On the other hand, the official corporate language may or may not be the home country language at the corporate level. For example, several Multinational companies from small non-English-based European countries, such as Nokia, and Phillips are using English as their corporate language. In addition, a study conducted at Siemens shows that Multinational companies may use two or more languages during internal communication and leave the issue of formal corporate language ambiguous to prevent any possible negative reactions from dominant language groups (Fredrikss on et al., 2006). Besides, a cultural form is one of the important ways to interpret and organize the world. For example songs, folktales, movies, and even beauty pageants are all cultural forms because they encapsulate ideas about the way people should live, look, and think (Cayla and Arnould, 2008). To put brand into cultural form is acknowledging that branding is a particular form of communication, which tells stories within the context of products orservices, addressing people as consumers, and promising in fulfilling desires and needs that haven't been fulfilled. In short, branding is a particular symbolic form, a specific way of talking about the world (Cayla and Arnould, 2008).

IV. Cross Cultural Communication

Gerhart (2008) had explained that national culture has received so much attention is because it is hypothesized to be a constraint on management practice and organization culture. In the past, dissimilarities among nations led multinational companies to view and design their marketing planning on a country-by-country basis which is a local marketing problem. However, this situation has been changed and the experiences of a growing number of multinational companies suggest that there are potential gains to be obtained by standardizing marketing practices (Vrontis, et al., 2009).There are several issues, challenges, and impacts of cross culture occur on the standardization and global localization. Castro, F. G., Barrera, M., Steiker, L. K. H. (2010) have mentioned that cultural adaptation involves a planned, organized, iterative, as well as collaborative process which often includes the participation of some subjects from the targeted population for whom the adaptation is being developed. The cultural' competence of the investigator and of the cultural adaptation team is also important for conducting a deep structure analysis of the needs and preferences of a targeted cultural group. Based on on the case of LENZE group, one of the Germany's leading industry innovators, Virvilaite, R., Seinauskiene, B., Sestokiene, G. (2011) stated that even though the company acts in the market of industrial products, its cultural environment also has great impact on the decisions of either standardization or adaptation in the global market. Furthermore, majority of studies indicate that pricing is the least standardized elements. Based on this statement, samli and Jacobs (1994) as cited in Birnik, A., Bowman, C. (2007) have found out that 69% of the US Multinational companies used uniform or standardized prices. Culture also affects business behaviours, a clear example such as in cultures where a business gift is expected like Japan, a host who is presented without a gift will be insulted. Arunthanes et al. (1994) as cited in Guang, T. and Trotter, D. (2012) claimed that an important feature of business communication will work to the detriment of the company seeking business, in other cultures offering a business gift could be interpreted as a bribe, inappropriate and would offend the recipient. Nevertheless, the effect of advertisement also influence

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by the culture where there are strongly influenced by language which can be seen as one of the key elements in culture. Advertising budget and structure are based on consumers' buying habits as well as the purchasing style which in turn, are also influenced by the personal values and norms, the local media, as well as the state of the material culture. Thus, it is obvious that every part of culture affects advertisement, which acts as a key component of cross-cultural business communication.

V. Discussion

This research tends to find out how marketers deal with issues and conflict while going global standardization as well as global localization, which also called adaptation to the cross cultural management in the communication and source of conflict point of view. Also, the decision whether to standardize or adapt operations in international business is very important because it influences the firm's fundamental approach to business and how it competes. Based on Bhag at et al. (2002) research, it is believed that insufficient adaptation might be a possibility because in their findings they suggest that the greater the difference between cultures the greater the difficulty in making knowledge transfer across cultures. An analysis of the growth of multinational organizations in the wake of globalization has been done and Chaney & Martin (2011) have identified several factors that have been instrumental to the inability of managers to succeed in a global context. The head among these factors are ethnocentric predisposition, cultural imperialism, as well as parochialism in managing a diverse or multicultural workforce. Based on Guang and Trotter (2012), there are four global models for cross-cultural communication which commonly called "the four-dimensions of culture model, which contains power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism and masculinity" (p.6461). These four models are used to help business managers to distinguish the culture differences for every country.

During this research, communication is seen as a professional practice from top managers where suitable tools and regulations to be applied in order to develop the utility of the data communicated, and it is also a social process of interaction between individuals. Communication, in a more formal way is viewed as a metaphorical pipeline along where information can be transformed from one individual to another; it is also viewed as a professional practice by using suitable tools and regulations while improving the utility of the data that is communicated, and is a social process of interaction between each individual. By labeling brand into a cultural form to acknowledge that branding is a specific form of communication by telling stories within the context of products or services, targeting people as consumers, and promising to fulfill individuals' desires and needs. Based on recent studies, it suggest that in the real business world if firms want to get optimal results they will need to study and accept cultural differences as well as practice in cross-cultural skills for their business communications. Based on previous research from Bhagat et al (2002), it can tell that insufficient adaptation might be a possibility since their findings suggest that the bigger the gap of differences between cultures the greater the difficulty for knowledge to transfer across cultures. Apparently, there are many factors that affect global business, but a fundamental precondition for every successful international business is known as effective communication, which more or less involves business marketers' awareness of other cultures.

VI. Conclusion

As business organizations are dealing with global ventures and competing with other multinational organizations, the common challenges like managing cultural differences and inter-cultural communication, as well as cross cultural negotiation and decision-making are the main key to either success or failure for the organizations. The managers of an organization plays a vital role because it emphasize on the ability of managers at all levels to communicate smoothly and effectively with partner or consumer that are from different backgrounds or nationalities, and showing respect for cultural differences. Multinational organizations like Coca-cola and Pepsi. Co had been successful using standardization strategies. However, despite the declared benefit, standardization does not always improve all organizations' performance equally (Silke, Reiman, Thomas, 2009).It has been said that a sound intercultural communication is vital for international managers and also for domestic managers from multicultural and multinational businesses. Moreover, Misunderstanding, miscommunication, and misinterpretation are more likely to take place among managers and employees that are from different ethnic backgrounds and nationalities compared to among the managers and people that are from homogenous backgrounds. In conclusion, it is very clear that international project management requires an effective process and avoids any possible conflict to ensure effective cross-cultural communication between all the countries because communication is viewed as vital role for the success or failure to a multinational organization.

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Effectiveness of SMS Advertising (A Study of Young Customers in Bahrain)

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Abstract- Mobile advertising gives companies an opportunity to directly communicate with their consumers beyond the boundaries of time and space. Although mobile advertising is emerging as a promising advertising channel, its effectiveness is still uncertain and requires more investigation. This paper recruited 247 young mobile users in Bahrain and analyzed their reactions to and perceptions of SMS advertising. The study found that these young consumers' attitudes towards SMS advertising were determined by five SMS attributes: entertainment value, informativeness, credibility, personali-zation, and irritation level. The study also found that attitude plays a significant role in determining consumers' future buying behavior, in terms of their intention to use SMS advertising as well as their word-of-mouth (WOM) response to it.

Keywords: mobile marketing, SMS advertising, mobile advertising channel, advertising effectiveness, SMS credibility, SMS informativeness, SMS irritation, SMS personalization, SMS entertaining, SMS attractiveness.

GJMBR-E Classification: JEL Code: M37, M39

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Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:

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I. Introduction

The dramatic revolution in mobile technology has provided companies with new promotional opportunities for reaching their consumer groups (Radder, et al., 2010; Carter, 2008; Xu et al., 2008; International Advertising Bureau, 2008). The worldwide increase in the ownership of mobile phones has made marketers consider such devices as promising potential media for mobile marketing use, through which they can effectively reach their customers (Bauer et al., 2005; Chowdhury, 2006; Muk, 2007; Tsang et al., 2004; Barwise and Strong, 2002). One component of mobile marketing is short-message-service (SMS) advertising (Waldt et al., 2009; Ramanarain, 2012). For the purpose of this study, SMS advertising will be defined as ―using short message service (SMS), sent to consumers' cell phones, to provide consumers with time and location sensitive information that promotes goods, services and ideas, thereby generating value for all stakeholders‖ (Kavassalis et al., 2003).

Many marketers find SMS advertising to be more effective than traditional advertising (Roozan et al., 2008; Mirbagheri, 2010) in terms of reach, cost and retention (Bamariya and Singh, 2012). The literature reveals that SMS advertising has managed to attract the attention and trust of marketers as a promotional tool due to its unique characteristics, including: interactive qualities, the ability to easily target specific groups of customers (Bauer, 2005; Stewart and Pavlou, 2002; Barnes, 2003), the capacity to reach customers anytime, anywhere (Aamir et al., 2013; Luxton, 2009; Dickinger et al., 2005), the generation of highly-personalized messages to individual consumers (Bauer et al., 2005; Aalto et al., 2004; Kavassalis et al., 2003; Leppaniemi and Karjaluoto, 2005; Siau et al., 2001), the potential to take advantage of mobile users' habit of reading all SMS messages (Leppamiemi, 2005; Mirbagheri, 2010), suitability for both ―pull‖ and ―push‖ promotional strategies (Katzstone, 2001), ability to reach a larger, more diverse pool of people (Yamir, 2008; Bauer et al., 2005), and lower costs than traditional advertising (Frolick, 2004). According to Ramnarain (2012), ―the most important reason to advertise via SMS is the high reading-ratio, about 99% of the text messages are read by the recipient and 90% of the text messages sent, are read within three minutes after delivery.‖ Kondo et al. (2008) summarized the benefits of SMS advertising as being immediate, personal, customized, direct, reliable, and automated. Some claim that SMS advertising would be more effective if it targeted young customers because this segment of the market is believed to comprise the majority of those who use mobile phones and mobile phone applications (Scharl et al., 2005; International Advertising Bureau, 2008; Bigelow, 2002; Rohm and Sultan, 2005).

The prevailing literature on mobile advertising has shown that people's perception of SMS advertising is determined by a number of factors, including the entertainment value, informativeness, credibility, personalization, and irritation level present in the advertising message (Bauer et al., 2005; Tsang et al., 2004; Xu, 2007; Radder et al., 2010; Zabadi et al. 2012).

The objective of this study is to examine how young customers in Bahrain interact with SMS advertising. What are their attitudes, and how do these attitudes affect their behavior? Specifically, this study intends to find answers to the following questions: (1) How do young consumers perceive SMS advertising in terms of its entertainment value, informativeness, credibility, personalization, and irritation level? (2) How do such perceptions influence their attitude towards SMS advertising? (3) What is the relationship between consumers' attitudes towards SMS advertising and their intention to use SMS advertising? (4) Do those consumers who perceive SMS advertising positively

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forward them to others? Or do they talk positively about them with others? (5) Is there any relationship between consumers‘ positive perceptions of SMS advertising and their buying behavior in regards to the products advertised through SMS?

Finding answers to such questions is essential to marketers. It would help them to properly design their SMS advertisements in order to positively influence consumer attention, attitude, intention, and behavior. In other words, effective SMS advertising would improve consumer response rates and how frequently they exhibit positive responses to the advertising they receive (Liu et al., 2012).

Arab countries lack research related to the response of consumers to SMS advertising. The majority of such studies have been conducted in the Western countries (Waldt et al., 2009), but the findings may not apply to the Arab countries due to cultural differences. Even within countries of the same region, one may find significant differences in the response of consumers to advertising (Marieke, 1994; Verchpoulos et al., 2003). Therefore, conducting a study of this nature in Bahrain would add significant insight to the current body of literature.

II. Conceptual Model of the Study

On the basis of a related literature review, a model was specified (Figure 1), showing that attitudes towards SMS advertising is a function of five SMS-related attributes, named: entertainment value, informativeness, credibility, personalization, and irritation level. Furthermore, the model depicts how attitude affects consumer intention to use SMS advertising as well their WOM. Finally, the model indicates that intention to use SMS advertising and consumers‘ WOM would likely result in buying products advertised through SMS. The model shown in Figure 1 has been partially adapted from a number of related studies (Ranjbarian et al., 2012; Cowdhury et al., 2006; Xu, 2007; Zabadi et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2011; Haghirian et al., 2008; Ahmadi et al., 2013; Waldt et al., 2009, Leppaniemi and Kajaluoto, 2005; Scharl et al., 2005; Bamoriya and Singh, 2012; Leung and Cheung, 2004).

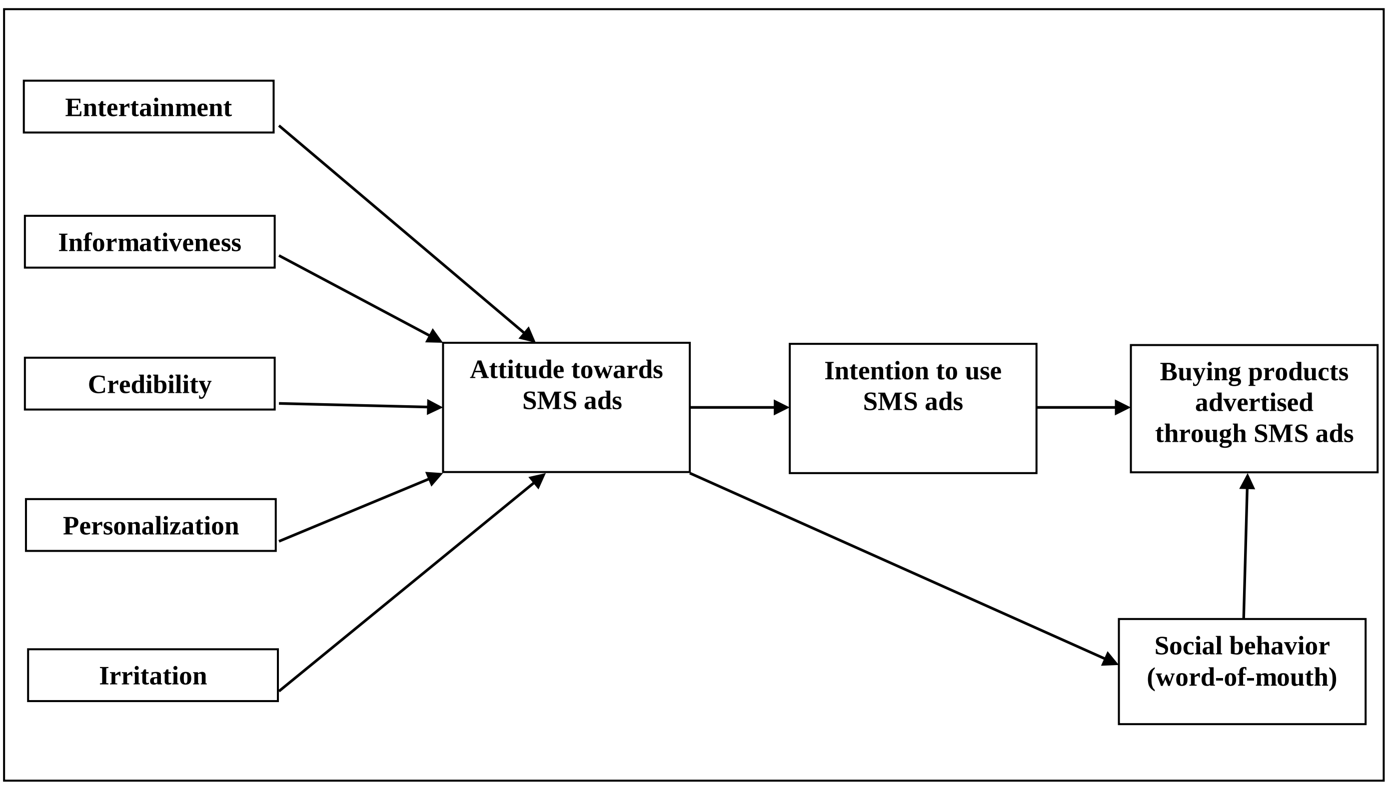

Figure 1 : Consumers' response to SMS advertising

III. Literature Review and Hypotheses

a) *Entertainment Value*

Entertainment is defined by Ducoffe (1996) as ―the ability to fulfill an audience‘s needs for escapism, diversion, aesthetic, enjoyment, or emotional enjoyment. ‖ In this respect, Mitchell and Olson (1981) found that entertaining advertising will put the audience in a good mood, and thus, have a positive impact on consumers ‘attitudes toward advertising and even toward the advertised brands (also supported by Hoffman and Novak, 1996). Mobile advertising, if delivered in an enjoyable format, will immediately capture consumers‘ attention and make them feel positive about the advertisement (Leung and Cheung, 2004; Katterbach, 2002). In order to attract customers and keep them, some companies deliver games, ring tones, and prizes to customers 'cell phones through SMS messages (Zabadi et al., 2012; Highirian and Dickinger, 2004). Some studies found that sending interactive games through SMS will engage customers more fully with the message (Lehmkuhl, 2003; Ahmadi et al., 2013). Bauer et al. (2013) found that advertising that meets consumers' standards for aesthetics and pleasure will be positively perceived, and will have a positive influence on consumers' attitudes towards SMS advertising (Bauer, 2005). In Japan, entertainment plays a significant role in people's acceptance of SMS advertising because for Japanese consumers, a mobile phone is not just a communication tool, but an entertainment device (Haghirian et al., 2004). The use of entertainment in advertising has a positive influence on consumers' attitudes and inspires customer loyalty (Liu et al., 2011).

From all the above, it seems that almost all related studies agree that a high degree of entertainment value has positive effects on consumer attitude (Shavitt et al., 1998; Hung et al., 2009).

Based on the literature highlighted above, hypothesis 1 was developed.

H1: There is a positive relationship between the entertainment value inherent in SMS advertising and customer attitude towards SMS advertising.

b) Informativeness

The informativeness of an SMS advertisement is defined as the amount of useful and helpful information provided by the advertising medium (Ducoffe, 1996). Given the important role information plays in the effectiveness of advertising, marketers tend to design their advertising messages in a way to provide sufficient, useful, and interesting information (Gordon and De Lima-Timer, 1997). When the recipients perceive that an advertisement contains useful and valuable information, they will react positively to it (Aitken et al., 2008). In order to be perceived by customers as worthy of both attention and time, information delivered via SMS messages needs to include qualitative features such as accuracy, relevance, timeliness, and usefulness for consumers (Siau and Shen, 2003; Nasco and Bruner, 2008; Ahmadi et al., 2013; Milne and Gordon, 1993). In their study, Nagash et al. (2003) suggested that in order for e-commerce advertising to be perceived positively, the advertisements should include accurate, relevant, convenient, and timely information that provides a complete picture. In this respect, Chowdhury et al. (2006) found that recipients of SMS advertisements do not feel annoyed if they receive them with appropriate information that they find interesting and relevant. Some researchers went even further and claimed that informative advertisements are likely to positively influence customers' brand attitude and purchase behavior (Leung and Cheung, 2004; Scharl et al., 2005; Liu et al., 2011).

From the above discussion one can understand that informativeness has a positive effect on the consumers' attitude towards SMS advertising (Chowdhury et al., 2006; Ahmadi et al., 2013). This positive relationship has been substantiated by a significant number of studies (Brackett and Carr, 2001; Tsang et al., 2004; Haghirian et al., 2005; Weldt et al., 2009; Haghirian et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2011; Leung and Cheung, 2004; Zabadi et al., 2012; Xu, 2007; Ranjbarian et al., 2012, Ahmadi et al., 2013). Based upon the reported relationship between SMS informativeness and consumer attitude towards SMS advertising, hypothesis 2 was developed.

H2: There is a positive relationship between the informativeness of SMS advertising and consumer attitude towards SMS advertising.

c) Credibility

Mac-Kenzie and Lutz (1989) define advertising credibility as ―consumers' perception of the truthfulness and believability of advertising in general.‖ According to Mac-Kenzie and Lutz (1989), audiences judge the credibility of an advertisement through two perspectives: advertiser credibility and advertising credibility. The former refers to the company as a source of information and the bearer of the message (Goldsmith et al., 2000; Lafferty et al., 2002) while the latter refers to the content of advertisement. Credibility is crucial for mobile advertising and may determine customer response to the message (Balasubramanian et al., 2002; Okazaki et al., 2007); therefore, credibility factors should be incorporated into studies related to technology adoption (Xu, 2007). Brackett and Carr (2001) found that credibility has a significant influence on customers' perceptions of advertisements, and customers may determine the credibility of a message according to the advertising medium. In this respect, Yang (2007) found that people perceive internet messages as less credible than printed messages. Credibility can be a powerful tool for marketers to gain customers' trust, which is crucial for the success of mobile commerce (Siau and Shen, 2003). Thus, it seems that advertising messages that satisfy consumer need for credibility will be positively perceived (Waldt et al., 2009).

From all the above, it can be deduced that advertising credibility has a positive influence on consumer attitude towards advertisements (Brackett and Carr, 2009; Tsang et al., 2004; Waldt et al., 2009; Zabadi et al., 2012; Ahmadi et al., 2013, Chowdhury et al., 2006; Liu et al., 2011). Based on this, the third hypothesis of the study was developed.

H3: There is a positive relationship between the credibility of SMS advertising and consumer attitude towards SMS advertising.

d) Personalization

Personalized messages are usually perceived more positively than mass-market messages by consumers (Xu et al., 2008), which means that mobile advertising can attract significant attention if personalized (Kalakota and Robinson, 2001). Personalization means ―building customer loyalty by building a meaningful one-to-one relationship, by understanding the needs of each individual and helping to satisfy a goal that efficiently and knowledgeably addresses each individual's need in a given context‖ (Ricken, 2000). Due to a significant amount of SMS advertising received by consumers, such advertisements can be perceived as intrusive and annoying (Zhang, 2000), which, in turn, may result in a negative attitude towards the messages (Zanot, 1981). To overcome these problems, message personalization is a possible solution (Xu, 2007) because customers are likely to be more receptive to messages that are customized to their needs and preferences (Dezoysa, 2002; Milne and Gorden, 1993; Robins, 2003). A study conducted by Yan et al. (2004) revealed that, by personalizing their mobile advertising, marketers would have an opportunity to accurately target certain groups of customers by speaking directly to their preferences (Varshney and Vetter, 2002; Fan et al., 2005; Leppaniemi and Karjaluoto, 2005; Zhang, 2003). In other words, through personalized messages, marketers can reach their potential customers in a very individual way and enhance their relationship with them (Xu, 2007). This finding is also supported by Varshney and Vetter (2002) who stated that, in order to increase the effectiveness of mobile advertising, marketers need to send precise messages focusing on specific target groups. To achieve this, they need to have databases containing customer demographics, locations, and preferences. This is also supported by Rao and Minakakis (2003), who stated the importance of having marketing strategies based on knowledge of customer profiles, histories, interests, and needs. Some studies argued that marketers can personalize their text messages based on the consumer local time and location (Watson, 2000; Balasubarmanian et al., 2002). With regard to time, SMS messages will get more attention if marketers consider the best time of day to send messages, and how frequently to send to each target group (Scharl et al., 2005). In this respect, Easton (2002) and Jukic (2003) emphasized the importance of time in attracting customers via wireless channels. It can also be noted from the literature that consumers respond more positively to location-specific messages (Watson et al., 2000; Leppaniemi and Karjaluoto, 2005; Xu, 2007). Therefore, for effective reach of different target groups, time and location are advantageous tools unique to mobile marketing, which most other marketing channels lack (Jukic et al., 2003). Based on the above discussion related to message personalization, hypothesis 4 was developed.

H4: There is a positive relationship between the personalization of SMS advertising and consumer attitude towards SMS advertising.

e) Irritation Level

When advertising employs techniques that annoy, offend, insult, or are overly manipulative, consumers are likely to perceive it as unwanted and irritating influence‖ (Ducoffe, 1996). Irritation has always been one of the major critiques of advertising (Bauer and Greyser, 1968). Due to the irritation it causes its audience, an advertisement may lose its effectiveness (Aaker and Bruzzone, 1985; Luo, 2002). Mobile users may perceive irrelevant and distracting information as an intrusion into their privacy, which may make them feel confused and annoyed about the message and, as a result, they will react negatively to it (Stewart and Pavlou, 2002). This finding is also supported by Ahmadi et al. (2013) who stated that ―cell phone ads can provide the consumer with information which makes them indecisive and upset. The consumers may have an indecisive feeling about the advertisement and show negative responses to them. ‖ another annoying type of message might be the unwanted one, known as spam (Dickenger, 2005). Through reviewing the relevant literature, one notices that the level of irritation induced by SMS advertisements is negatively correlated to consumer attitudes towards SMS advertisements (for example: Brackett and Carr, 2001; Tsang et al., 2004; Brehm, 1972; Zabadi et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2011; Chowdhury et al., 2006). Based on the literature review related to irritation levels caused by mobile advertising, hypothesis 5 was developed.

H5: There is a negative relationship between the irritation caused by SMS advertising and consumer attitude towards SMS advertising.

f) Attitude, intention, and buying behavior

Attitude is defined as a ―learned predisposition to respond to an object in a consistently favorable or unfavorable way‖ (Wilkie, 1994). Intention is defined as ―the strength of a person's conscious plan to perform the target behavior‖ (Fishein, 1975). Attitudes cannot be observed directly because they are psychological and mental states, therefore researchers attempt to identify them through other factors (Aaker et al., 1995; Huang, 2004). Most previous studies related to SMS advertising found that people generally have negative attitudes towards SMS advertising (Ranjbarian et al., 2012; Carroll et al., 2007; Lenng, 2007, Muk, 2007). Attitudes towards advertisement play a significant role in determining consumer response to advertisements (Mackenzie & Lutz, 1989). The major aim of any advertiser is to positively influence consumers' attitudes and buying behavior (Ducoffe, 1996). Consumer attitude and intention are the focus of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis et al., 1989). These two theories state that consumer intention to behave in a specific manner is determined by their general attitude. In other words, attitude shapes intention, and intention shapes buying behavior. In this respect, Kinnear and Taylor (1996) stated that attitude is an important criteria used by consumers to make their buying decisions. This finding is also supported by Korzaa (2003). Lee et al. (2006) found a strong and positive correlation between the intention of consumers to receive mobile advertising messages and their attitude towards them. Related to the same issue, Anderson (200) discussed the Fishbein Attitude Theory and stated that when consumers receive SMS advertisements, such ads will affect their belief systems, which in turn shapes their attitudes towards the advertised brand; such attitudes will influence their intention to buy the advertised brand. Ajzan (1985) reported that attitude is used by consumers in making buying decisions (Okakazi et el., 2007). Positive attitudes will likely lead to purchase. Such a positive relationship between attitudes and behavior will become stronger when consumers are dealing with a product with which they are highly involved (Tenbult et al., 2008). The positive relationship between attitude-intention and intention-behavior was also reported by Venkatesh et al., 2003; Tsung et al., 2004). The relationship between these variables is also explained in the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which states that attitude influences behavior through intention (Zabadi et al., 2012).

From the above discussion, it is predicted that the relationship between attitude and intention as well as between intention and buying behavior can be positive. Based on this, hypotheses 6 and 7 were developed.

H6: There is a positive relationship between consumer attitude towards SMS advertising and intention to use SMS advertising.

H7: There is a positive relationship between consumer intention to use SMS advertising and buying behavior.

g) Attitude and word of mouth (WOM)

In regards to SMS advertising, word of mouth refers to consumers spreading the message, independently of the advertiser. Methods of WOM for SMS advertising might include forwarding the message to others or talking positively about it with others. Weinberger and Lepkowska (2000) reported that consumers tend to pass SMS advertising to others if they experienced a positive response or interaction with the advertisement. Ping et al. (2003) investigated consumer product formation process in online WOM, and found that positive WOM has a larger impact on proliferating positive product attitudes than negative ones. Albarq (2014) studied the relationship between electronic WOM and tourism in Jordon and found it positive. In fact, it works both ways. Positive WOM will have a positive impact on consumer attitudes, and those who have positive attitudes towards a product will likely pass positive information about it to others (Tucker, 2011; Vermeulen and Seegers, 2009). Park et al. (2011) stated that WOM has a greater impact on the formation of consumer attitudes towards SMS advertising than towards conventional advertisements. Therefore, companies must consider customer satisfaction when developing advertising, as satisfied customers are likely to pass positive WOM to friends and relatives while dissatisfied ones may pass negative WOM (Tucker, 2001). WOM is a result of people's natural tendency to share their thoughts regarding the products they use and the advertisements they encounter (Bone, 1992; Jalilvand et al., 2012), and these shared thoughts (i.e. WOM) can be positive, neutral, or negative (Anderson, 1998). The impact of attitude on people's electronic WOM is significant because nowadays, after experiencing products, people report their reviews (opinions) online for others to see. Such online reviews have become an increasingly important reference in customers' decision-making processes (Goldenberg et al., 2001; Gretzel and Yoo, 2008; Morgan et al., 2003). A similar result was reported by Jalivand et al. (2013), who studied the impact of WOM on tourists' attitudes toward Islamic destinations. Literature also reveals that the relationship between attitude and WOM plays a significant role in trusting online retailers. Those with a positive past experience (i.e. positive attitude) with an e-retailer will communicate positively about it with others (i.e. positive WOM) and vise versa (Dennis et al., 2009; Vermeulen and Seegers, 2009; Ajzen, 1991). A similar scenario was reported by Murtiash et al. (2013) in a study related to dealing with car agents in Indonesia. Companies spend a lot of money and effort to avoid negative publicity (i.e. negative WOM) about their products, which is usually disseminated by those who formed negative attitudes towards the company or its products (Ahluwalia et al., 2002; Hernard, 2002; Greyser, 1995). According to Pulling et al. (2003), there are two types of negative publicity: performance-related (due to perceived product bad quality) and value-related (due to unethical or social issues related to the company or its products).

From the WOM studies discussed above, it can be noted that customer satisfaction (i.e. positive attitudes) leads to positive WOM and customer dissatisfaction (i.e. negative attitudes) leads to negative WOM (for example: Wangenheim and Bayon, 2007;

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Anderson and Mittal, 2000; Bolton et al., 2004; Rust et al., 1995; Anderson, 1998; Swan and Oliver, 1989; Westbrook, 1987; Sudaraman et al., 1998). A similar linkage between satisfaction and WOM was also found by Palmer et al. (2011), who examined the relationship between student satisfaction with their university experience and their WOM about the university. Their findings revealed that student dissatisfaction was associated with negative WOM, while student satisfaction was associated with positive WOM expressed to people outside the institution.

The issue of WOM is essential for companies because messages forwarded/recommended by friends gain more credibility than those coming directly from advertisers, and friends do not forward messages unless they themselves have read and enjoyed the message, thus determining that it has value worthy enough to be forwarded to others.

Based on the above, this study proposes the following two hypotheses:

H8: There is a positive relationship between customer attitude towards SMS advertising and their WOM about SMS advertising.

H9: There is a positive relationship between customer WOM about SMS advertising and their buying behavior.

IV. Methodology

a) *The sample*

To test the nine hypotheses of the study, 247 undergraduate students were recruited. The students were between the ages of 20 and 24 years; 35% of them were male and 65% were female. The sample was chosen from the 20,000 students registered at the University of Bahrain, using a convenience sampling technique. Recruiting college students as a sample for investigating mobile advertising has been widely-used, as can be witnessed in the literature, because this group of mobile phone users has been depicted as a concrete representative of the digital world (Katz, 1996). Many marketers look at young customers as an attractive target for mobile-related goods and services. Youth's heavy usage of mobile phones makes them important targets to researchers attempting to investigate the effectiveness of mobile advertising (Grant and O 'Donohoe, 2007; Standing et al., 2005; Chowdhury et al., 2006; Hanley et al., 2006; Peng, 2006; Rohm and Sultan, 2006; Jun and Lee, 2007; Newell and Meier, 2007; Hanley and Becker, 2008; Wais and Clemons, 2008; Radder et al., 2010). The importance of the youth in mobile marketing was substantiated in a study conducted by the Interactive Advertising Bureau (2008), which reported that in the USA, 96% of 18-29 year olds with mobile phones have used one or more mobile data services.

b) *Data collection procedure*

The primary data was collected by administering a self-completion questionnaire to participants that covered data related to the variables of the study. The study questionnaire had 30 questions aimed at obtaining the required data for the study. Four of the questions were personal questions asking for SMS usage, gender, age, and education. The other 26 questions aimed to determine sample responses to the study variables as follows: three questions assessing SMS entertainment value (adapted from Xu, 2007; Chowdhury et al., 2006; Liu et al., 2012), three questions assessing SMS informativeness (adapted from Xu, 2007; Zabadi et al., 2012; Bamoriya and Singh, 2012; Chowdhury et al., 2006; Liu et al., 2012), three questions assessing SMS credibility (adapted from Xu, 2007; Liu, 2012), three questions assessing SMS personalization (adapted from Xu, 2007; Ramanarain, 2012), three questions assessing SMS irritation levels (adapted from Xu, 2007; Chowdhury et al., 2006; Liu et al., 2012), five questions assessing attitude towards SMS advertising (adapted from Xu, 2007; Zabadi et al., 2012; Bamoriya and Singh, 2012; Xu et al., 2008; Chowdhury et al., 2006; Liu et al., 2012; Ramanarain, 2012; Kumar, 2013), three question assessing intention to use SMS advertising (adapted from Xu, 2007; Bamoriya and Singh, 2012; Ramanarain, 2012; Radder et al., 2010), two questions assessing word-of-mouth effects (suggested by the study), and one question assessing purchase behavior (adapted from Aamir et al., 2013).

c) *Variable specifications and statistical techniques*

To test the nine hypotheses, the study used multiple regression analysis and correlation analysis techniques. Seven of the variables—entertainment value, informativeness, credibility, personalization, irritation level, attitude, and intention—were measured on a five-point likert scale: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree. The other two variables, word of mouth and buying behavior, were measured using a five-point scale: always, mostly, sometimes, seldom, and never.

V. Findings

To test the reliability of the internal consistency of the scales used, Cronbasch Alpha was calculated, and revealed that all the scales were reliable with alpha values of 0.863 for entertainment value, 0.731 for informativeness, 0.617 for credibility, 0.643 for personalization, 0.751 for irritation level, 0.816 for attitudes, 0.788 for intention, 0.704 for word of mouth, and 0.788 for purchase behavior.

A multiple regression analysis was run to examine the relationships between the variables as proposed in hypotheses 1-9, as reported below. For all hypotheses, we also analyzed the effect of gender on the responses of the respondents and found that it has no significant impact. This was confirmed by the results of Chi-square, which indicated that there is no significant difference between perceptions of male and female with regards to SMS advertising attributes. Therefore, the findings reported in this section show the overall results for the respondents without differentiating gender.

Hypotheses 1-4 investigated whether there is a positive relationship between SMS advertising attributes (entertainment value, informativeness, credibility, and personalization) and consumer attitude towards SMS advertising. Hypothesis 5 investigated whether there is a negative relationship between irritation induced by SMS advertising and consumer attitude towards SMS advertising. Tables 1 and 2 indicate the results obtained for testing hypotheses 1-5.

Table 1 : Correlation coefficient values of the constructs (N = 247)

Details	Entertainment	Informativeness	Credibility	Personalization	Irritation
Attitude towards SMS ads (control factor)					
Pearson correlation (r)	0.674	0.504	0.521	0.225	-0.407
Significance (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Table 2 : Results of multiple regression analysis (dependent variable: attitude towards SMS ads)

Factors	Standardized coefficient (Beta)	t-value	Sig.
Constant		4.289	0.000
Entertainment	0.434	8.393	0.000
Informativeness	0.164	3.367	0.001
Credibility	0.261	5.465	0.000
Personalization	0.047	3.613	0.000
Irritation	-0.141	-3.054	0.003
Adjusted R square = 0.571 F-value = 66.375 Significance = 0.000			

The correlation results in Table 1 indicate that all the examined five attributes of the SMS advertising have significant influence on consumer attitude towards SMS advertising at<.01. Entertainment value, informativeness, credibility, and personalization were found to positively correlate to attitude towards SMS advertising, whereas irritation was found to correlate negatively to attitude. From Table 1, it can also be inferred that although personalization is positively associated with attitude, the correlation between the two is weak (r = 0.225). This means that for the young customers in Bahrain, although receiving personalized messages is preferable to receiving blind, mass-marketed messages, personalization is not a major determinant in their attitude towards SMS advertising. The personalization results reported in this study do not fully correspond with the results found in many of the studies that are analyzed in existing literature, studies which reveal a strong correlation between personalization and consumer attitude and suggest that mobile advertising has gained significant attention because of SMS personalization. Table 2 indicates that the overall result of the regression model is statistically significant at < 1% with the F-value of 66.375, and that variations in all independent variables together explain 57.1% of the variations in the dependent variable (adjusted R square = 0.571). Table 2 also indicates that, when assessed individually, all five SMS attributes play significant roles in determining consumer attitude towards SMS advertising (sig. t < .01), with entertainment value playing the most important role (beta = 0.434), followed by credibility (beta = 0.261), then informativeness (beta = 0.164), then irritation level (beta = 0.141) and finally personalization (beta = 0.047).

The above results provide full support for hypotheses15.

Hypothesis 6 investigated whether there is a positive relationship between consumer attitude towards SMS advertising and intention to use SMS advertising. Correlation analysis indicates that the two variables are strongly and positively correlated (r = 0.659, sig. = 0.000). Regression analysis shows that consumer attitude towards SMS advertising has a significant role in determining intention to use SMS advertising (beta = 0.659, t = 13.708, sig. = 0.000). The importance of attitude in forming intention can also be observed in the results of adjusted R square, which indicate that variation in attitude explains 43.2% of the variation in intention (adjusted R square = 0.432, F-value = 187.913, sig. = 0.000). These results support hypothesis 6.

Hypothesis 7 examined whether there is a positive relationship between consumers' intention to use SMS advertising and their buying behavior (i.e., actually buying the products advertised through SMS messages). Correlation analysis results indicate that the two variables are positively and strongly associated (r = 0.426, sig. = 0.000). Regression results show that consumer intention to use SMS advertising is a significant determinant of buying behavior (beta = 0.420, t = 7.299, sig. = 0.000), and that intention explains 17.8% of the buying behavior (adjusted R square = 0.178, F-value = 53.281, sig. = 0.000). These findings support hypothesis 7.

Hypothesis 8 tested whether there is a positive relationship between consumer attitude towards SMS advertising and WOM (i.e., forwarding the message to others or talking positively about it with others). Correlation results indicated that there is a positive and strong relationship between the two variables (r = 0.450, sig. = 0.000). Regression results show that when consumers have positive attitudes towards SMS advertising, they tend to spread positive WOM about it (beta = 0.450, t = 7.879, sig. = 0.000). It was found that variation in attitude explains 19.9% of the variation in WOM (adjusted R square = 0.199, F-value = 62.075, sig. = 0.000). These findings verify hypothesis 8.

Hypothesis 9 proposed a positive relationship between consumers' WOM about SMS advertising and their buying behavior for the products advertised through SMS advertising. The findings show that the two variables are strongly and positively correlated (r = 0.483, sig. = 0.000). On the other hand, regression analysis revealed that those who spread positive WOM about SMS advertisements are likely to exhibit positive behavioral reactions and buy the products promoted through SMS advertising (beta = 0.483, t = 8.543, sig. = 0.000). Results also show that the variation in consumers' reported WOM explains 23% of the variation in their reported buying behavior (adjusted R square = 0.230, F-value = 72.980, sig. = 0.000). Based on these findings, hypothesis 9 is deemed valid and true.

VI. Conclusion and Discussion

Based on previous related research, this study proposed a conceptual model for SMS advertising effectiveness. The core of the model is consumer attitude towards SMS advertising. According to the model, the attitude construct is determined by five SMS attributes: entertainment value, informativeness, credibility, personalization, and irritation level. The model also suggests that once attitude towards SMS advertising is formed, such attitude will determine two important behavioral constructs: psychological (intention to use SMS advertising) and social (WOM). This study tested such relationships and found that attitude is positively associated with intention and WOM. The last part of the model is related to the relationship between consumers' intention to use SMS advertising, their WOM, and their buying behavior (that is, their proclivity to buy products advertised through the received SMS advertisements). It sought to answer the question of whether consumers' intention to use SMS advertising and positive WOM would encourage them to buy the advertised products. The findings indicated that intention and WOM do determine consumers' buying decisions and have the potential to positively influence these decisions.

Due to the high volume of SMS advertising by numerous companies that send them out without the consent of the mobile users, many people tend to avoid and delete SMS advertisements before reading their content. Entertainment value is an essential element that should be considered and integrated into an SMS advertising campaign to better attract the youth. There are several ways that an SMS message can be more entertaining and better engage the youth, allowing them to interact with the content of the ad. One of the ways is to involve a game or challenge in the SMS, to include appealing graphics and/or sound effects, or to use animation to catch the attention of the consumer while simultaneously delivering the core message of the ad. Another example is to make the ad's message less conventional and more creative, by using an informal tone, or incorporating humor or a joke that people would want to share with their friends into the ad's message. Creating ads that relate to people's day-to-day life and culture is crucial, as it will strengthen people's connections to the ad and easily capture their interest. The ad will create a feeling of being understood in the consumer, and they will be more likely to feel that the advertised product is ―right‖ for them.

An SMS message should remain short and light, containing the most important points that you would like to be delivered. Long, verbose messages with excess information could lead to having people, especially young people, dismiss the ad as boring or irrelevant, and result in instant deletion. Young people have little interest in reading a long message from an unknown person that doesn't relate to them, so much so that it could result in an opposite reaction and cause disinterest in the company or brand being advertised. An SMS message should be developed as if it were newspaper headline or the title of the book. It should be bold, interesting, fun and unique, something that will grab and sustain the attention of the reader, feeding them the necessary information while entertaining them. These ads should feel like fun diversions, not burdensome advertisements, thus inspiring the youth to eagerly read them.

The credibility of an ad is very important to the person reading it. Sometimes, advertisements exaggerate when delivering their message, or promote their brand or company in a way which is inauthentic, or downright false. The ad might work the first time, but it would ultimately result in fostering a bad reputation for the company and leave a negative impression in people's minds. Once the public sees that a product does not correspond to the advertisement promoting it, they will no longer trust any ads from that company. A customer always expects to get what has been advertised, no strings attached. Anything less sits like a lie in the customer's consciousness.

An advertisement is best when it communicates with the consumer on a personal level. When a company is aware of who they are sending their ads to, they can better assess what tone is most appropriate, what imagery is most appealing, what humor will be most effective, and what time of day to send it. For example, choosing to send an ad at noon time in many Arab countries is not a good idea, as that is usually a time when people rest, eat, and take a nap, while night time is more social. Incorporating customers' names in ads, sending ads that speak directly to their interests and tailoring ads so they are timely—such as incorporating football celebrities in ads promoted during World Cup season—will incite more interest in the ads and increase their popularity. A good approach is to first understand who the consumers are as a whole, then to split them into different target groups based on age, location, interests, etc., and based on that, tailor the ads to work best for each target group. Irritating consumers with excessive and irrelevant advertising will incite negative attitudes towards your company brand and image. One of the things that could potentially irritate the consumer is sending multiple ads that feel like spam, which will cause the customer to feel both harassed and negligible in the advertising process. Many companies send multiple messages throughout the day, and send out ads on a near-daily basis, which not only results in the ad being deleted straight away, but also increases the level of complaints and intolerance every time an SMS ad is received. If an ad is mildly irritating the first time, it is infuriating by the fifth time. Another factor that results in irritation is receiving ads from companies that consumers have no association with, meaning that they have somehow acquired the consumer's phone number without permission, and have chosen to invade the privacy of the consumer's personal phone and forced their ads upon the consumer. Additionally, messages that are very long and take time to read exhibit a lack of respective for the consumer's time, prevent the customer from engaging with the ad, and exhibit a lack of professionalism in the company, as it implies an inability to be concise. This creates the feeling that a company is advertising only for their own benefit rather than truly trying to connect with consumers and understand their needs. Taking the time to understand consumers grants a company better leverage in that they can give consumers what they need. Failure to do so creates negative attitudes in consumers.

These five key factors (entertainment value, informativeness, credibility, personalization, and irritation level) play a big role in shaping the ultimate attitude of consumers towards SMS ads, in either a positive or negative manner, and have a tremendous impact on their decision of how to behave in relation to the product and the brand. If a consumer exhibits interest in an ad and receives it positively, then this will lead to either of two things. The first is that they will look into acquiring what is being promoted in the ad for their own use. The second is they will engage in WOM, and share the ad with someone they know who they feel could benefit from it. In both these cases, the final outcome will be that someone purchases the product advertised through the SMS ad, which is ultimately what every company and ad campaign seeks to achieve.

The findings of this study have resulted in the acceptance of all nine hypotheses, and its results are, for the most part, in line with the existing literature. In examining the relationships between the variables shown in the conceptual model (see Figure 1), this study and many others have reached similar outcomes, despite being conducted on groups from different cultural, social, demographic, and economic environments (for example: Xu, 2007; Zabadi et al, 2012; Katterbach, 2002; LehmKuhl, 2003; Bauer et al., 2005; Brackett and Carr, 2001; Bauer et al, 2005; Haghirian et al, 2005; Waldt et al, 2009; Tsang et al, 2004; Funk, 2004; Haghirian et al, 2008; Ranjbarian et al, 2012; Ahmadi et al, 2013; Heng et al, 2009; Liu et al, 2012; Krishnamorthy, 2000; Kassinen, 2003; Siau and Shen, 2003; Varshney, 2003; Chowdhury et al, 2006; Luo, 2002; Okazaki, 2004; Aitken et al, 2008; Pagani, 2004; Nasco and Gordon, 2008; Robins, 2003; Bahmanzaiari et al, 2003; Pavlou and Stewart, 2000; Stewart, 2002; Waldt et al, 2009; Goldsmith et al, 2000; Lafferty et al, 2002; Riecken, 2000; Easton, 2002; Kalakota and Robinson, 2001; Dezoysa, 2002; Yan, 2004; Varshney and Vetter, 2002; Robins, 2003; Fan and Gordon, 2005; Rao and Minakakis, 2003; Zhang, 2003; Stewart, 2002; Dickinger, 2005; Luo, 2002; Siau and Shen, 2003; Rust et al, 2002).

VII. Implications

Despite these findings, SMS advertising has yet to hit its stride. Most consumers still do not have a very positive attitude towards SMS ads, and for this reason these ads remain largely ineffective. This can be seen in the results of this study that tested consumer attitudes toward SMS advertising; the average attitude towards SMS advertising was 2.973 out of a maximum positive of 5. This low score reflects the belief among the majority of consumers that SMS advertising is not entertaining (mean = 2.77), uninformative (mean = 3.33), not credible (mean = 2.46), not personalized (mean = 3.17), and irritating (mean = 3.44).

To improve the effectiveness of SMS advertising, marketers face the challenge of making SMS advertisements more palatable and likable to the majority of consumers. To be perceived positively, marketers need to ensure that their SMS advertisements possess the following characteristics:

- Management has to seriously consider the entertainment aspect of SMS advertisements by adding games, jokes, graphics, or catchy and memorable jingles to their ads. This will make the consumer feel they are interacting with a fun diversion, not reading an ad. And the consumer will be more likely to forward the message to friends, to save it on their phone and show friends, or to pass along the joke. All of this positive WOM can have a potent positive effect on consumer behavior, brand image, and general attitude to SMS marketing.
- Incorporating elements from pop culture, such as musicians, actors and athletes, as well as references to popular literature, music, and film will enhance the ads' attention-grabbing capacity. This, too, has the potential to make an SMS ad a talking-point among friends, especially young people, who all want to use the products their favorite celebrities and athletes use.
- To be informative, SMS ads should be designed in a way that conveys their promotional messages concisely. Using few words, mixing words with images, and using sound will succeed in expressing the core message while sustaining consumer attention. People don't have the time to read long messages unless they include obvious attractive incentives.
- To be credible, SMS ads should be reasonable. They should promote products honestly, without resorting to exaggeration, in order to foster trust among consumers. This will have positive implications not only for the particular ad and product, but for overall receptivity of consumers to the brand, and to SMS advertising in general. It is the first and perhaps most essential step in developing a positive relationship with the consumer.
- Personalized messages are crucial in forming and strengthening the bonds of loyalty between consumers and brands. Companies need to possess comprehensive databases that contain relevant information about their target customers. When consumers receive only relevant SMS advertisements that speak to their interests, they will be more likely to read future ads from the same source. In addition, receiving ads at a convenient time increases the likelihood of the ad being read.
- Irritating a consumer can destroy the potential for SMS advertising to positively impact consumer attitudes and buying patterns. In a society where we are inundated with SPAM by way of emails, telemarketing phone calls, and even promotional paper mail, excessive SMS ads can be infuriating. Customers will feel harassed, will delete messages indiscriminately, without reading them, and will spread negative WOM about how annoying SMS ads are. Furthermore, sending ads en masse, without regards to the interests, demographics, or age group of the target audience, will result in spreading irritation, distrust, and frustration toward the product, the company, and the SMS advertising campaign at large.

In sum, placing the consumer needs and preferences at the foreground of any SMS advertising campaign is the most surefire way of achieving success.

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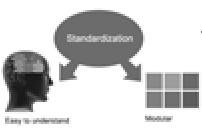

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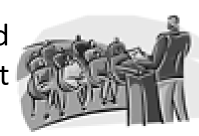

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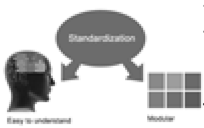

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2. Ethical Guidelines,

3. Submission of Manuscripts,

4. Manuscript's Category,

5. Structure and Format of Manuscript,

6. After Acceptance.

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- To the point depiction of the research
- Consequences, including definite statistics - if the consequences are quantitative in nature, account quantitative data; results of any numerical analysis should be reported
- Significant conclusions or questions that track from the research(es)

Approach:

- Single section, and succinct
- As a outline of job done, it is always written in past tense
- A conceptual should situate on its own, and not submit to any other part of the paper such as a form or table
- Center on shortening results - bound background information to a verdict or two, if completely necessary
- What you account in an conceptual must be regular with what you reported in the manuscript
- Exact spelling, clearness of sentences and phrases, and appropriate reporting of quantities (proper units, important statistics) are just as significant in an abstract as they are anywhere else

Introduction:

The **Introduction** should "introduce" the manuscript. The reviewer should be presented with sufficient background information to be capable to comprehend and calculate the purpose of your study without having to submit to other works. The basis for the study should be offered. Give most important references but shun difficult to make a comprehensive appraisal of the topic. In the introduction, describe the problem visibly. If the problem is not acknowledged in a logical, reasonable way, the reviewer will have no attention in your result. Speak in common terms about techniques used to explain the problem, if needed, but do not present any particulars about the protocols here. Following approach can create a valuable beginning:

- Explain the value (significance) of the study
- Shield the model - why did you employ this particular system or method? What is its compensation? You strength remark on its appropriateness from a abstract point of vision as well as point out sensible reasons for using it.
- Present a justification. Status your particular theory (es) or aim(s), and describe the logic that led you to choose them.
- Very for a short time explain the tentative propose and how it skilled the declared objectives.

Approach:

- Use past tense except for when referring to recognized facts. After all, the manuscript will be submitted after the entire job is done.
- Sort out your thoughts; manufacture one key point with every section. If you make the four points listed above, you will need a least of four paragraphs.

- Present surroundings information only as desirable in order hold up a situation. The reviewer does not desire to read the whole thing you know about a topic.
- Shape the theory/purpose specifically - do not take a broad view.
- As always, give awareness to spelling, simplicity and correctness of sentences and phrases.

Procedures (Methods and Materials):

This part is supposed to be the easiest to carve if you have good skills. A sound written Procedures segment allows a capable scientist to replacement your results. Present precise information about your supplies. The suppliers and clarity of reagents can be helpful bits of information. Present methods in sequential order but linked methodologies can be grouped as a segment. Be concise when relating the protocols. Attempt for the least amount of information that would permit another capable scientist to spare your outcome but be cautious that vital information is integrated. The use of subheadings is suggested and ought to be synchronized with the results section. When a technique is used that has been well described in another object, mention the specific item describing a way but draw the basic principle while stating the situation. The purpose is to text all particular resources and broad procedures, so that another person may use some or all of the methods in one more study or referee the scientific value of your work. It is not to be a step by step report of the whole thing you did, nor is a methods section a set of orders.

Materials:

- Explain materials individually only if the study is so complex that it saves liberty this way.
- Embrace particular materials, and any tools or provisions that are not frequently found in laboratories.
- Do not take in frequently found.
- If use of a definite type of tools.
- Materials may be reported in a part section or else they may be recognized along with your measures.

Methods:

- Report the method (not particulars of each process that engaged the same methodology)
- Describe the method entirely
- To be succinct, present methods under headings dedicated to specific dealings or groups of measures
- Simplify - details how procedures were completed not how they were exclusively performed on a particular day.
- If well known procedures were used, account the procedure by name, possibly with reference, and that's all.

Approach:

- It is embarrassed or not possible to use vigorous voice when documenting methods with no using first person, which would focus the reviewer's interest on the researcher rather than the job. As a result when script up the methods most authors use third person passive voice.
- Use standard style in this and in every other part of the paper - avoid familiar lists, and use full sentences.

What to keep away from

- Resources and methods are not a set of information.
- Skip all descriptive information and surroundings - save it for the argument.
- Leave out information that is immaterial to a third party.

Results:

The principle of a results segment is to present and demonstrate your conclusion. Create this part a entirely objective details of the outcome, and save all understanding for the discussion.

The page length of this segment is set by the sum and types of data to be reported. Carry on to be to the point, by means of statistics and tables, if suitable, to present consequences most efficiently.You must obviously differentiate material that would usually be incorporated in a study editorial from any unprocessed data or additional appendix matter that would not be available. In fact, such matter should not be submitted at all except requested by the instructor.

Content

- Sum up your conclusion in text and demonstrate them, if suitable, with figures and tables.
- In manuscript, explain each of your consequences, point the reader to remarks that are most appropriate.
- Present a background, such as by describing the question that was addressed by creation an exacting study.
- Explain results of control experiments and comprise remarks that are not accessible in a prescribed figure or table, if appropriate.
- Examine your data, then prepare the analyzed (transformed) data in the form of a figure (graph), table, or in manuscript form.

What to stay away from

- Do not discuss or infer your outcome, report surroundings information, or try to explain anything.
- Not at all, take in raw data or intermediate calculations in a research manuscript.
- Do not present the similar data more than once.
- Manuscript should complement any figures or tables, not duplicate the identical information.
- Never confuse figures with tables - there is a difference.

Approach

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- Put figures and tables, appropriately numbered, in order at the end of the report
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Figures and tables

- If you put figures and tables at the end of the details, make certain that they are visibly distinguished from any attach appendix materials, such as raw facts
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- 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.
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- Recommendations for detailed papers will offer supplementary suggestions.

Approach:

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- Submit to work done by specific persons (including you) in past 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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References	Complete and correct format, well organized	Beside the point, Incomplete	Wrong format and structuring

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