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Determinants of Shopping Centers’ Image for Romanian Consumers

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Abstract: Despite its large size, the shopping center industry in Romania is still a recent phenomenon. The evolution of this industry has been very abrupt and both practical experience and literature in this field are still limited. In an attempt to understand the evaluative dimensions of shopping centers’ image for Romanian buyers, an empirical research has been conducted in one of the largest city in Romania. The results show that the underlying factors of shopping centers’ image are: stores and merchandise assortment, ambience, special events, prices, communication, service, loyalty programs and restaurants.

Keywords: shopping center, image, store image, retail brand, marketing mix

JEL Classification: M31, M39

1. Introduction

The success of shopping centers depends on whether they manage to create positive associations in the minds of consumers, which lead them to visit first, then make purchases at their retailers and service companies, and finally transform them into loyal customers. Literature has emphasized the role of the image as a determinant of the customers’ selection of retailers (Hildebrandt, 1988; Grewal et al., 1998; Dabija et al., 2009), of satisfaction (Bloemer, de Ruyter, 1997) and of loyalty (Lessig, 1973; Bellenger et al., 1977). How shopping centers or retailers’ image is created in the minds of consumers is the result of an interaction between actual and perceived attributes. Image of shopping centers is a concept developed as a result of both deliberate and unintentional actions of their management, of environmental conditions, of the differences in perception and purchase decision making (Finn, Louviere, 1996: 243). It relies more on consumer perception than on the messages of the retail stores (Sullivan, Adcock, 2002: 78). Consumers’ perceptions depend on their personal experiences, as well as on the information received from other customers.

One of the first authors that dealt with the image of retail stores is Martineau (1958: 47), who defines store image as “the way in which the store is defined in the shopper’s mind, partly by its functional qualities and partly by an aura of psychological attributes”. He contends the fact that, for image measurement, in addition to functional components (tangible or intangible), psychological ones, such as the personality of a store should be considered. Functional characteristics refer to the assortment of goods, prices, credit policies, store configuration, and so on, which can be more or less objectively compared with those of competitors. Psychological attributes refer to feelings of belonging, warmth, friendship, excitement or interest. After this moment, many researchers have embraced this vision, that image of the retail unit is a complex combination of functional attributes (tangible and intangible) and psychological ones. Among the pioneers in this field are Kunkel & Berry (1968: 22); Berry (1969: 4), who applied learning theory to the concept of retail stores’ image and defined the

Romanian cheese market segmentation

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Abstract: The main objective of this research is to segment the Romanian cheese market using segmentation variables along with consumer and purchasing behavior. Descriptive research design was used to describe cheese consumer and buying behavior. The data was collected through personal interviews supported by a questionnaire. Convenience sampling technique was used in data collection in hypermarkets. The sampling contains 887 completed questionnaires. Consumers from five big cities in Romania (Arad, Bucureşti, Cluj-Napoca, Iaşi, and Timișoara) were asked to participate in the study. The cluster analysis revealed four homogenous segments: cluster 1 - Medium consumers and purchasers, cluster 2 - Hedonic hard consumers but moderate purchasers, cluster 3 - Hedonic hard traditional consumers and hard purchasers, cluster 4: Hedonic, healthy hard traditional consumers but moderate purchasers. This study extends the knowledge of cheese consumer behavior in Romania. Also, this particular study has important managerial implication in targeting cheese consumers. This research was made in collaboration with Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca Faculty of Economics and Business Administration and Unilact Romanian cheese producer company.

KEYWORDS: segmentation, cluster analysis, cheese market, consumer behavior, Romania

JEL Classification: M31

1. Introduction

Market segmentation is still a very used marketing strategy from the '50s to present times. The concept of market segmentation is linked to the name of Wendell R. Smith. During his life he has been employed as a marketing professor, marketing consultant, and corporate executive, apart from serving as President of the Marketing Science Institute. Wendell R. Smith became a marketing leader introducing the concept of market segmentation in the literature with the article entitled “Product Differentiation and Market Segmentation as Alternative Marketing Strategies” in 1956.

According to Smith, market segmentation “*consists of viewing a heterogeneous market as a number of smaller homogeneous markets in response to differing product preferences among important market segments. It is attributable to the desires of consumers or users for more precise satisfaction of their varying wants*” (Smith, 1956: 6).

In over 60 years, the main concept of market segmentation didn't change in the theoretical and practical literature. However, the method itself has been improved regarding the use of variables, classification techniques, data interpretation and results implementation.

Can Attitude to Advertisement Influence Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention? Empirical Findings from the Romanian Banking System

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Abstract: One of the marketers’ ongoing concerns is to create and maintain a favourable attitude to brand, as a prerequisite for future purchases. Consequently, the question arises, to what extent advertisements and the way in which they are perceived can influence consumers’ attitude to brand and their purchase intention. According to the literature (Mitchell and Olson 1982; MacKenzie et al. 1986; Brown, Stayman, 1992; Le Roux 1998), the favourable or unfavourable attitude to advertisements is transferred to or associated with the promoted brand. This paper is aimed at highlighting how, and the extent to which, the advertisements of Banca Transilvania featuring the fictional character “Fairy-man” have managed to influence consumers’ attitude to the bank and prompt them to choose its services. The findings of the conducted empirical research confirm that the advertising campaign had a major effect by triggering strong emotional and cognitive reactions to the BT’s advertisement and by increasing its awareness among its customers.

Keywords: attitude, brand, advertisement, cognitive reactions, affective reactions, Banca Transilvania (BT)

JEL Classification: D12, M31, M37

1. Introduction

One of the major objectives of a company’s advertising strategy is to preserve the customers’ positive attitude to the brand or change their negative attitude. The reason for this interest in brand attitudes is the belief that the more favourable brand attitudes are, the more likely a purchase of the brand becomes.

The most frequently cited definition of ‘attitudes’ is that of Gordon Allport—“attitudes are learned predispositions to respond to an object or class of objects in a consistently favourable or unfavourable way” (Assael, 2004: 216). Thus, an attitude is the way in which one thinks, feels, and acts toward one aspect of his or her environment such as a retail store, television program, or product (Manolică, Roman, 2011: 158). In a broader sense, attitude is defined as an enduring organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes with respect to some aspects of our environment (Hawkins, Best, Coney, 2003: 386).

The understanding of the process whereby advertising influences consumers’ attitudes and behaviour is one of the major concerns of the marketing researchers. Therefore, it is believed

RFM based segmentation: An analysis of a telecom company’s customers

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Abstract: The purpose of relational marketing is to keep subscribers with the company and increase their loyalty. Carrying out successful marketing for both retaining customers and enticing them to continue consuming in the future is an extremely important goal in today’s competitive environment. To meet these targets, companies need to offer subscribers services as close to their needs as possible, which is possible only if they divide the market in customer segments. The hereby survey will pursue the behavioural patterns of a telecom operator’s prepaid subscribers’ base, considering the variables taken into account in the RFM analysis. The analysis will segment clients based on the date of their last recharge, the frequency of their three months recharges and the value of the recharges in this interval. To identify consumer segments we used the K-mean cluster analysis. To assess the internal cohesion of the clusters we used the average sum of squares error, and to determine the differences between clusters we used the ANOVA and Tukey post-hoc tests. The study led to the identification of eight customer segments with different behaviours, the results providing the telecom carrier with the possibility to better match its marketing strategies with the subscribers’ needs.

Keywords: customer segmentation, RFM analysis, telecommunication, k-mean cluster

JEL Classification: M31

1. Introduction

Companies act and react in a dynamic and unstable marketing environment, on markets featuring fierce competition. In recent years, a lot has changed in the telecom business with the advent of new technologies and services and the liberalization of the markets (Huang et al, 2010). To ensure success and consolidate their market position, companies need to deliver high quality service and to adapt rapidly to the changes in their subscribers’ needs, desires, and behaviours. In this respect, companies do not need to consider the market as homogenous and to address their customers with the same campaigns and marketing stimuli, but to split their customers’ base into segments and target them differently depending on the needs, characteristics and behaviours of the subscribers therein (Bose, Chen, 2010).

Service Quality in Theatre. An Exploratory Study

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to reveal Romanian theatre audience's perception over service quality and identify the constituents of the three quality dimensions proposed by Grönroos: technical, functional and provider's image, according to theatre's particularities. The conducted research has shown that technical quality refers to the overall perceived quality of the theatre show, including the quality of the play and its writer, the quality of the actors, directors and scenography. Functional quality is based on the service environment, theatre's staff, ticketing process and promotional materials, while the image is mainly linked to the theatre's reputation gained in time. While a theatre's reputation is what may catch audience's attention and drive them to theatre, the quality of the theatre show is what seems to matter most for the audience, as it has the power of bringing them the highest satisfaction.

Keywords: service marketing, service quality, value, satisfaction, theatre, performing arts

JEL Classification: M31

1. Introduction

Romanian theatres' main source of finance is the Government, as the majority of these theatres are subordinated to the Ministry of Culture and Cults. This means that subventions are scarce, making theatre managers be in a difficult position, trying to do their best when managing the existing funds. To make matter worse, sponsorship is poor practice in nowadays Romanian theatre, as "some have not learned yet how to give, and others have not learned yet how to ask for" (Plesu, 2007). In these conditions, theatre managers should focus intensively on their audiences, as it is them who ensure the well-being of a theatre organization.

Although at a first sight this seems easy to be done, understanding the audience is a delicate matter as recent researches have shown that changes have occurred in the audience's regular behavior (Kolb, 2003). Still, it is of primordial importance to understand the audience, its needs, motivations and the way it evaluates the quality of the services provided by a theatrical experience, because the quality of the experience can only be defined by the audience (Kolb, 2003). Why the customers' evaluation of service quality is so important? Because the service quality is what brings value to customers, thus satisfaction which will make them repurchase again, and ultimately they will become regular, loyal customers of those theatres (Woodall, 2001).

In literature, there are several models proposed for the evaluation of service quality. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) stand for SERVQUAL, quite a popular model that has enjoyed both appreciations and critics, most of them regarding the one-dimensional feature of quality. Grönroos and Lehtinen and Lehtinen (as cited in Woodall, 2001;

The Internet Marketing and the SMEs. A comparative analysis of dentistry strategies for online and printed advertising

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Abstract: In the Internet era, it is not surprising that more sectors are turning to online technique in order to grow their efficiency. In the latest years, dental care providers have implemented Internet marketing tools to a greater extent. Our study aims at identifying the strategic differences between websites and printed advertisements in Romanian dental industry. Specifically, we try to assess providers’ websites marketing orientation towards direct response websites or image consolidation. We choose dental care sector because the online techniques, used materials and procedures are rapidly evolving in this particular branch of health industry.

In order to achieve our goal, the paper examines the state of the art in direct response vs. image orientation. A customized methodology was elaborated. The study is an exploratory research, using the qualitative approach: contents analysis. Moreover, we compared the obtained results to the traditional advertising direct response vs. image of the 879 advertisements published in Dental Target Magazine in the last five years. For websites analysis, the sample consists in 137 Romanian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) from dental industry. A specific methodology was built to reach this objective.

The results reflect an extensive prioritization of dental actors toward online presence through websites. However, the displayed tools for virtual communication reflect a basic stage of development in this field. The study reveals also a balanced orientation between direct marketing and brand orientation. The website’s message is in the great majority of cases rational, using reasons, by displaying information rather than images. There are important disparities between online and traditional marketing communication strategy, dental practitioners being more concerned in building an image than the suppliers.

In addition, we hope that the study on the dental industry companies can provide a benchmark for the companies in other industries that wish to implement a website.

Keywords: website marketing, direct marketing, branding, small and medium enterprises, dental industry

JEL Classification: M37, L66

1. Introduction

Dental industry has become increasingly competitive over the last decade. Some of the major causes are the increasing popularity of the trade, more dental substitutes (auxiliaries), changing patterns of dental demand and the sophistication of buyers. Despite the economic crisis followed by the competitive pressures, dentistry remains an attractive industry. The expenditures on dental services have increased substantially worldwide; in 2011 it was over

The Spiritual, Ethical and Economical Impact of Religious Tourism: The Case of Transylvanian Monasteries

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Abstract: Tourism has often been related to pilgrimages. Although the cultural religious heritage attracts millions of people, thumbs, churches, temples, monasteries and other sacred places lead tourists with different reasons. The economic realities have led religious organizations, site managers, and community members to begin offering services to meet the needs of tourists, both religious and otherwise. The aim of this paper is to identify and to examine the perceptions that the principals of monasteries and sites have regarding the religious tourism phenomenon. Data was gathered through a qualitative research, consisting in several partial-structured interviews with monasteries’ abbots from three different regions of Transylvania, places known as “holy or sacred” destinations for the Romanian religious people. The findings of the study revealed some major dimensions of the potential impact of the religious tourism on monks’ living, sites’ image, goal and management and community economic and spiritual aspects. But among other things, they consider this form of tourism as a real danger for the sacred places as they may become too commercialized and the real purpose of a spiritual place overshadowed by economic aspects. Furthermore, the study presents possible solutions for the caveats and ethical issues raised by religious tourism industry in order to maintain what is sacred and to create a delicate balance between holy and profane items.

Keywords: religious tourism, ethical issue, religious destination, tourist satisfaction

JEL Classification: M10, M21, R10

1. Introduction. Brief literature review.

People have always been interested in making sense of their lives and the world in which they live and, it is claimed, have looked to the sacred for meaning. Today we see that, all over the world, more and more people are travelling to sacred sites (not always sacred to their own

The customer – employee relationship in services marketing

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Abstract: Service marketing has become a vast component of the marketing literature due to the growing interest of specialists, both theoreticians and practitioners, enhancing therefore the amount of information on this subject. The first part of the paper makes a brief analysis of several definitions of the tertiary sector of the economy in order to stress out the main coordinates of the services marketing process, while the second part consists in discussing the customer – employee relationship in the context of services, as drawn by the four main characteristics: inseparability, heterogeneity, intangibility and perishability.

Keywords: services marketing, service characteristics, customer – employee relationship, customer; employee

JEL Classification: M13

1. Services Marketing

Performing marketing activities in the services sector has captured, during time, the interest of several specialists in the field. Leading theorists and practitioners of marketing have taken explaining the services concept as a starting point for their research. Due to various approaches, different definitions of services have emerged. The paper will focus on highlighting some key features of services as shown by several authors. The concepts highlighted in this manner will be used further in the analysis of the customer – employee relationship.

The clearest landmark in the definition of services is the place it occupies in the range of economic activities: the tertiary sector (along with commerce) completed by agriculture (the primary sector) and industry (the secondary sector). Zait (2002: 17) takes this analysis even further, dividing the service sector in: main tertiary (restaurants, hotels, cleaning services etc.), quaternary (transport, communications, commerce, financial and administrative services) and quinary (health, culture, education and recreation). Concerning the definition, the same author presents a chronological approach of how services have been seen, beginning with the middle of the 18th Century when physiocrats defined this sector as being all that is opposed to agriculture (Zait, 2002). Adam Smith named them (Palmer, 2000: 1) “production activities lacking a tangible output (other than agriculture and manufacturing)”, while Jean-Baptiste Say saw them as “adding utility to a good, through immaterial activities” (Zait, 2002: 18). Nowadays Philip Kotler states that “a service is any act or performance that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in ownership of anything. Its production may or may not be tied to a physical product” (Kotler, Keller, 2008: 584). Discussing service definitions following the timeline of evolution is important, but would be more relevant if we were fully aware of the precise context: history of economic

The importance of studying behavior in the effort of educating consumers towards ecological awareness

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Abstract: The concerns regarding the environment and sustainable development have increasingly taken an important place in the whole world's vocabulary, and political, economical, and social practices. Europe's concern regarding a potential food crisis has determined the authorities to develop and implement a series of documents with the purpose of influencing human behavior in the direction of protecting and preserving the environment. In order for the ecological strategies and programs to be efficient and to achieve their purpose, it is necessary to gear the very commitment of the consumer. Studies worldwide indicate that consumers are concerned regarding environmental protection and they are even willing to change their behavior, being motivated by the desire to protect the environment. Yet, the dichotomy between consumers' statements and their daily practice increases the concerns and requires a deeper approach in consumer's behavior analysis. Consumer behavior is an extremely complex phenomenon, influenced by a variety of factors, both internal and external. Identifying these determinant factors of behavior is crucial for the consumer's education initiatives towards environmental awareness. Also, the initiatives of changing consumer behavior and consumer's education need to be extremely specific formulated and very well planned, and their operationalization needs to be incorporated with actions generated by multiple sources. This paper presents a study that investigates consumers' attitude regarding the environment in Bihor county and explores a multi-source intervention model for consumer education initiatives.

Keywords: Ecological awareness, consumer behavior, behavioral theories, behavioral analysis, pro-environmental behavior

JEL Classification: M39

1. Introduction

The current worldwide trend in consumer behavior is one of concern and worry regarding the protection of the environment which at least apparently seems to lead to consumers' willingness to modify their buying behavior in order to answer to those concerns. Nevertheless, this declared willingness requires a deeper and more accurate understanding of consumer behavior, and the factors that determine and influence this behavior in order to capitalize on this shift.

Study on the Usage of Online Social Networks by University Students from Sibiu County and its Impact on Organisations

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to identify the usage level of online social networks (OSN) by university undergraduate students from Sibiu County, as well as the main reasons for utilizing this tool. We are presenting some theoretical concepts regarding OSN and the evolution of this instrument. The authors used a quantitative research based on a questionnaire by which the hypotheses were tested. The questionnaire was pre-tested with a qualitative research (focus-group) in order to check the validity of the context. The study was applied to university students from the five universities from Sibiu County. Following the analysis, it has been determined that respondents use OSN in a large percentage and for large periods of time. The study has revealed that the majority of the users use OSN in order to communicate with friends, post photos, change ideas and reconnect with family and colleagues. Online Social Networks is a relatively new field of study and with this paper we are among the first who tackle this subject, especially because of its practical approach on this matter for businesses and their managers and marketing specialists.

Keywords: online social networks, marketing, information technology, marketing research

JEL Classification: M15, M31, M39

1. Introduction

The manner in which individuals communicate has changed greatly in the last decades. If at the beginning of the 1900, the main way of communication for individuals were letters, telephone or in some areas even the telegraph, in the last two and a half decades, new communication technologies have developed. The largest development in the means of communication has appeared with the development of the Internet at the beginning of the '90s, when this great communication environment was opened to the entire world. The transition to global economy and the strong development of means of communication and modern information technology

Implications of employee’s motivation and loyalty regarding customer loyalty in retail activity context

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Abstract: The customer loyalization process represents a very complex endeavor which involves engaging a large number of variables in the most unexpected combinations. Loyalty seen as a particular expression of customer behavior is itself a dynamic concept, in the loyalty equation an important role being played by a series of antecedents, including employees motivation, commitment and performance. The paper proposes a holistic approach regarding connections that can be made between organisational culture-management involvement-motivation and satisfaction of employees-employee loyalty-customer loyalty, in the retail activity context.

A number of three different studies have been made regarding the customer loyalty of a retail chain store, research that provide a double perspective on the subject – the customer perception about loyalty and employee’s motivation and the employee’s perception about customer loyalty and their own degree of motivation. The results have shown that in the context of retail activity relationship between employee intrinsic motivation, satisfaction and loyalty for the organization on one hand and customer loyalty and satisfaction on the other hand is a complex one and it is potentiated by the customer orientation at the level of the organisational management. For the particular chain store investigated, the research point out the importance of the self image of the employees based on the perception of the customers

Keywords: Employee motivation, customer loyalty, employee loyalty, commitment, customer orientation

JEL Classification: M31

1. Introduction

Customer loyalty in retail activity context represents one of the complex dimensions regarding customer loyalty issues, subject of a accentuated dynamism in recent years.

A CSR Benchmarking model with an emphasis on the environmental component

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Abstract: One thing that must be understood around corporate social responsibility is that the business case is very strong. If we look at any survey, all other things being equal, such as price and quality, the consumer will buy from the company that has a responsible attitude towards its community. Benchmarking has developed into a very popular regular improvement tool that has come to be seen as an essential component of internationally respected business excellence programs and good management practice. Literature demonstrates a broad and progressive fusion between the benchmarking concept and CSR praxis, but the existing models on this regard does not make a distinction between effective and ineffective benchmarking efforts, therefore a better knowledge of the theoretical framework and a validation of a new model would either confirm or not the doubts as to its efficiency and effectiveness in a wide range of organizational settings.

Keywords: Social responsibility, environment, benchmarking, strategy, performance

JEL Classification: C14, O44

1. Introduction

It has been said that one must measure what it expects to manage and accomplish. The financial performance through all its indicators is a way through which one can review how a business evolves over time and achieves targets. The inadequacy of former measurements of financial performance has created always the need to find better metrics to assess this performance. The Corporate social responsibility like financial performance is generally accepted by the economic literature as one of the dimensions of corporate governance. We can notice a growing interest in the ethical behavior of corporations, or corporate social responsibility in both the academic and non-academic environments.

The aim of the research was to examine CSR and benchmarking practices and associated literature under the working hypotheses, namely: What counts as an effective benchmarking model of environmental performance in organizational studies?; Can the environmental component be encompassed by a single CSR Benchmarking model that provides distinction

Engagement Marketing: the Future of Relationship Marketing in Higher Education

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to identify suitable, low-cost and profitable marketing approaches that are appropriate to be implemented in higher education institutions, effective programs, which can be translated into better and long-term relationships, higher profits and student retention. Specifically, this paper posits the idea that higher education institutions are in need of marketing programmes that are based on strong relationships with loyal customers, which will help them cope with the changing environment, and better face the challenges and threats that it presents along the way. The authors outline the importance of a relationship based marketing orientation in higher education institutions, and anticipate a completely new approach for the Romanian higher educational system, pointed out through a shift and a development in relationship marketing, towards the new marketing era: engagement marketing. Implications for higher education institutions' stakeholders are discussed, and avenues for further research offered.

Keywords: engagement marketing, relationship marketing, higher education institutions, university management, stakeholders, relationship management.

JEL Classification: M31, I23, I25

1. Introduction

Higher education institutions have undergone a process of expansion and transformation for the past decades, being faced with a series of challenges, both nationally, and internationally. On a global level, the education and professional training provided by universities have become key elements for the economic progress and development of any country or region (Engwall, 2007).

The rapid development of higher education institutions coupled with the increase in tuition fees (Kotler and Fox, 1995), together with the increasing competition in the educational environment are placing a great deal of pressure on universities to embrace a market oriented strategy, in order to differentiate themselves, and to differentiate their offer from the competitors. Some institutions are beginning to recognize the benefits of applying instruments and concepts that have been effective in the business world (Hemsley-Brown, Oplatka,

Methods of online promotion for services, training and adult's education

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Abstract: The professional adult's training services have experienced a rapid development in recent years in Romania and worldwide, knowing a formal recognition of their importance by the conferred legal basis. Governments have started to delegate the private sector training activities preferring to coordinate and standardize these processes only. By default, these signals were given and the competition naturally appeared. We deal with trained costumers increasingly busy who prefer as a search tool machine the Internet, the tools which make known the supplier firms is the online marketing. We will see what it is and which is the proper advertising to get the sales targets.

Keywords: services, customers, on-line tools, on-line advertising mix, types of on-line promotion

JEL Classification: M31, M37

1. Introduction

The overall goal of the promotional efforts of a company providing goods and services is to influence consumer behavior in a manner favorable to them. That is to win and retain as many customers. Even if the message is not direct and taking action is not intended to be immediately. Marketing efforts are geared towards promotion in order to induce some people to behave in a certain way.

We refer here to determine creditworthy potential customers to make contact with the company, then deciding to purchase or former clients to be informed of news and return the decision to purchase and why not to lobby for the company providing the services they were satisfied. It turns out that increasingly more customers don't have physically enough time to go to the headquarters supplier providing training services to register for a course.

On the other hand firm providing services in order to optimize human resources capable of using front-office staff that is dedicated to passive sales (expected the customers to come to the head office in order to be served) active purposes (to go to the client by establishing a number of meetings per day). The role of promotion in marketing is (Prutianu, Caluschi, Munteanu, 1999: 42): information supplier, stimulating demand, the service difference, remembrance, contracting competitors, neutralization of unfavorable information, mitigating demand, to influence the person who decide and to influencing public behavior.

Based on empirical research, U.S. experts cited (Vorzsak et al., 2006: 129) have hierarchical the promotional means by the intensity of their impact in services domain as follows: personal seal, mouth to mouth advertising, the address letter, press publicity, TV publicity. To that we may add Online publicity (see details about online publicity methods). According to the approaches of french literature cited (Toqner, Langlois, 1992) there is: contact staff, physic

Entrepreneurial marketing: specificities, challenges and opportunities

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Abstract: From an organizational perspective the SMEs present specific characteristics in terms of strategic approach, operationalisation and implementation. Considering this perspective it is necessary to investigate in more detail the specificity of entrepreneurial marketing, as well as the challenges and opportunities encountered by entrepreneurs in their day-to-day marketing activity. This study presents several elements that should be taken into account, both by researchers and practitioners, when studying, developing and implementing entrepreneurial marketing strategies. After a presentation of the organizational characteristics of SMEs, the paper discusses the entrepreneurial specificity of SMEs' marketing activities in relation to the personal and professional profile of the manager-entrepreneur. Using this analysis as a theoretical basis, the study outlines the specific advantages of SMEs in marketing operations, and the importance of marketing activities for SMEs' globalization. The paper ends with a series of concluding remarks, which summarise the main elements discussed and propose potential research areas to be developed in the future.

Keywords: entrepreneurial marketing, specificity, challenges, advantages, globalisation

JEL Classification: M31

1. Introduction

The entrepreneurial activity represents one of the most important engines of economic progress and employment. The governments of many developed and developing countries consider the development of SMEs as the best solution for sustained economic growth, global competitiveness, and low unemployment.

From an organizational perspective the SMEs present specific characteristics in terms of strategic approach, operationalisation and implementation. Considering this perspective it is necessary to investigate in more detail the specificity of entrepreneurial marketing, as well as the challenges and opportunities encountered by entrepreneurs in their day-to-day marketing activity. This study presents several elements that should be taken into account, both by researchers and practitioners, when studying, developing and implementing entrepreneurial marketing strategies.

After a presentation of the organizational characteristics of SMEs, the paper discusses the entrepreneurial specificity of SMEs' marketing activities in relation to the personal and professional profile of the manager-entrepreneur. Using this analysis as a theoretical basis, the study outlines the specific advantages of SMEs in marketing operations, and the importance of marketing activities for SMEs' globalization. The paper ends with a series of concluding remarks, which summarise the main elements discussed and propose potential research areas to be developed in the future.

What is and why do we need ambient advertising? A theoretical approach.

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Abstract: With traditional advertising loosing more and more of its efficiency in delivering the brand message due to the increasing clutter, marketing specialists are trying to find new methods to reach nowadays marketing literate consumers. One of these methods that has gained tremendous popularity within past years is ambient advertising, an extremely creative communication technique that seems to be offering almost everything that traditional advertising is lacking. However, despite its growing popularity the body of existing knowledge is very scarce. This paper aims to contribute to creating a theoretical framework for ambient advertising by first analyzing the context that led to its appearance and its ever increasing popularity, then following the evolution of its definition throughout the existing literature, and eventually tries to develop a new and more comprehensive definition of the term. Furthermore, it also tries to identify and propose new ideas for further research that can lead to a clearer positioning of ambient advertising in both the marketing literature and the marketing practice.

Keywords: ambient, advertising, nontraditional, media

JEL Classification: M37

1. Introduction

In nowadays world, ads have become part of our every day life, influencing us in ways that we are not always aware of. They surround us at every step, whether we are in or outside our homes. TV, radio, newspapers, Internet, billboards, every media channel is trying to send us commercial messages that are intended to make us buy. However, the human mind cannot acknowledge all these messages. Besides the natural tendency of the brain of not to process information that does not seem relevant, the nowadays consumers have developed a so-called advertising blindness which makes them virtually immune to commercial messages (Reyburn, 2010). This is why, companies are desperately trying to find new ways to reach the consumers, and make them aware of their products. These new ways of promoting the products are comprised by the economic literature under the term guerrilla advertising, concept that was first introduced by Levinson in 1994.

Companies well known such as Ikea, Coca Cola, Nestle, Adidas and many others have reoriented their advertising strategy, using more and more unconventional approaches in their attempt to deliver commercial messages. This way, consumers are caught “at their most vulnerable” (Kaikati, Kaikati, 2004) when their protection shield is down, and this way the commercial message can reach them. The budgets for unconventional advertising also known as alternative out-of-home advertising have grown rapidly in the past years. A research made

Pilot survey regarding patient satisfaction towards medical services provided by Alba County Emergency Hospital

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Abstract: The paper presents the results of a pilot survey regarding patient satisfaction towards medical services provided by Alba County Emergency Hospital and was conducted in order to discover the main problems that the respondents might encounter when giving responses and also to identify what were the most important factors, from the respondents point of view, that contribute to their satisfaction regarding health care services. The designed questionnaire was applied to a total of 50 persons from the city of Alba Iulia. In the moment of applying the questionnaire some difficulties in the construction of the questions emerged. In the paper are presented the obtained results and the measures that will be taken in order to eliminate the identified problems.

Keywords: patient, satisfaction, medical services

JEL Classification: M31, M39

1. Introduction

The present paper presents a pilot test of the questionnaire designed to measure consumer (patient) satisfaction regarding medical service offered by the state hospitals. In this pilot test the main objective was to find out what were the main problems of the designed questionnaire. The hospital that was chosen to test the questionnaire was the Alba County Emergency Hospital. This hospital is a state hospital and it offers the following services: Surgery, Urology, Orthopedics, Traumatology, Obstetrics and Gynecology, the Newly Born, ITA Division, Internal Medicine, Otolaryngology, Diabetes and Nutrition, Cardiology, Department of Pediatrics, Section of Ophthalmology (<http://spitalalba.ro/despre/istoric>).

2. Literature review

The patient is a person who has been diagnosed as being ill by a doctor. Person remains a patient until no longer under medical care (<http://www.medicalmarketing.ro/articole/1-Medici/21-Consumatorii-sistemului-medical-> accessed on 06.01.2011). A definition of the consumer (patient) is also presented by the law number 46/2003 that defines the patient as being the user of healthcare services. Satisfaction has been considered as a process, emphasizing the perceptual, evaluative and psychological processes that contribute to satisfaction (Vavra, 1997).

While the literature contains significant differences in the definition of the term satisfaction, all the definitions share some common elements. When examined as a whole, three general components can be identified: 1) consumer satisfaction is a response (emotional or cognitive);

Transylvanian inhabitants attitude regarding advertising

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Abstract: The purpose of this research is to obtain information on people`s attitude towards outdoor advertising. It is very difficult to measure the impact that an advertisement located on a billboard, mesh or print has on a consumer`s purchasing decision. Advertising generally irritates. Advertisers rarely create spots or prints that are appreciated by the public. But when they do, their impact remains very long soaked in the consumers` mind, causing them to buy that product. The results of the study are very conclusive, over 94% said that ads are useful when it comes to selling goods or services. When it comes to people`s attraction on advertisements, the most mentioned environment remains the TV with 78 mentions, followed by billboards with 42 and internet with 35. When the respondents were asked to name a specific brand or product which they had seen advertising the results were very good: 90% named a brand that they had seen on a billboard, 95% named a brand that they`d seen at TV, but only 31 could name a brand that advertise in cinemas. Overall, the paper shows that people are generally interested in advertising and they get influenced by it, when it comes to buying a product.

Keywords: Advertising, advertising research, advertising, advertising impact

JEL Classification: M37

1. Introduction. Brief literature review.

I started this study assuming that many people consider advertising being very aggressive. From numerous city billboards, unipols and backlits that bombard consumers mind with all kind of advertising messages (Palatnek, Stutz, 2011), to unconventional advertising like aircrafts or hot air balloons carrying banners over crowded beaches. In this study I wanted to see if my respondents are aware of the benefits of advertising, if they watch commercials of any kind or change the TV channel when ads are broadcasted. In my opinion this domain should be more discreet and the audience should see ads from a different angle. It`s understandable why this way of doing advertising irritates people. For example, the law adopted by the authorities in Cluj-Napoca (HCL 130/2009) is not respected. Advertising agencies are not allowed to build billboards or backlits at more than 50 m apart. If this amendment would be meet, people wouldn`t be bombarded with so many messages.

On the other hand advertising inspires people. Many inventive ads are very well seen by the public and are going viral on the internet. For example Terry Crews – Crazy Old Spice commercial (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LC15uyn5K7k>, retrieved on 8.8.2012) registered over 8.600.000 views from March to September 2012. Commercials texts are becoming increasingly adopted in the language of youth (Vergara, Rodriguez, 2010).

Men as Consumers of Body Care Products specially Designes for Them

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Abstract: We have chosen to study the behaviour of Iasi men consumers on the market of body care products specially designed for the men in Romania. Our option is justified, in terms of market selection, by the fact that this market segment has a great potential for development. According to a 2009 study for the Gillette brand carried out on a sample of 500 people it was found that men were more focussed on physical appearance than a decade ago. 73% of the respondents consider the appearance as an essential element to success. Besides this new attitude we have also noted other peculiar features of the male consumer behaviour, such as brand loyalty, stability in making decisions on the products purchased and availability to greater payments for items proven to be of high quality. All these advantages are taken into account by manufacturers when they launch new range of products specially designed for men on the Romanian market.

The research problem means identification of the behaviour of men as consumers of body care products specially designed them, from the city of Iasi, between the ages of 18-35 years. The behaviour to be studied will be both perception of the products and intention of purchase thereof.

Keywords: men cosmetic market, men purchasing intention

JEL Classification: M31, M39

1. Introduction

Known as “the market for men’s personal care products” or “the male cosmetics market”, it has received special attention along with the rise of the metrosexual man, the man who allocates time and substantial amounts of money for his care and physical appearance. Today, looking good and investing in this is not a feature specific only to women. Issues related to the care of skin, facial skin, nails and hair have been seriously considered by men. In promoting this pattern of behaviour, the media channels have played a very important role. The publications emphasize the changes in the behaviour of male, the TV shows promote a new mentality, and thus male celebrities have become the images of metrosexuality.

Knowing your customers through satisfaction to loyalty

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Abstract: The study is aimed to highlight the importance of knowing and understanding who your customers really are, and understanding the path they have to take in order to reach satisfaction and from here further to loyalty. Through the present study there were highlighted different concepts like expectations, dissatisfaction theory, switching barriers that are most likely to be met when dealing with the customers. Nowadays, it is a reality that it's getting harder and harder to get profit and success for your company, and therefore taking care of your customers, understanding their expectations, and the reasons that drives them to act into a specific way has to be a major marketing objective for each company.

Also, the strategy of being orientated towards customers was proved to be much more cost effective than the one of just attracting new customers to your data base, and at the same time it represents a valuable asset in terms of competitive advantage for the future of any company.

Keywords: types of customers, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty

JEL Classification: M30, M31

1. Introduction

Step by step throughout the time the orientation has changed and has reached now the moment when it is turned towards customers as core element of the commercial activity. In some fields customers become to be considered so important that these industries are called “people industry”, as you can see for instance shopping centre industry.

It is a reality that retailers had become more and more aware of the high level of sophistication reached by the customers, of the progress they have registered in terms of behaviour over time. As a consequence their expectations are becoming harder to meet, and therefore there is a major probability that there will not be easy way to get them loyal towards your company. Beside this expressed reality, it has to be said that in every field of activity and especially in the retail area there is encountered a high rate of development, so the main objective of attracting more and new customers becomes an even bigger challenge. But this is just not enough, as we must consider focusing more onto the existing customers, and having them transformed into loyal one's.

In the present paper there was realized a literature review trying to highlight and understand better the typology of the existing customers, and their specific behaviour path. It has, also, been an objective to try and illustrate the importance of customer satisfaction as a precursor for customer loyalty – but stating clearly and with no doubt that this is not the only condition in getting customers to loyalty. For the purpose of this study, there has been used secondary data which has been collected through online database such as Ebsco, Emerald, J-store and many others. Secondary sources of data include e-books, books, electronic data basis,

The Consumer Behaviour in Social Networks

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Abstract: The influence of social networks began to be so pronounced in recent years that affect perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, motivations, consumer lifestyle and personality. More specifically, there is the influence of social networks on personal and psychological factors. Nowadays, the influence of social factors on consumer behavior of social networks becomes an incontestable factor. This paper is intended to be a study on consumer behavior in social networks, the logical order of actions that make a social network consumer, a client-server architecture of a recommender system, a database structure and a study of collected data.

Keywords: Social Networks, Behaviour, Recommender System

JEL Classification: C81

Introduction. The motivation of the research.

The question we ask ourselves for long time is: *what is a community?* We hear everywhere talking about online communities, but *what are they?* A briefly definition would be: community is a group of people who share interests, desires, preferences and goals.

Each of us is a part of a community, whether it is professional or community based on specific interests and goals. It is human nature to be social, to seek the company of other people who are similar in some ways, that resonates in some areas, themes, subjects, etc.. and provides all the necessary tools for this to be much easier and faster to do. That's why social networks have become a phenomenon for online communication effectively.

There are a couple different **types of groups** that influence consumer behavior (Kaplan, 2010):

- **Reference group** : presumed perspectives or values are being used by an individual as the basis for his or her current behavior. A reference group is a guide for behavior in a specific situation. There are different types of reference groups depending on the strength of the social tie.
- **Primary groups**, typically family and friends, involve lots of interaction and strong ties typically wield considerable influence.
- **Secondary groups** (social media networks) typically involve relatively weak ties and less frequent interaction. The curious thing is that members “groups” or online communities as they are also called actually can interact quite frequently and as such can take on the attributes of a primary group for some users and thereby wield significant influence (see figure 1).

We decided to make such a study because it can be noticed that in recent years more and more people get in touch with social networks. They connect to such networks, first of all for

Tourism Preferences and Choices of Young Romanian Facebook Users: Travel Frequency, Seasons and Types of Destinations

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Abstract: Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world, consistently contributing to the worldwide GDP. Still, although having a territory with a diversified and valuable tourism potential, Romania reports a low contribution of its tourism to its GDP. Therefore, all entities involved in the national tourism industry must gain knowledge in order to better segment, target and attract potential tourists. Considering the fast paced growing penetration rate of the Internet, the social media and blogs within the Romanian population, and their importance in marketing tourism destination and products, the purpose of this paper is to identify tourism preferences and choices of young Romanian Facebook users regarding travel frequency, seasons allocated for tourist travel, internal versus external destinations and, respectively, types of destinations, and to identify any possible positive or negative relation between the above described aspects and variables regarding demographics and online behavior patterns such as frequency of Internet browsing, social media usage (i.e. Facebook) and blogs reading. In order to collect the necessary data, an online survey was designed and conducted among all reachable people, capitalizing on the power of Facebook online social networking and snowball sampling. The paper argues that targeting young Romanian Facebook users with tourism offers can probably be successful and profitable, while its results suggest that when targeting young Romanian Facebook users with tourism products it is essential to further segment the target using demographics criteria and online behavior variables such as Internet browsing, social media usage and blogs reading frequency.

Keywords: travel frequency, tourism destinations, Internet, Facebook, blog, segmentation

JEL Classification: M31, L83, L86

1. Introduction

Over the last decades, tourism has continuously expanded and diversified becoming one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world, representing a contribution of 5% to worldwide gross domestic product (UNWTO, 2011). Moreover, the tourism sector contributes, directly and indirectly, to employment even in a larger amount: 6-7% of the overall number of jobs worldwide. Even for a diversified economy and a country where tourism is a comparatively small sector, the contribution of tourism to GDP surpasses 2% (UNWTO, 2011).

Romania is a relatively diversified economy, a developing country and, moreover, a territory with a very diversified and valuable tourism potential, unfortunately only in a small part harnessed. In Romania, the direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was of only 1.4%

Employer branding opportunities among young entrants in Hungary

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Abstract: In today’s Hungarian labour market, more and more large companies are challenged by the fact that previously applied methods of recruitment do not generate sufficient level of applications among young entrants. Furthermore their preferences have basically re-ordered, as main orientation points digital contents, online friends and acquaintances opinions have arisen. All this implies the need for reconsidering corporate branding opportunities towards new entrants. In our paper we clarify what employer branding exactly means in marketing as well as its position among organizational functions. In addition we set new directions for achieving and recruiting young entrants more effectively based on the results of an exploratory empirical research.

Keywords: employer branding, online branding, young entrants, labour marketing

JEL Classification: M30

Introduction

Following the economic crises demand in Hungary is stagnating and the only refuge – export – cannot generate a multiplication effect (Fazekas, Molnár 2011). Unemployment rate in 2011 almost achieved 11% and it is even higher among younger age groups (e.g.: among 25-29 year old entrants it reached 12,9% in 2011) (ksh.hu). However there are certain corporations, mainly multinational companies, who are planning to expand their workforce and offer new positions to graduates as well. Although these jobs are designed to appeal this special target group, more and more HR professionals complain about insufficient applications and decision difficulties in finding the ideal ones. We presumed that this problem originates in generation differences and new, emerging trends.

The main goal of the paper is to provide recommendations based on the results of an exploratory empirical research for recruiting and communicating activities towards young entrants. A key concept, in this regard, is employer branding. However first of all we need to clarify the definition of this relatively new phrase and the way it can be integrated into the traditional marketing framework. Due to confusions in different definitions the importance of employer branding activities are inevitable, although it is not clear, how it is related to corporate identity issues, corporate and product branding as well as it is not clarified yet, how related functions (HR and marketing) should find their roles in this process. As new trends

Empirical analysis of the relation between organizational performance and integrated marketing communication within the Romanian bakery industry

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ABSTRACT: Nowadays, the relation between organizational performance and integrated marketing communication is valorified increasingly more by companies aiming to create profitable and long-term relationships with consumers, and getting materialized results in increased sales, increased market share, profitability, etc. The identification the ways of measurement the efficiency of tools communication integrated marketing constitute the support to create such relationships and supports the managers in their efforts to implement and measure the integrated marketing communication program in a way effectively. The empirical analysis was aimed identify ways to measure to the the efficiency of tools communication integrated marketing used by leading manufacturers in the bakery sector in Romania.

Keywords: integrated marketing communication, efficiency, communication tools, bakery industry, communication program

JEL Classification: M30, M31, M37, M39

1. Introduction

The relation between efficiency and integrated marketing communication was considered, over time, an issue of major importance both the theoreticians and the practitioners in marketing and communication. In this way, were achieved few empirical studies that have studied this relationship (Cornelissen, 2001; Low, 2000). More recently, few specialists analyzed the relation between efficiency and integrated marketing communication and showed its influence on the results of a company (Reid et al., 2001; Reid, 2002, 2003, 2005). The specialized literature shows the correlation between management of integrated marketing communication in the organization and economic efficiency (brand - consumer - sales efficiency). This means a high level of marketing communication integration in the management organization, which can lead to greater economic efficiency.

The problem of evaluating the efficiency of communication program remains a domain of the major importance for studies achieved in the field (Kitchen, Schultz, 1998, 1999; Reid, 2003).

Store atmosphere: Conceptual Issues and It's Impact on Shopping Behavior

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Abstract: The importance of atmosphere in retail context has for long been recognized both among practitioners and researchers. This paper provides a systematic overview of the concept of atmosphere, dimensions of atmospheric and relevant studies on atmospheric in retail context. The aim of this paper is to review the pertinent literature stream on the effects of atmosphere on buyer behavior. We review the empirical studies in this area that focus on atmospheric stimuli and consumer responses. The article concludes by identifying gaps in the literature and suggesting future topics for atmospheric related research.

Keywords: atmospherics, dimensions of atmospherics, shopping behavior, S-O-R model

JEL Classification: M31, M39

1. Introduction

The concept of atmosphere is ambiguous and in the same time is a commonly used term both in everyday life and in the business context. In spite of several efforts to define this concept, the meaning of the term still remains vague, nonetheless, atmosphere remains important and it really counts.

In the context of a retail store, “atmospherics” refers to aesthetics and ambiance of the store. The atmospheric cues such as color, music, lighting, smell, crowding, window displays and store font reflect the store atmosphere and play an important role in shoppers' perception and evaluation of the store at large (Dabija, Băbuț, 2012: 168). Ideally, retail stores should be perceived to be pleasant and moderately arousing. Stores with pleasant and moderately arousing atmospheres are likely to contribute to the overall favorableness of the store and affect buyer behavior in a positive way (Chebat, Sirgy, 2010).

In the marketing literature stream many articles examine atmospheric effect on shopping behavior (Kotler, 1973; Areni, Kim, 1994; Herrington, Capella 1996; Turley, Milliman, 2000). Today many retail marketers view the store environments as increasingly important to satisfying their customers by providing a positive total shopping experience and use as a communication tool to position the store in the consumers' mind (Levy, Weitz, 2001). In a

The impact of subjective and objective knowledge on attitudes towards organic food consumption

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Abstract: Studies appeared in this field found that there is a gap between consumers' knowledge and attitude and their behavior in the context of organic food consumption. This discrepancy consists in the difficulty to identify or to know the characteristics of these products and in their confusion with other types of similar products or even counterfeit ones. The objective of this paper is to investigate the impact of consumers' knowledge about organic food on attitudes towards consumption. The paper presents the results of an empirical study on the impact of objectively and subjectively measured knowledge on attitudes and mediator effects of subjective knowledge and beliefs on the relationship between objective knowledge and behavioral attitude. The innovativeness of the article consists in a multidimensional approach to the concept of *objective knowledge*, emphasizing the differentiated effect of certain types of information stored in consumer's memory.

Keywords: consumer knowledge, objective knowledge, subjective knowledge, belief, behavioral attitude, organic food

JEL Classification: D11, D12, D83

1. Introduction

Study of consumer behavior toward organic foods gained momentum in the 1990s, a number of researchers trying to identify the particular issues of consumer behavior and their impact on purchase intention. Researches undertaken in the last two decades regarding consumer behavior related to organic foods can be grouped into different categories of interest, as following: socio-demographic and psychographic profile of organic food consumer, factors that stimulate the consumption of organic food, factors that hinder or compromise the organic food consumption. In these studies, factors that influence, both positively and negatively, the organic food choice are treated both individually and in interdependence with others.

If at the beginning of the research the motivation of product adoption and shaping consumer profile were the main point of interest, in time, together with the development of literature and research methodology studies have emerged that propose and validate partial models with different complexity of the interdependence of certain internal and external factors of the decision to purchase a green food. Also international research appears that attempt to capture a new dimension of factors of influence, namely the marketing environment specific to each country. Including systematic study of knowledge in consumer behavior models of organic food happened around the year 2010, this being caused by a series of results provided by previous studies on consumer awareness.

Community orientation plus: The construct and conceptual framework proposition

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Abstract: This paper is a conceptual one, proposing a new notion – community orientation plus - rooted in market orientation literature. This study is built on the premise that the adoption of principles of market orientation in local public administration is a way of opening it to the community in order to increase the efficiency and accountability of public institutions and of communities’ sustainable development. Thus, the purpose of this study is to continue the efforts to expand the concept of market orientation in local public administration, proposing a conceptual framework regarding the adoption of this concept developed for business environment in public administration. Currently, the principle of open public administration has become an important concern, given the need to modernize and reform of public institutions. This principle is not new, but its implementation is not an easy task, given that these organizations are very complex, accounting the interface between Government and citizens. Given the existing controversies regarding the use of client notion in public administration, in this study we adopted the denomination of the “community orientation plus” and we use the citizen denomination for the “client” of public administration institution.

Keywords: market orientation, community orientation plus, open public administration, external accountability

JEL Classification: H83, M31, M40,

1. Introduction

The concept of marketing in public sector can be seen as “the activity, set of institutions, and processes – always interconnected and interdependent – meant to identify, anticipate, create, communicate, deliver and exchange valuable offerings that satisfy clients, audiences, partners, and society at large” (Serrat, 2010). The fact that marketing is a very important component to a modern public administration, it is also underlined by Kotler and Lee (2007) who emphasized: “*Marketing turns out to be the best planning platform for a public agency that wants to meet citizens’ needs and deliver real value. In the private sector, marketing final purpose is customer value and satisfaction. In the public sector, marketing’s final purpose is citizen value and satisfaction*”.

Developing the Research Instrument for Measuring Loyalty within the Financial-Accounting Services

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Abstract: The objective of relationship marketing is to establish and maintain long-term relationships that translate into customer loyalty. This article focuses on the methodological aspects and conceptualisation of relational determinants of loyalty, for business to business market. A special importance is given to the loyalty model tested in the field of services and in the business to business sector, since the financial-accounting services, through the specificity of their activity are included in this category. The finality of this demarche consists in stating the research hypotheses and proposing the loyalty model that will be tested in the case of financial-accounting services. In order to develop the research instrument for measuring loyalty, we have validated the research instrument, implicitly the measuring instruments of the latent variables included in the research design and we have empirically tested the proposed research model on a sample of 60 clients of accounting firms.

Keywords: Loyalty, Trust, Relationship Marketing, Commitment, Relationship Quality

JEL Classification: M310

1. Introduction

In the economy of the new millennium we notice an intensification of the rhythm in which the economic processes and exchange relationships between providers and clients take place. The necessity of optimizing the relationships between the company and the marketing environment led to the appearance and development of some specific concepts and instruments whose content expresses the evolution itself of the relational marketing concept. Thus, a new complex form of the connections between the market actors that Kotler names network economy appears. In this new context, an emphasis of the modelling processes is imposed, based on some typological structures of the exchange relationships between the business partners. The strategic planning develops long-term approaches in the market mechanisms and represents an instrument that allows the company to “better navigate in a continuously changing market environment” (Pop, 2008: 33).

The present research belongs to the relational marketing field and will analyse its main component, the customer loyalty. The papers proposes to analyse the process of building the

Modern Tools for Sales Promotion – Online Promotions

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Abstract: Online promotion is considered one of the most effective promotion approach, due to affordable costs and long-term effects. Online promotion is actually a set of SEM techniques and actions such as SEO (Search Engine Optimization), web directory submission, Google Adwords sponsored links, email marketing, viral marketing, banner exchange, bannerclassical promotion, social networking, social media and others (blogging, affiliate marketing, etc). To highlight the making of an online marketing campaign through Google Adwords we can use the example of a beauty salon. Within the AdWords campaign which was organized to promote this salon, four different ad groups were created in order to cover a wide range of searches. The AdWords advertising campaign was launched on the 1st of August 2011, after a carefully investigating online promotion techniques as well as studying methods and techniques used by competitors.

At the same timethe optimization of the analyzed salon’s website was done through SEO - Search Engine Optimization. For the considered period of time (May 27th - June 26th 2012) we can observe that the site salonuldefrumusete.ro had 6776 visits. Thus, 5780 visits (85.3%) came from search engines, Google holding a percentage of 99.1% (5728 visits). Direct visits (typing www.salonuldefrumuseteS.ro) on the salon’s site were 414 (6.11%). Other important site visits sources are the directories where the salon’s site was indexed, body treatments promotional articles published in specialized online journals (www.eva.ro, www.ele.ro, www.idieta.ro, etc.) and the salon’s indexing on websites that promotes exclusively beauty salons (www.e-saloane.ro). The number of clients from these sources is 340 (5.02%). Visits coming from the newsletter which was sent to clients in the salon’s database was 242, representing 3.57% of all visits.

Given the success of the online marketing campaign based on Google AdWords, we suggest to continue it, with the following objectives: refinement of the keywords to increase click rates, tracking progress positioning for all keywords in order to optimize them. It is essential to select those words and phrases designed not only to bring traffic to your site, but traffic to include as many potential clients. Also it is suggested to take into consideration the increasing awareness in the online environment.

Keywords: Online promotion, SEO, Google Adwords, network, Pay Per Click

JEL Classification: M31

1. Introduction

In recent years, especially in the last decade, there has been a widening concern regarding the promotion of products but especially regarding the promotion of sales. Sales promotion “offers consumers a short-term incentive for purchasing a product” (Schultz, Robinson, Petrison, 2005: 9). In the modern market economy, it does not matter that the products are good quality, if potential customers do not know them, they are unlikely to sell. Traditionally, promotion was intended to attract new customers. It is now at least as important to find out

Knowledge based society: optimization of management decisions in the supply chain regarding the buying of business services

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Abstract: Nowadays, the acquisition of business services is becoming very important for organizations. Therefore, this article investigates the optimization of the management decisions in the supply chain regarding to the structure of the buying center for the business services. The paper begins with the presentation of the increasing importance of the purchasing of business services. Next, we describe the special characteristics of the business services which increase the complexity of the buying center. Furthermore, we investigate whether the buying center structure varies for different categories of business services. We develop a conceptual framework of the factors influencing the structure of the buying center for business services. In this paper we present the preliminary findings from testing the framework in practice. The paper ends with conclusions and recommendations for managers regarding the optimization of their decisions for the purchasing of the business services.

Keywords: buying center, business services, purchasing management

JEL Classification: L8, M19, M30

1. Introduction

We are now at the beginning of a new era, the industrial society has become a service society and is on the way to become an information and knowledge based society. Ambrosi et al. (2005) consider that “knowledge society has to do with a society in which the conditions for generating knowledge and processing information have been substantially changed by a technological revolution focused on information processing, knowledge generation and information technologies”.

Nowadays, we can observe that services are bought and consumed more than ever, as a consequence of the present developments. However, buying business services has not been studied in detail and the studies that have been done have either focused on one type of service or a specific phase of the procurement process. This article tries to fill this gap and investigates the structure of the buying center for different categories of business services.

In the first part of the article we present the increasing importance of buying business services in the knowledge based society. Next, we describe the particularities of the business services compare with the goods. Furthermore, we develop a conceptual framework of the factors influencing the structure of the buying center for business services. We tested this framework

A Review of the Service Quality Concept – Past, Present and Perspectives

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Abstract: After three decades of research and academics’ attempts to capture the essence of the service quality concept, the review of the literature still cannot provide us with a precise and comprehensive answer when asking “What is service quality after all?”. The purpose of this paper is threefold. First, the authors emphasise the aspects which make service quality more difficult to define than product quality. Second, this paper underlines the main approaches that have been adopted in the attempt to define service quality and also highlights those aspects which contribute to the confusion that characterizes this concept. Finally, the paper presents the “evolution” of the service quality concept by grouping the identified definitions in two main categories. This article argues that such a classification can help researchers formulate a definition which hinges on a certain period in time as well as to underline the need for further research. This study concludes that service quality remains an ambiguous concept which lacks complete agreement.

Keywords: quality, conceptualising service quality, performance versus expectations and performance

JEL Classification: M30, M31

1. A Review of the Service Quality Concept – Where we were, Where we are and Where should we be next?

The competitive environment which companies must face, no matter whether they offer physical products or services, makes it necessary for them to realize and to recognize the benefits offered by a high quality of their offer. For this purpose, in 1979 Philip Crosby dedicates his book “*Quality Is Free: The Art of Making Quality Certain*” to managers. In his attempt to highlight the importance of a quality oriented strategy, Crosby emphasizes the idea that a corrective action implies higher costs than the necessary investment to increase the quality level of an offer before it gets to consumers. The same opinion is expressed a few years later by the Vice-Chairman and Treasurer of the Mellon Bank: “A lot of people think

Functional Value and Risk in Romanian SMEs

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Abstract: The objective of this study is to test the hypothetical relation between risk and the benefits and sacrifices components of functional value, and also the relation between value, satisfaction and loyalty (intention to switch). Various schools of thought on functional value are investigated in order to identify major contributions on this subject and also the risk related literature is analyzed in order to bridge the gap between the value and risk constructs. The relation between the above mentioned concepts (risk, value, satisfaction and loyalty) is tested empirically on a representative sample of Romanian SMEs. The results confirm the hypothetical relation between this constructs thus providing support to similar findings reported in other studies. Contribution to knowledge, managerial implications, limits and future research are also discussed.

Keywords: functional value, risk, SME, Romania

JEL Classification: D46; M31; M39

1. Introduction

At the present time, Romania's economy is still affected by the global economical crisis started at the beginning of the last trimester of the year 2008. Due to a somehow feeble orientation towards exportation of the Romanian economy, the effects of the global crisis began to show with a delay of approximately 2 trimesters than in other states of the region. Still, the impact of this crisis was much stronger in Romania than in other neighbouring countries, this impact being amplified by a pretty low internal demand and by a lack of competition of most Romanian products at an international level.

This is why the Romanian economy continues to struggle with the effects of this global crisis, and restoring the economic growth level recorded before this crisis will take a long period of time. The private sector in Romania has reacted to the economical crisis by massive personnel cuts, by stopping the developing investments and by reducing the general activity. Although, starting with the fourth trimester of the year 2010, the descendant trend was stopped, the year 2011 and the first half of the year 2012 were characterised by the stand-by of the economic activity in most areas of the economy.

In this pretty unfavourable economic context, a company which succeeded in creating and offering value to its customers will succeed in surviving and even be profitable on average and long term. The concept of perceived value became, starting with the last decade of the past century, a key-element in defining the way to develop businesses in globe's most developed economies. More and more companies acknowledge the role played by the value as key-element in the strategic management (Spiteri, Dion, 2004). Slater (1997: 166) states that the reason for which a company exists and is successful is determined by its ability to create and offer value for the consumers.

The Possible Causes of Low E-commerce Adoption in Romania – Conceptualization of Trust Effect with regard to Low Level of Technology Acceptance

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Abstract: Despite the high level of e-commerce adoption (43% in average) among most EU countries, Romania only has a 6% adoption rate which is the poorest in the European Union. Using data from secondary sources we compare Romanian e-commerce adoption rates and Internet penetration rates with the other newly accepted EU members' same datasets. Our primary objectives with this article are (1) to see into the possible causes of the low e-commerce adoption rate among internet users in Romania, such as distribution channel structure peculiarities, customer trust issues as well as technology acceptance level, and (2) to emphasize on one of its possible causes that we believe to be a general lack of customer trust in Romanian e-commerce platform operators. Our aim is to see into the possible cause-effect relationship between lack of trust and low e-commerce adoption rate. We conduct a literature review and with the help of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) we conceptually link low e-commerce adoption to the notion of trust. In the final part of the paper we present and conceptualize the notion of trust.

Keywords: trust, e-commerce adoption, technology acceptance, Romania, Internet

JEL Classification: M31

1. Introduction

It is already a commonly known cliché that the emergence of the Internet had a decisive impact on World economy especially on commerce and trade. The rapidly evolving Internet technology caused radical changes in the commerce environment. These changes brought up several innovative developments which boosted the efficiency of commerce (Varadarajan, Yadav, 2009). On one hand Internet technology caused a revolution in business-to-consumer

International Negotiation

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Abstract: Negotiations are important part of business regardless of the place and time of the negotiation. It is quite difficult as it is, and the challenges increase with the disparity of cultural practices among the individuals participating in a negotiation.

The intention of the article is to understand the motivation in companies in different cultural groups and determine how these determine the success of the negotiation procedure, even though much literature is available on the cross-cultural and international negotiation, not much can be found on prescriptive recommendations for the challenges of the international negotiation. There are many contributions that stand out in literature as practical and effective solutions universally. Some of these contributions are shared here.

The world economy may not be growing as fast as it was some years back. Whenever two states start working together, there is always a conflict of interests and problems that arise due to the difference of business culture. It is argued from the definition of the business culture that business culture refers to coexistence among business people of different cultural orientations aided by the fact that they have a common vision even though they may have different ideologies.

Keywords: Marketing, Negotiation, Intentional business, International and Cross-Cultural Marketing

JEL Classification: M30

1. Introduction

While talking about international trade, it does not only mean that something is going on outside the borders but it also crosses the limits of the culture. Culture is a wide term which includes the behaviour, the mind set and the communication skills of the people of different backgrounds. Different cultures are reflected by the ways under which individuals or corporations from diversified backgrounds deal with each other. The cultural differences of the countries can act as barriers in the negotiation process. Like for instance, cultural difference existing between Chinese manager, working in Shanghai and the head of a Canadian company, existing in Toronto can create a block in the negotiation process.

Rapid increase in international discussions has been seen from quite a few decades, especially in Poland. International negotiations have become common because of globalization, strengthening trading relations and economic and political incorporation within the European Union. International negotiations have become common in both diplomatic and business environments. The increase in the international negotiations has become so common now days that it has gained attention of many scholars. The differences in culture have an adverse impact on the international negotiations, and this fact has attracted the scholars to a great extent (Lewicki et al., 2006).

SERVQUAL and the Romanian hospitality industry: A study

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Abstract: The Romanian hospitality industry has known in the last five years an ascending trend in quality and numbers of hotels being built. However, as the industry grows there are virtually no studies showing how the consumers perceive this change, and whether they are aware of it. From this point of view the field of perceived quality and customer satisfaction is relatively unexplored. For this purpose the current article presents a study, first of its kind on the Romanian hospitality industry, regarding how a service quality model such as SERVQUAL can be adapted and used by Romanian hotel managers to study customer satisfaction and then, based on the results, take strategic decisions because of it.

Keywords: customer satisfaction, perceived quality, SERVQUAL, hotel services, Romania, tourism

JEL Classification: M 31, L 83

1. Introduction

In 1988, in anecdotic review, Knutson penned the ten laws of customer satisfaction. They started with “know your client” and “make a good first impression”, continued with “overcome their expectations”, “help the customer decide”, “make things easy for the customer”, “focus on perception”, “don’t overstep untold limits”, “create memories they’ll want to relieve”, “expect your customers to remember bad experiences” and ended with “make the customer owe you”. Over twenty years have passed since then the laws were written, yet they are as valid as ever, because their main point is this - although objective quality is important and should be kept at a high standard, what is more relevant is the perceived quality of the service and the sentiments it evokes, be it satisfaction or dissatisfaction. And this perceived quality is evaluated through two elements: the expectations the customer carries before starting the service experience and the perceptions he has of everything he receives, in other words, the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm.

There is a growing number of authors who claim that in evaluating perceived quality and customer satisfaction, perceptions of the service performance are more than enough, however, when the goal is more than descriptive, as in providing a context in which perceptions can be evaluated against, it can be argued that the expectations need to be measured as well. Especially in a newly stepped into field such as customer satisfaction with Romanian hospitality industry, the role of expectations is to provide a basis against which the perceptions can be evaluated.

Taking similar arguments into consideration, Knutson and her colleagues have developed two models for determining the quality of lodging and dining services: LODGSERV (Knutson et al., 1990) and DINESERV (Stevens, Knutson, Patton, 1995), in which they have tried to

Marketing Activity in the Information Society

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Abstract: Developing information and communication technologies radically change infrastructure savings, how people access information and conduct open a new democratization. New digital technologies are access, storing and transmitting information increasingly easier and more accessible. With digital information, it can be transformed into new economic and social values, creating huge opportunities for developing new products and services. Information is key resource for the digital economy.

Information Society is an objective of development and an essential component of political and economic development program and a prerequisite for participation in the European single market. Given the need to move to this type of society and to our country, have seen fit to address the problem of marketing in the digital age. Having outlined the theoretical concepts of information society, marketing, I addressed issues related to the features and objectives of marketing in the traditional economy, and then to reveal new dimensions of marketing in the information society. I presented the marketing information system components, emphasizing the importance of the database for processing digital information. Given that computers are becoming faster and more spread Internet use, we are assaulted by a quantity of increasingly more information online, so I thought it appropriate to present the particularity of marketing on the Internet and to review the main e-Marketing trends, ending with a corresponding set of conclusions.

Keywords: digital, e-Marketing, information society, cybermarketing

JEL Classification: M31

1. Introduction

Widespread use of information and communication technologies and ensure progress towards the information society growth under increased environmental protection, physical consumption reduction for accelerating recovery of information and knowledge, center of gravity shift from investment in fixed assets investment in human capital. In this way, integrate the information society and sustainable development objectives, based on social justice and equal opportunity, freedom, cultural diversity and innovative development, environmental protection, restructuring and business environment.

It is clear that knowledge-based society, unlike the industrial society and the information will be in the foreground knowledge, how to purchase, hoarding, and magnitude of its transfer. Faced with markets becoming more competitive, with consumers increasingly demanding and more restricted reference segments, organizations must find new ways to gain competitive

Some factors that influence hospitality services suppliers' decision to include traditional products in their offer

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Abstract: Food, nutrition and health are topics of growing interest among many researchers nowadays. How can we avoid unhealthy foods and move towards those that can improve health and our wellbeing state? In this research we start from the premise that in Romania there is potential, resources and traditional recipes which can help us being educated in what a balanced nutrition is concerned. Romanian traditional products, made especially in specific geographical areas, do not manage to be known all over the country. Is it possible that tourism might help them?

A study based on the interviews made with several touristic pension managers in Bihor helps us understand their attitude towards traditional products. The question that arises from this study is trying to find an answer in terms of the ability to promote traditional products through touristic offers. The research tries to identify some factors that influence the decision of touristic suppliers to include or not in their offer traditional products, as hostels, hotels, restaurants, leisure suppliers can influence (consciously or not), our culinary habits.

Keywords: agricultural marketing, nutrition marketing, traditional products, promotion, touristic offer

JEL Classification: M31, Q13, L83

1. Introduction

People all over the world tend to be more and more preoccupied with issues concerning food, nutrition, and health. The world level preoccupations have in view two directions:

- one is to ensure and supply food for a rapidly increasing population, (in 1960 the World population counted 3 billion people and in 2012 we reached 7 billion people and the tendency is of continuous growth, as states the U.S. Census Bureau). The countries showing the highest birth rate are especially the undeveloped countries (in Asia, Africa and partially in South America), countries which have serious difficulties in food supply. In this case, they are looking for solutions to develop an agricultural system and food production in extensive system.
- another can be seen in the developed countries and developing countries which started becoming aware of the fact that it was more important “WHAT” we eat and not “HOW” we eat. This is the tendency of getting back to “green” food, to home-made products (as our grandparents used to make) to the foods wholly made with ingredients which are the least harmful for the body. In this case, the producers have

The Use and Effectiveness of Codes of Ethics – A Literature Review

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Abstract: Several strands of literature attempt to address ethical behaviour and standards in relation to the use of codes of ethics. This paper discusses relevant literature and studies on codes of ethics, providing an overview of various definitions of the concept and a literature analysis on codes of ethics’ use in organisations in general and in marketing research companies in particular. A first strand of research that examines the use of codes of ethics is identified. A second strand of research that is identified and discussed in this paper attempts to measure the effectiveness of codes of ethics. The literature suggests that the lack of use and enforcement of codes of ethics in the marketing research industry is perceived to lead to unethical behaviour. There is however little agreement in the literature on the extent of usefulness of codes and the influence they have on behaviour.

Keywords: business ethics, codes, marketing research

JEL Classification: M39, Y80, Z19

1. Introduction

The degree to which an organisation can be held to be ethical is dependent on its ability to create an ethical environment internally in its members’ relationships with each other and with the organisation itself, as well as externally in organisational members’ relationships with others. Codes of ethics are widely understood to act as a mechanism facilitating and ensuring ethical behaviours within organisations.

The practice of business ethics in general and of ethics within the marketing research function in particular has attracted substantial attention both from the public and from academics (Malhotra, Miller, 1998). Many studies have focussed on the importance of business ethics in the activities of organisations, with the aim of understanding the actual tendencies in business and organisational environments of acting and behaving in accordance with particular norms and standards that would generate an ethical business environment, good relational interaction between actors involved, and good outcomes for the stakeholders involved. The whole realm of ethics and, within this realm, of what constitutes an ethical business environment, is one in which there is differing opinion.

Ethics is the study of what contributes good and bad conduct, including related actions and values (Barry, 1979). Similarly, Thompson (2005) defines ethics as the study of right and wrong; of the moral choices people make and the way in which they seek to justify them. Ethics is concerned with the nature of specific decisions made and the “goodness or badness” of those decisions in terms of the consequences of those decisions (Chonko, 1995). Business ethics exists as a subfield of ethics. Business ethics also exists within the context of a variety of business disciplines, most notably management as the base business discipline that most business ethics scholars associate with. There is also marketing ethics and within this subfield marketing research ethics exists as a smaller strand of research drawing from both ethics and business ethics in the particular context of organisational activities concerning

How Could Children Become Bad Consumers - Materialistic Values and Ethics -

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Abstract: The paper addresses a theoretical approach of negative consumer behaviour in relation to misleading marketing practices and materialistic values. As a vulnerable market segment, children may pay a heavy price, being treated unfairly by companies. As a response, as consumers, kids adversely affect companies becoming wrong customers. They will develop a craving for wealth and material possessions and will cultivate a great materialistic orientation that leads to conspicuous consumption, compulsive buying or even shoplifting.

Keywords: advertising, consumer ethics, materialism, vulnerable market segment

JEL Classification: M31, M37, M39

Introduction

Children's world is prone to be very interesting for most companies in the marketplace. They inevitably become a main focus of investigation because they are usually regarded as an attractive segment. Thus, marketers do take advantage of the vulnerability of the consumers. The negative aspects of advertising, for instance, have a significant effect on young people. Advertisers traditionally use techniques to which children or adolescents are more susceptible, such as product placements in movies, advergames and TV shows; the attractiveness of fast food restaurants through special products or toys, children's exposure to TV commercials based on celebrity endorsement.

All these techniques have a negative impact in time and companies may need to deal with different acts of customers' opportunism. Youth people sometimes "reward" companies' misbehaviour, being themselves unethical or deviant in consumption.

1. Marketing implications

Ethics in general, but especially in the business world has proven to arise several controversial topics over the years. Despite the growing number of studies concerning problematic and subtle ethical aspects, the topic still remains a dilemma. Ethical business practices have widely received a questionable label so far. In this context, marketing environment has been argued as being more prone to ethical issues.