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Open Innovation and Online Intermediaries: A Review of Theory and its Implications for Tourism

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ABSTRACT The open innovation concept has become relevant to the tourism industry, which has long been one of the leading industries in adopting innovative services (Hjalager, 2010). Open innovation intermediaries can play an interesting role because they facilitate the adequate linkages among different actors which are located globally. These entities offer virtual platforms, characterized by numerous web 2.0 tools, which stimulate the interactions among organizations and increase the combination of the complementary capabilities necessary to obtain innovative tourism services. This article aims to highlight how open innovation intermediaries can be a useful solution for tourism companies which intend to adopt an open innovation approach for exploring services. This conceptual paper analyzes opportunities and challenges of the intermediation and/or the resources which these intermediaries provide. The method used for the analysis is literature review in which the authors collected data from scientific publications, reports and books through a snowball technique.

Keywords: open innovation, innovation intermediaries, virtual platforms, tourism services

JEL Classification: D47, D83, M31, O3, L83

1. Introduction

When it comes to innovation, marketing strategies have long underlined its role in generating success for the firms that invest in it (Kotler and Keller, 2006). Because of that, the Research and Development department (R&D) has been a staple for any company viewing commercial success and a market leader position, as the projects they researched would later become the basis of the products that the company would eventually market (Duarte and Sarkar, 2011). This has been the model for innovation ever since the Industrial Revolution has changed the economic landscape, and what the relevant literature calls the closed R&D model. This model however, has been known to create spillovers that the firms could not profit from, also known as projects in which funds had been invested but for one reason or another they were never marketed (Nelson, 1959). Moreover, the innovation performance differences between firms were found to be based on the difference in their capabilities in deploying internal, competitor and external knowledge over time (Katila, 2002).

Use of Tenant Mix Strategies to Attract Shopping Centers’ Customers. Evidence from Romania

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ABSTRACT Shopping centers’ image is a concept dependent on the result of the creation process of a functional and coherent marketing mix. Of all the marketing components, studies show that tenants and merchandise assortment is the determining factor. This study aims to highlight, based on a qualitative research, using structured interview technique, which are the most widely used assortment strategies in successful shopping centers from Romania. The conclusions obtained may constitute useful information for both researchers of the Romanian retail industry and for practitioners seeking solutions to better position their offer.

Keywords: shopping center, strategy, shopping center image, marketing mix

JEL Classification: M31, M39, M10

1. Introduction

The success of any enterprise, and therefore of a shopping center as well, is dependent on the effectiveness of the positioning efforts and on the creation of an image that is consistent with the needs of the enterprise and of its current and prospective customers. Positive associations that a certain brand evokes to consumers have the ability to transform them first into visitors and, ultimately, into real advocates and partners of the enterprise. Creating and maintaining a positive image on the long term is primarily conditioned by the degree of satisfaction and the perpetuation of this feeling among buyers. This feeling is, on its turn, essentially dependent on the product, service or assortment of products and services provided, but also on all the other components - the price level, atmosphere, sales personnel ancillary services (service), location or communication.

Regarding shopping centers, *image* components refer to the assortment of shops and goods, ambiance, special events, prices, communication, service, loyalty programs and restaurants (Abrudan, 2012). It is more than the sum of these components; it is the result of the synergy between them. Its quality depends on the degree to which marketing managers are able to efficiently create or combine the tools and techniques available to them, so that the result is coherent and distinctive. For this reason, in their case, the management of center’s image and the marketing management activity can be considered equivalent. Specific marketing strategies refer to the management of the situation of each element of the marketing mix in

Customer segmentation based on the value of consumption patterns in telecommunications

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ABSTRACT The purpose of relationship marketing is to maintain clients and increase their loyalty. In order to attain these objectives, mobile operators must identify subscriber segments and provide services that best suit their needs. This study aims to identify behaviour patterns among the prepaid subscribers of a mobile operator. The aim of the analysis is to carry out a segmentation of subscribers based on their spending of credit on local or international calls, SMSs and data. The K-mean cluster analysis was applied to group subscribers in segments. The average sum of squares error indicator was used to determine the internal cohesion of clusters, and, to identify the differences between clusters, the ANOVA and Tukey post-hoc tests were utilised. The study led to the identification of nine subscriber segments with different behaviour, the results obtained offering the mobile operator the possibility to better adapt their marketing strategies to their subscribers' needs.

Keywords: customer segmentation, relationship marketing, telecommunication

JEL Classification: M31

1. Introduction

The marketing environment in which mobile operators carry out their activity features an intense competition for clients and increased degree of mobility. As clients prefer services that offer them a high level of satisfaction, these companies must know subscribers' needs and be able to adapt their offer to the possible changes in subscribers' expectations. Thus, instead of targeting all subscribers with the same campaigns, they should be approached differently, according to their needs, characteristics and behaviour (Bose and Chen, 2010).

Consequently, mobile operators cannot focus only on the creation and implementation of strategies to attract new clients, but they also have to concentrate on maintaining existing clients and increasing their value. Market liberalisation and globalisation constrain mobile operators to keep their clients in order to be able to preserve their market share in the context of increasing costs for attracting new subscribers (Tripathi and Siddiqui, 2010:49). Most of the times, increasing the loyalty and value of present customers is as important as and sometimes easier to achieve than attracting subscribers from competitors. (Tsiptsis and Chorianopoulos, 2009: 291).

Drivers of consumer’s satisfaction with luxury fashion products and overall satisfaction’s impact on repurchase intention

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ABSTRACT Due to the lack of widely accepted definitions of luxury products, luxury brands and luxury consumers, the luxury domain is still ambiguous. This aspect is reflected on the reduced number of attempts to investigate more complex concepts like consumer behavior. The paper has two main objectives, namely to determine the main drivers that explain consumers’ satisfaction in case of luxury fashion products and then to establish the overall satisfaction’s impact on the repurchase intention. Data was gathered using a self administrated questionnaire and the snowball sampling technique among Romanian luxury consumers. Linear regression, used to test the hypothesis, has suggested that consumers’ overall satisfaction was influenced by the satisfaction with the comfort, the resistance, the prestige, the visibility and the quality of products, while the satisfaction regarding the style and the value did not have a significant effect. Findings also indicated that overall satisfaction has impact on the repurchase intention in case of luxury fashion products, but explained nearly half of the variation. While the study has a practical implication as in the context of rapid market globalization managers need know on what to rely on, so not to diminish consumers’ satisfaction, there are also some limits as Romania’s particularities of a post communist country may be reflected in the results. Regarding the originality, it is important to mention that the authors did not find in literature other articles that discuss the drivers of satisfaction and the satisfaction’s impact on repurchase intention in case of luxury fashion products in particular, nor for luxury products in general. Also the study contributes to the scarce empirical investigation of “real” luxury consumers.

Keywords: luxury consumer satisfaction, fashion consumer satisfaction, satisfaction drivers, luxury fashion, luxury consumption, repurchase intention

JEL Classification: M31, L67

1. Introduction

Luxury consumption has a very long history which goes back to the great civilizations of Ancient Mesopotamia, Ancient Greece, Roman Empire or Ancient Egypt (Kapferer and Bastien, 2009b; Okonkwo, 2007). Nevertheless, compared to the other domains (eg. finance, medicine, tourism) the luxury field was little researched (Ciornea *et al.*, 2012) and still offers great opportunities for scientists (Dubois and Laurent, 1994; Vickers and Renand, 2003). Because of the limited academic interest, the domain is still ambiguous and controversial, with no universally accepted definitions of the luxury concept (Godey *et al.*, 2009), luxury products, luxury brands (Vickers and Renand, 2003; De Barnier *et al.*, 2006) and luxury consumers (Ciornea *et al.*, 2012). The issues concerning the definitions together with the particularities of luxury consumers led to an even smaller number of attempts to investigate more complex concepts as those related to consumer behavior. The previous studies on luxury

Satisfaction with goods and services: definitions and determinants. A critical review of the literature

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ABSTRACT Satisfaction has long been acknowledged as one of the cornerstones of marketing given its propensity to generate positive effects for the organization such as increased customer retention and profitability, positive word of mouth or customer loyalty. A wide variety of studies have thus been conducted in order to further investigate the concept and help organizations better satisfy their clients’ needs and wants. After many decades of research, results are somehow surprising in that there appears to be no broad consensus as to the definition of the term, its antecedents or measurement methods. This paper takes on the challenge and aims to provide a critical overview of the existing literature relating to definitions and determinants of satisfaction with goods and services, while at the same time suggesting further research areas. A total number of 37 articles have been selected following three consecutive key word searches and one bibliography search. Results show that a variety of definitions and models exist, with most studies conducted in the fields of services, namely banking, food services and the airline/automotive industry. At the same time, the number of studies analyzing how satisfaction is understood and perceived from the point of view of consumers are scarce.

Keywords: consumer satisfaction, literature review, satisfaction determinants

JEL Classification: M31

1. Introduction

“There are some days when I think I’m going to die from an overdose of satisfaction”.
(Salvador Dali)

The importance of consumer satisfaction cannot be argued, benefiting from extensive exploring in the marketing literature (Hung and Wong, 2007; Yeung and Ennew, 2000). It is now a widely accepted idea that it is much more expensive to attract a new customer than to keep an old one. This view is most often doubled by the fact that while satisfied consumers will share their experiences with three to five of their peers, dissatisfied consumers will share their negative experiences with eight up to twenty people (Babich 1992). Furthermore, it is also a generally accepted fact that satisfaction plays an important role in enabling a connection between a certain product offered (be it a good, service, information etc.) and post-buying phenomena such as brand loyalty, positive word of mouth, repeated buying etc. (Dubrovski 2001; Churchill and Surprenant, 1982). To many (Anderson and Mittal, 2000; Woodruff, 1997; Eggert and Ulaga, 2002; Churchill and Surprenant, 1982; Yeung and Ennew, 2000), this means that satisfaction has an ability to generate competitiveness and economic success which makes it widely used in evaluating business performance (Anderson, 1994).

A new approach of Religious Marketing: The Theory of Planned Behavior

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ABSTRACT There is a misconception among those who haven't studied the economic field, that marketing means sale and promotion of goods and services. There is a certain reservation among clergy and laity regarding this matter – marketing of religious services – from fear of transforming this special field that militates for indissoluble truths and matters of spiritual life, into one that pursues financial gain. However, churches should adopt certain measures to determine those who declare themselves believers but are non-practicing, to become active members of the church. This is where the marketing of religious services could make a difference, not searching for solutions to increase the number of the members of the Orthodox Church or to obtain financial resources, but rather to respond to the needs of the people. One person's predisposition for a certain behavior will be analyzed using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), trying to determine the factors underlying the intention of the non-practicing. There is a connection between the intent to participate in religious services and actual participation of the non-practicing; further the purpose and planning determine a certain behavior and there are some factors that determine non-practicing to change their initial intent or determine to adopt an expected behavior).

Keywords: religious marketing, church, TPB, practicing / non-practicing

JEL Classification: M31, L31, D11, Z12

1.Key characteristics of the church as a non-profit organization

The church is the aim of a controversial discussion in post-communist Romania, because people want nothing to do with a God they haven't met. Writer Octavian Paler noted: “I do not necessarily believe in the naively-projected God, the One with human image. I feel though, that the freedom of non-believing (in God) will open an abyss”. Writer Mircea Cărtărescu argued this change so: “For 40 years «scientific atheism» was taught in schools – the communism saw the church as a rival cult that needed to disappear.” (Suciu, 2006).

Non-profit organizations were created because individuals, corporations and sometimes the government considered necessary certain social changes. Non-profit organizations try to free drug-dependants, prevent domestic violence, captivate young people's interest for ballet and dancing arts, offer an education to poor children and provide for them proper places to study and guide people towards God (Andreasen and Kotler, 2008). Andreasen and Kotler (2008) observed that non-profit organization's sector is increasing and is developing at a much faster rate than the private sector. A comparison of non-profit economic sectors from 35 countries led to the conclusion that this sector is more evolved in developed countries than in developing countries.

Churches are unique institutions in society because they are the only ones who provide spiritual and moral support to the faithful. Although the church is the oldest institution, with a

New empirical insights into advertising creativity – traditional/non-traditional media context

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ABSTRACT The current research examines how advertising creativity influences consumer’s processing and response. We develop a conceptual framework that proposes two antecedents of advertising creativity – originality and relevance and four effects – attention, attitude towards advertising, attitude towards brand and medium credibility. Although these aspects have been the focus of previous research, this paper brings some new insights in the field by testing the hypotheses in the context of the Romanian market. The paper also tries to identify the differences in consumers’ response to an unconventional placement of the ad compared to a traditional medium. The hypothetical relations between constructs were tested through structural equation modelling (SEM).

Keywords: unconventional media, advertising creativity, attitude, attention, medium credibility.

JEL Classification: M37, M31

1. Introduction

Sometimes when companies try to use advertising as a competitive advantage, things do not go as well as planned. So, following the rivalry between companies that fight to get customer’s attention (Abdul-Razzaq *et al.*, 2009), advertising clutter appears, making it harder to communicate the promotional message. One of the immediate effects of the increased clutter is a decrease in public’s attention, affecting customers’ ability to identify the promoted product (Rosengren, 2008) or more flaming their discontent (Rotfeld, 2006). No doubt, nowadays customer is more familiar, and may even become irritated, with the presence of traditional advertising, no matter how creative it is (Maniu and Zaharie, 2013).

Following this idea, more and more companies reorient their marketing strategies towards using unconventional promotional methods that catch customers in their most vulnerable moments (Kaikati and Kaikati, 2004), thus making it easier to deliver the promotional message. This untraditional advertising technique appears in very different environments.

Causes affecting voluntary turnover in IT sector. Review of some empirical studies

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ABSTRACT Employee voluntary turnover remains a critical issue for organizations because of the associated costs, disruptions, and potential loss of valuable knowledge, skills, and organizational memory. A lot of research was done on the reasons for voluntarily leaving the workplace in general and less about the reasons for voluntarily leaving the IT sector. Thus, our ability to explain and predict individual voluntary turnover remains limited. In light of this, the question that arises is why employees voluntarily leave their jobs among IT sector? This paper will review the reasons as they are found in the literature. From the reviewed studies, it seems that some of them belong to the internal environment of the organization while others come from outside the organization.

Keywords: Israel, voluntary turnover, IT sector

JEL Classification: J2, M14

Voluntary turnover in Israel IT industry

Examination of Israel's` data shows that the voluntary turnover rate of employees working in IT sector from the total emissions (in this sector) increased from 57% in 1999 to 64% in 2012 (Orenstein, 2012).

Attitudes typically only explain around 5% of total turnover variance while intentions to quit rarely explain more than 15% of total turnover variance (Griffeth, Hom and Gaertner, 2000; Hom and Griffeth, 1995). A review of five meta-analyses examining the correlation between turnover intention and actual turnover finds correlations from .31 to .52 (Dalton *et al.*, 1999). That is, turnover intention accounts for 9% to 25% of turnover. Most of these studies examine intention and behavior in private firms (Cho and Lewis, 2012). Since IT sector contains mainly private companies, this data is very relevant also to this sector.

The literature review indicates that not many studies have been conducted on voluntary skilled (programmers, engineers, etc.) employees' turnover in IT branch in Israel. However, from the literature emerge several relevant surveys. A survey conducted in 2009 in Israel showed that the percentage of voluntary departures in IT companies in Israel is 3.7% from all departures (2006: 3%; in 2007; 9%; 2008; 5.2%, respectively (Report produced by the Research Department of Refael Israeli Company, 2009). That is, until this year the percentage of voluntary turnover was in the rise. A survey conducted in 2011 in IT sector in Israel shows that in 2010, the percentage of the employees who leave voluntarily increased and the trend

Hungarian biotechnological company clusters in terms of innovation co-operations

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ABSTRACT New market structures and branches have emerged in modern business life. In case of new innovative market formulations strict boundaries between competition and collaboration have been blurred to some extent. Business sector innovations are not only investigated within firms as a reaction to outside competitive forces but as a consequence of company co-operations and interactions business networks evolve that are characterised by specific features. As a result of this unique and special resources become available to business partners. The developing of inter-organisational relationships and the maintenance of the long-term co-operations require mutual trust, reciprocity and unhierarchical production structure. With the partnership all involved parties can increase their competitiveness. Leading sector of the economy in the 21st century is biotechnology. It searches answers for the most crucial problems of the humanity. It concentrates on disease treatment, improving life quality, up-to-date and healthy food production, as well as solving the problems of environmental pollution. As a consequence of new innovative results this branch stands in the focal point of interest of the society all around the world. Biotechnology belongs to one of the most innovative, knowledge intensive branches. special attention is paid on its development and on its results. All these encouraged me to analyse and make a clustering among companies in the biotechnological industry from the perspective of co-operation motivating factors.

Keywords: biotechnology, innovation, co-operation, cluster, Hungary

JEL Classification: M31

1. Innovation as critical factor in nowadays economy

Research and development (R&D) is considered to be one of the most important factor of economic competitiveness. It contributes to the more effective economic restructuring, increased productivity, and improved quality of life. In the 21st century it is crucial how new technologies diffuse among firms in the given branch. “Research and experimental development comprise creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications” (OECD, 2002: 30). Innovation is a broader category than R&D. The first innovation definition was constructed by Schumpeter (1911, 1935). Schumpeter had a pioneering role as he introduced innovation into economic studies.

The appearance of the publication was financed by SROP-4.2.2.A-11/1/KONV-2012-0058, Modeling the effects of the energy- production, utilization and waste management technologies to the competitiveness of the cities and regions

Aspects regarding corporate social responsibility definition and dimensions

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ABSTRACT During the last years, limited or non-renewable natural resources, pollution limiting life on earth, global warming, have been the subject of major researches. People like Bowen, Davis, Friedman, Carroll or Schwartz tried several times to design a definition for Corporate Social Responsibility concept, but not even today do we have a general accepted definition for this concept. The main objectives of the present article are to trace the evolution of the concept from its first beginning until today. The paper represents the first step of a research project that is meant to investigate the consumers' perceptions of the socially responsible activities that companies communicate through corporate communication and the way this perceptions influence consumers' buying behaviour. For the present paper a theoretical research has been done, in order to determine the level reached by the specialty literature in the area and to understand the component parts of corporate social responsibility, which are very needed in order to implement the research project that we already mentioned. Practically it represents the documentary phase of the research project. In the same time, the most important models designed by the authors mentioned before, the models that best represent the dimensions of the Corporate Social Responsibility concept, will be analyzed, presenting the pros and cons for each of the models.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, stakeholders, shareholders, definition, dimensions

JEL Classification: M14

1. Introduction

Lately, we hear more and more about Earth's limited natural and non-renewable resources, about pollution limiting life on earth and about global warming. In this context, awareness of the need for accountability actions towards society and the environment has increased significantly. More so, the companies' need of being responsible was felt both by themselves and by the decision makers, so the company began imposing restrictions on the irrational behaviour of companies.

A strategic approach to corporate social responsibility is considered to be of increasing importance for the competitiveness of enterprises. This can be beneficial for managing the risk of the business, saving the production costs, having capital access, establishing relations with customers, human resources management and innovation capacity.

Since CSR requires commitment to internal and external directly involved actors, this enables companies to anticipate and take advantage of social expectations and changing operational conditions. This can lead to the creation of new markets and conditions for growth.

The concept of shopping centre attractiveness - literature review

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ABSTRACT The concept of shopping centres is quite new for the Romanian market (as this kind of activity started to develop intensively only after the year of 2000), so that many details related to mall strategies are yet to be revealed. How are the shopping centres attracting their customers? And how does one shopping mall get to attract more customers than the other which can be similar to it in terms of catchment area and tenant mix? What could be the main strong points for an attractive shopping centre over a less attractive shopping centre? Nowadays retail sector represented by shopping centres has reached a highly important relevance for our day-to-day existence. This study aims to illustrate the concept of shopping centres attractiveness, and the factors that might affect this parameter. Whether customers are preponderant hedonists or utilitarians is also a question to which shopping centre managers need to know the right answer. It is a fact that customers can get multiple benefits from using shopping centres as their source for shopping, but sometimes it could get confusing due to all the existing alternatives. In the present paper are to be found different researcher’s perspectives on attractiveness concept, as this study is a pure theoretical approach, even though most likely it is going to be followed, in the near future, by an applied market research.

Keywords: shopping centre, shopping centre attractiveness, hedonic vs. utilitarian customers

JEL Classification: M30, M31

1. Introduction – brief facts and figures for the Romanian shopping centre retail sector

Romanian retail sector has known a wide expansion in the last years, even though nowadays the development rate has been reduced significantly.

As stated also by Rajagopal (2009:100) „narrowing of shopping streets and the rise of shopping malls have been major trends in retailing in emerging markets”, and the Romanian market comes to confirm this principle.

At this moment the rhythm of development for new projects is quite tempered or even lowered, but still there are undergoing several projects that are to be delivered into the market in the near future. As a retail status, at this moment we have in Romania around 2,3 million sq. m commercial area out of which almost 30% of it is located in only in Bucharest - to be more exactly 20 out of the 60 shopping centres projects are located in the capital of the country (Jones Lang LaSalle cited in Pele, 2013).

According to CBRE România (cited in Cunceva, 2013) the city with the highest comercial agglomeration rate per capita is Suceava 1,118 sq. m/1,000 inhabitants – it is 9 times bigger than the national average (which is around 127 sq. m/1,000 inhabitants).

An empirical investigation regarding the relationship between demographics and travel preferences

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ABSTRACT The purpose of this paper is to investigate the relationship between several demographic characteristic of domestic travelers, on one hand, and, respectively, some important dimensions of their travel preferences, on the other hand. After analyzing data from an online questionnaire based study conducted among a sample of 346 young Romanian Facebook users (between 19 and 35 years old), the results showed that, from a hospitality industry practical point of view, it can be stated that as people grow older and gain a higher income level they prefer longer tourism trip/staying durations, smaller travelling groups, higher accommodation comfort levels, and, respectively, a more complete accommodation board system. Moreover, men prefer slightly higher accommodation comfort levels than women. Also, larger travelling groups are more frequently preferred by persons with a lower education level, while smaller travelling groups are more frequently preferred by those with a higher education level. Last, but not least, transportation by car or plane is more preferred by older and higher income travelers, while transportation by plane is more preferred by more educated travelers. Due to the fact that the matching consumers’ needs and desires is essential in marketing any company involved in the hospitality industry, and that in order to attract new customers and retain existing ones tourism services and packages must be offered in different configurations so that to satisfy each market segment’s needs and desires, the findings of this paper can be very useful and relevant from a practical perspective.

Keywords: tourism; travel preferences; demographics; consumer behavior

JEL Classification: M31, L83

1. Introduction

Demographics changes significantly influence consumer behavior, demographics being objectively and easily measurable characteristics of a population such as: age, gender, income, education, family structure and others alike (Hsu and Powers, 2002). On the other hand, the investigation of consumer behavior in the travel and tourism sector is particularly difficult due to the high level of variability of tourism services, of consumption periods (ranging from a few minutes to several days and nights), as well as of consumer wants and needs which are dependent on factors such as situation, circumstance, expenditure and others (Williams, 2002).

During the last decades, understanding the nature of travel plans and choices have been the subject of considerable attention from consumer behavior and tourism marketing researchers, one of the reasons of such research interest being the fact that such studies can provide tourism marketers relevant profiles of customer segments based on demographics, trip

An overview of the consumer value literature – perceived value, desired value

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ABSTRACT The main idea of the present article is to shed light on the concept of *value* and its importance stated in the literature. The consumer perceived value construct is a very important component in the consumer value literature and it has been identified as one of the most important measures for gaining a competitive edge, being perceived as the basis for all marketing activities. The research methodology resumes to observing, summarizing, comparing and highlighting the most relevant information on consumer' perceived value available in the studied literature. The present article sustains the idea that consumer's perceived value can be associated with customer satisfaction, which leads to customer loyalty and retention, positive word-of-mouth, stronger competitive position, and higher market share. Regarding the methodology used in the development of the study, I appealed to the documentary research by consulting different speciality articles, in order to find out relevant aspects for the analyzed issues. The informational basis of the paper resides in the results of different findings captured both from online and phisic sources, articles published both in Romanian and foreign literature. The article is conceptual and suggests a new theoretical frame of reference describing value. Based on the literature, findings indicate different opinions regarding the circumstances within consumers perceive value or even think about it. Definitions given by the authors differ throughout the concepts analyzed : utility, benefits, quality and satisfaction; fact that rises difficulty in comparing their opinions. The authors could not find a common path over the components of perceived value and, of course, over a consistent and clear definition of it.

Keywords: customer' perceived value, desired value, value in use, customer satisfaction

JEL Classification: M31

1. Introduction

The concept of "value" is a key-element in marketing. Marketing managers are encouraged to adopt strategies related to the value expected by the consumer, to promote and enhance the long-term success (Gale, 1994; Hamel and Prahalad, 1994; Woodruff, 1997; Flint *et al.*, 2002). The literature contains a large variety of models to conceptualize the customer value (Graf and Maas, 2008), which is considered to be the key outcome in the general model of consumption experiences (Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994; Holbrook, 1986); also, perceived value of the consumer has been argued to be the most important indicator of repurchase Intentions (Parasuraman and Grewal, 2000), being said that with the recognition of the importance of consumer perceived value comes the recognition that retailers must deliver the value which will increase the shopping intention of consumers by creating and delivering good shopping experiences.

Customer satisfaction in the operator's market of the Israeli Hi-Tech industry

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ABSTRACT The main objective of this study is to present how customer satisfaction is perceived in the operators oriented companies comparing to other markets in the Israeli hi-tech industry. The literature review was conducted to find out the relationship between customer satisfaction on quality of service and loyalty. The literature confirms that relationship. A mixed method research has been established by using qualitative and quantitative research concept. The qualitative research included a sample of eighteen interviewees. A semi-structured interview was used where the interviewee had a great deal of freedom in how to reply. There were three markets under study: a) R&D Centers, b) Communication Operators and c) Military Organizations. The quantitative research was conducted over a sample of 100 companies from the above mentioned markets where a survey was introduced and filled-in. The results of the research demonstrate that customer satisfaction is an important factor in the Israeli high-tech industry. Additionally, it was found that the relation between customer satisfaction and loyalty was positive in the discussed markets. This study suggests creating a business management model, which can help each of the discussed markets - especially in the communication operators market, how to increase customer satisfaction and get more involved with future bids and business opportunities.

Keywords: customer satisfaction, total quality management, customer loyalty, customer characteristics.

JEL Classification: M21, O47

1. Introduction

1.1. Gap in Knowledge

Although the literary resources indicate that there is a significant correlation between customer satisfaction, quality of service and customer loyalty, this correlation was not investigated enough in the Israeli hi-tech industry.

There are several researches who pointed out that customer satisfaction influence customer's loyalty. A direct affect was identified by (Yi, 1990; Szymanski and Henard, 2001; Spiteri and Dion, 2004; Woo and Ennew, 2004; Russelennett *et al.*, 2007), and indirect affect was recognized by (Wetzels *et al.*, 1998; Abdul-Muhmin, 2002, 2005; Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2002; Caceres and Paparoidamis, 2007).

The research explores several market types including: the military oriented organizations, service providers and cellular operators and R&D companies, which behave differently in the Israeli market. The research may eventually help other companies around the world.

Timing in a web based survey: an influential factor of the response rate

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ABSTRACT The sample response rate is one of the most important indicators in marketing research. The panelists are receiving an increasing number of email invitations in order to participate at different on line surveys and this cause sample response rate to have a downward trend. The existing literature has highlighted a wide variety of factors that are influencing the response rate in a web based survey; however few of those are approaching the timing of the invitation letter. The purpose of this paper is to determine which moment of the day will generate a higher response rate and also which day of the week will be more productive for getting more hits of the invitation letter for participating at a web based survey.

Keywords: online marketing research, web based survey, response rate, timing

JEL Classification: M31, M11

1. Introduction

One of the most commonly used research tools in marketing research is the web based survey. The panelists are flood with invitation letters for participating at various surveys. For their participation, they are usually rewarded with different incentives such as accumulation points which later can be transformed in cash, gift vouchers, different prizes and even instant awards. These benefits for survey completion differ and are depending on the complexity of the survey and the questionnaire length.

The response rate is generally defined as the number of completed units divided by the number of eligible units in the sample, according to American Association for Public Opinion Research (Fan and Yan, 2010:132). In this paper, the response rate was calculated as the number of panelists that accessed the survey link divided by the number of invitations sent.

The response rate is one of the indicators which are defining the success rate of the survey as well as the representativeness of the sample. What can a marketer do in order to be able to obtain the amount of responses so that he will be able to have a valid database for his research? One option is to increase the number of invitations that he will be sending to the panelists and invite more potential respondents but this will lead to an increase of incentives and the costs, an overload of the sample database utilization and a waste of panel. Another option is to recruit more panelists for the potential web based survey but this also will cause an increase of costs. Unlike the traditional mail, an advantage of an electronic invitation letter for participating at a survey sent to a potentially respondent is that can be easily deleted or it can remain in the inbox for an undetermined period of time (Cook *et al.*, 2000:823).

Other tool for maximizing the productivity of the sample is choosing the right moment for sending the invitation letter for participating at the survey. For launching a web based survey, the marketing researcher can use a special tool that simulates the invitation letter that he will

Promotion of Romania's image and identity: traditional and modern promotion techniques and methods

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ABSTRACT The purpose of the present paper is to provide an overview of the challenges posed by the multiple possibilities of promoting Romania's image and identity, both internally and externally; at the same time, the present paper answers some questions about building Romania as a brand, revealing to readers various factors that influence the way in which the country's image and identity are perceived. Also, this article provides information regarding the factors that have negatively influenced the process of nation branding until now, and about the opportunities that Romania could exploit in order to build a strong, unique and attractive nation brand. This topic was chosen because, in the present context, the country suffers from an image deficit and the current process of nation branding -particularly the way in which is communicated within- requires a real incentive in order to achieve its objectives. In order to write this paper, the authors reviewed the literature in the field, their contributions consisting in identifying and exposing the importance of combined usage of methods and influence techniques utilized for promoting the country's image and identity in a world of diversity, considering the imperative of promoting Romania as a particular, unique and different brand that promises and generates loyalty.

Keywords: promotion, nation branding, image and identity, Romania

JEL Classification: M31, M37

1. Introduction

It is widely accepted that the way a country is perceived may constitute the critical difference between failure and success in the business environment, with big influence on trade and tourism, on diplomatic and external cultural relations of the country etc. Given that the attitude toward a brand -seen as a place, a destination, a country or a nation- is given by the differences existent between brand image and brand identity, the necessity for an accurate communication regarding the identity and image of a nation arises - so that the nation to be perceived and regarded through the light of its true values, traditions, customs and culture.

Considering the fact that the globalization tends to erode both the general inter-ethnic climate and the national identity through the intense "regionalization and ethnicization processes of social problems" (Ciobanu-Băcanu, 2010) is understandable that this process is one that negatively affects the efforts made in order to preserve the national identity, value and status.

Tourist satisfaction in rural areas- a comparative study on rural areas from Romania and Hungary

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ABSTRACT When it comes to tourists and their satisfaction, tourism researchers agreed upon the idea that a satisfied tourist may repeat his visit and recommend it to others, rather than a dissatisfied one would. Of course, satisfaction results from a bunch of factors that deal with destination image, perceived value and tourist expectations. This study tries to deal with tourist satisfaction in some rural areas of two countries, Romania and Hungary, as rural tourism is, nowadays, one flourishing sector. This comparative study will reveal satisfaction among tourists emerging from the study of some variables such as: the chosen area, the accommodation unit chosen (with several sub-factors such as parking area, playground, amount of money paid for meals and for accommodation, variety of the menu, auxiliary ways of spending time) and the intention of revisiting the area and recommend it to others. What this research tries to explain is the reason why some tourists are more satisfied than others, why some rural areas chosen for discussion are able to manage to comply with the expectations of tourists and others fail in this mission. Of course, the main characteristics of the areas are important and need special attention because they may influence tourist expectations on one hand and the organization and management of the owners of businesses, on the other hand. Rural tourism is implemented in different ways depending on the landscape, culture and traditions of the locals and also on the economic background of that particular area..

Keywords: consumer of rural tourism, tourist satisfaction, rural area

JEL Classification: M31

1. Introduction

Rural tourism is regarded as “touristic activities that take place in rural areas and include a wide range of accommodation units, events, festivals and other ways of spending time, all taking place in rural environments” (Nistoreanu and Gheres, 2010).

Rural tourism could be defined as a particular form of practice where the culture of the village plays a very important role (The European Marketing and Quality Tourism Comitee, 1995).

Relationship between CSR and traditional and alternative energy consumption in Hungary

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ABSTRACT Our study tries to identify the relationship between the CSR of Hungarian energy companies and the households' energy and alternative energy consumption based on literature review as secondary research and three case studies as primary research. Beside ethics the corporate social responsibility is typically influenced by three main actors: the companies, the governments and the customers. The major actor of CSR is of course the corporate, but the other influential factors also should be taken into account. The government gives the main framework of CSR by the laws and incentives, but the customers' needs determine what kind of CSR can appear. If customers are really responsible, the real CSR can appear, but if customers are self-conscious, only shallow CSR actions will spread. The companies should measure the effects of implementation of their CSR in order to gain consumers loyalty or stronger image. The results show that in the energy sector the real, “deep” CSR could not spread because of the gap between the consumers' positive attitude and their effective or real behaviour. The results also imply that according to CSR pyramid the number of the really responsible energy corporations will be much less, than the number of corporations, which use CSR as communication tool, so the companies do not have to undertake real responsible actions because the implementation of shallow CSR is enough for the consumers. One reason of this is that energy industry is a more monopolistic market and for the consumers not easy to switch between different energy providers mainly because of the necessary infrastructure. But in nowadays more and more consumers switch to the traditional heating forms, e.g. wood. Even so the energy companies do not want to have bad reputation and have started carrying CSR actions for ten years or so.

Keywords: CSR, responsibility, energy sector, renewable energy, consumer behaviour, energy consumption

JEL Classification: M30

This research was realized in the frames of SROP-4.2.2.A-11/1/KONV-2012-0058, Modeling the effects of the energy- production, utilization and waste management technologies to the competitiveness of the cities and regions

An application of technology acceptance model to Internet Banking services

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ABSTRACT This paper presents an extended technology acceptance model developed with the purpose to investigate the factors which influence the decision to continue to use a self-service banking technology. The study was conducted among Romanian Internet Banking users studying either for a Bachelor or Master degree. The hypothesized relationships between the variables in the proposed model are tested through structural equation modelling. Results of the data analysis reveal that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, along with perceived security/privacy and image, successfully influence Internet Banking users' intention to continue to use this service for their banking transactions. Perceived benefit, on the other hand, was found to have a significant effect only on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. The findings reported in this study are useful both from a theoretical and from a managerial perspective.

Keywords: banking services, image, Internet Banking, perceived security/privacy, technology acceptance model (TAM)

JEL Classification: M31; G20; L84; L86

1. Literature Review

Despite the obvious efforts that banks make in order to “move” their clients from face-to-face contact to a remote one, the success of bank self-services technologies also depends on the individuals' acceptance to interact with a machine instead of a human being.

Over past decades, several information technology acceptance models have been proposed with the purpose to understand the factors which determine consumers to embrace the technology made available by companies for their customers. Among these models, Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) introduced by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) proposed by Ajzen (1985) and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) introduced by Davis (1989) for job contexts are considered to be “the most well-known theoretical models” (Martins, Oliveira and Popovič, 2013: 2) which grasp the relationship between customers' beliefs and their actual behaviour.

In order to meet the purpose of our study we applied the TAM for at least five reasons. First, TAM is appreciated to be generalizable to all information technologies (Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw, 1989; Pikkariainen *et al.*, 2004; Yousafzai, Foxall, and Pallister, 2010) unlike other theories which are context specific. Second, it has been proved that TAM consistently

Conceptualizing Emotional Value

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ABSTRACT Creating and delivering value to consumers has become a strategic imperative of organizations in order to build and maintain a competitive advantage over its competitors. An overview of the literature in the field of consumer value suggests the fact there are a number of current research streams regarding this concept. Although there are attempts to conceptualize also the emotional dimension of consumer value the discussion in this regard is still open. At the current time there is no consensus among researchers regarding the best way of dealing with this side of the concept of value and therefore the possibility for further research in this direction both theoretically and operationally is still present.

Keywords: emotional value, hedonic value, altruistic value, value typology

JEL Classification: M30, M31, M39

1. Introduction

The concept of perceived value has become, since the last decade of the previous century, a key element in defining how business is to be done in the majority of developed economies in the world. This concept continues to be relevant today, the term value being included in the definition of marketing proposed by the American Marketing Association.

In addition, the Marketing Science Institute included on the list of priorities for future research, the definition of perceived value. Thus, all these elements reflect the growing interest among both researchers and practitioners in studying the phenomenon of perceived value.

In line with the ideas presented above, more and more companies recognize the role value plays as a key element in strategic management (Spiteri and Dion, 2004). Slater (1997:166) states that the reason why a firm is successful is determined by its ability to create and deliver value to consumers.

Thus creating and delivering value to consumers has become a strategic imperative of organizations in order to build and maintain a competitive advantage over its competitors. It has also been established that consumer loyalty and profitability for a firm are strongly related to the value created and supplied to its customers, and the concept of value to consumers has become the focus needed to be addressed in the context of each marketing activity (Sanchez-Fernandez and Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007).

Over time, a number of definitions for the concept of value have been proposed by several authors, including Holbrook (1994, 1999), Woodruff (1997) and, in particular, the one proposed by Zeithaml (1988).