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This Issue

By understanding effective sales management from the perspective of sales people, this study adds a new dimension to our view of sales managers. Drawing from the sales literature, this research tests relationships between key variables identified as contributing to sales manager effectiveness from previous sales research. Listening skills, open communication, and effective feedback are positioned as antecedents to self-efficacy while customer relationship development, representative job performance, and satisfaction with one's sales manager represent the outcome variables. Results support the importance of listening skills and assert that self-efficacy plays a key role in each of the outcome variables.

The paper empirically examines the influence of brand names (foreign versus national) on consumer perception. The paper also investigates how product ratings affect the relationship between brand names and consumer perception which is measured by brand attitude, purchase intention, advertisement feeling, and advertisement attitude. The results show that the national brand elicits more positive consumer perception than the foreign brand. The findings suggest that product attribute information moderates the relationship between brand names and consumer perception. The results are important and relevant to branding strategies marketers use to counteract competitive brands.

This study aimed at assessing the marketing strategies for Promoting Ecotourism in Rwanda. The study involved desk and field research and convenience sampling was also used for tourists, while simple random sampling was used for the local people and RDB/T&C staff. We used SPSS for analysis of data and hypotheses were tested using Kolmogorov-Smirnov to investigate differences in the level of tourists' satisfaction, level of importance, degree of agreement/disagreement on tourism product, price, promotion, place, people, process and physical evidence. Tourists were generally satisfied with tourism offering and lack of infrastructure is still a challenge of ecotourism in Rwanda.

This research examines the effect of lesbians' in-group/out-group considerations of gay males on their responses to both gendered and non-gendered gay-oriented imagery. The findings indicate that lesbians' consideration of the extent to which they feel they share group membership with gay males plays a vital role in determining their attitudes towards advertisements that depict lesbian, gay male, or non-gendered ad content. These findings suggest that advertisers' current practice of predominantly using advertisements with gay male imagery is unnecessarily disenfranchising lesbians who do not consider themselves as sharing an in-group with gay males.

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Effective Sales Management: What Do Sales People Think?

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By understanding effective sales management from the perspective of sales people, this study adds a new dimension to our view of sales managers. Drawing from the sales literature, this research tests relationships between key variables identified as contributing to sales manager effectiveness from previous sales research. Listening skills, open communication, and effective feedback are positioned as antecedents to self-efficacy while customer relationship development, representative job performance, and satisfaction with one's sales manager represent the outcome variables. Results support the importance of listening skills and assert that self-efficacy plays a key role in each of the outcome variables.

INTRODUCTION

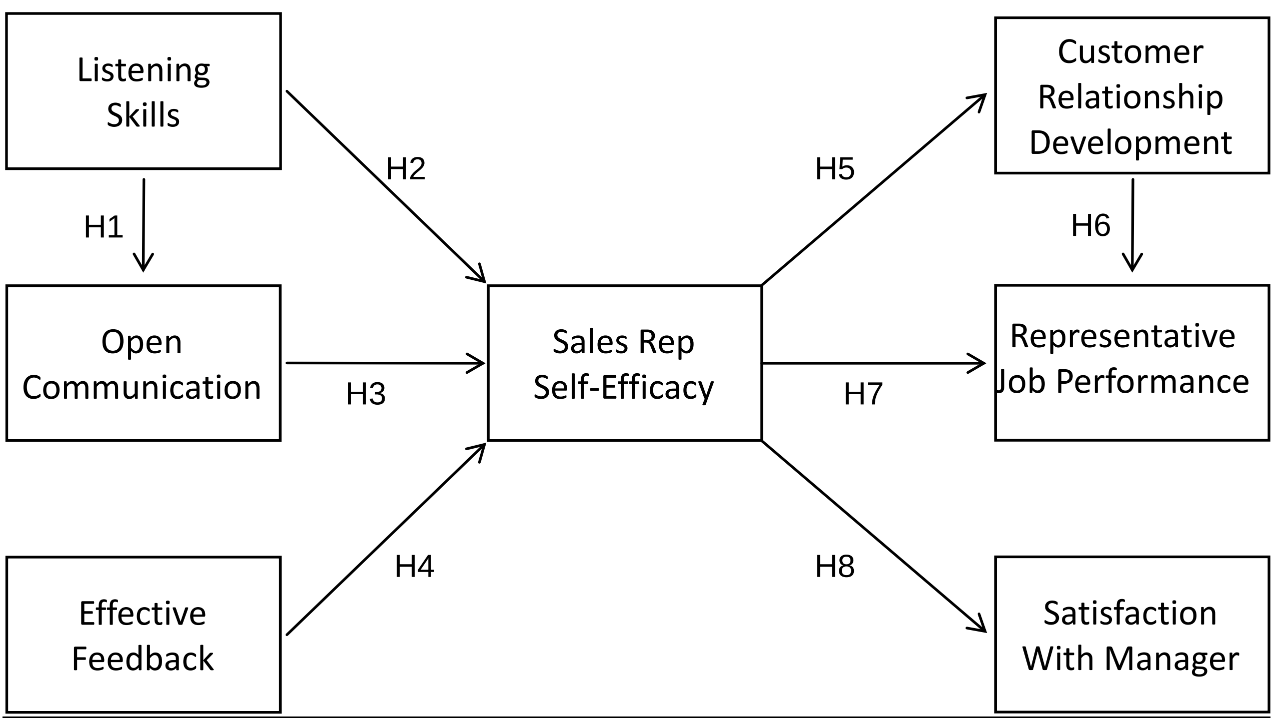
Recent research in the sales literature has begun to investigate the traits and performance characteristics of effective sales managers (i.e., Deeter-Schmelz, Goebel and Kennedy, 2008; Deeter-Schmelz, Kennedy, and Goebel, 2002). Those efforts have attempted to fill a gap in the sales literature related to sales manager effectiveness that is not fully explored by previous research on sales manager job satisfaction (e.g., Kantak, Futrell, and Sager, 1992) and the sales manager/salesperson relationship (e.g., Brashear et al., 2003; Castleberry and Tanner, 1986; Dubinsky, 1999; Martin and Bush, 2006). Efforts undertaken to research sales manager effectiveness by Deeter-Schmelz et al., (2002, 2008) have utilized a research methodology, value-laddering, that can be described as more qualitative in nature and not appropriate for making statistical inferences. The results of those studies were expressed in the development of hierarchical value maps. Such maps were developed from in-depth interviews conducted with "sales professionals" (Deeter-Schmelz, Goebel, and Kennedy, 2002) or sales managers and sales people separately (Deeter-Schmelz, Kennedy, and Goebel, 2008) and they provide a foundation for model development to continue exploring relationships among the behaviors and characteristics leading to sales manager effectiveness. Importantly, understanding the salient factors leading to sales manager effectiveness is important because of the vast influence sales managers have on virtually all aspects of the salesperson's job responsibilities and her/his job outcomes (cf. Brashear et al., 2003; Castleberry and Tanner, 1986; Dubinsky, 1999; Evans et al., 2002; Guest and Meric, 1989; Sager, Yi, and Futrell, 1998).

The purpose of the current study is to expand this nascent research base by investigating a key set of constructs and relationships that have been linked to sales manager effectiveness. Specifically, drawing from the hierarchical value map derived from salesperson responses in Deeter-Schmelz, Kennedy, and Goebel (2008) this study tests the relationships between salesperson – sales manager communication and important salesperson outcomes. This paper proceeds as follows. First, a preliminary model containing the communication variables and relationships identified by sales people as important to sales manager effectiveness is presented; hypotheses for the relationships are also provided. Second, the methodology for testing the model and hypotheses is explained and results are given. Finally, study implications are explored along with limitations and opportunities for future research.

MODEL AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

A preliminary model of sales manager effectiveness limited to the communication variables expressed in Deeter-Schmelz, Kennedy, and Goebel (2008) is provided in Figure 1. Salespeople identified three primary communication elements that constitute sales manager effectiveness; those being communication and listening skills, open communication, and effective feedback. Consequently, those three variables comprise the antecedents of the model. Important resultant outcomes of these communication skills include representative job performance, customer relationship development, and satisfaction with the sales manager. In addition, self-efficacy is included in the model as an outcome of a sales manager being an effective listener, communicating openly, and providing effective feedback. Self-efficacy has been shown to positively influence salesperson performance in a number of different studies (cf. Brown, Cron, and Slocum, 1998; Krishnan, Netemeyer, and Boles, 2002; Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998). Specific hypotheses shown in the model are developed next.

FIGURE 1
A PRELIMINARY MODEL OF SALES MANAGER EFFECTIVENESS



Antecedent Hypotheses

Listening is a multi-dimensional construct consisting of three distinct components sensing, evaluating, and responding (Steil, Barker, and Watson, 1983). The sensing component of listening is defined as receiving stimuli from multiple sources, verbal or nonverbal, and attending to a particular message while evaluating involves the implementation of cognitive processes allowing a sales manager to assign meaning to a message and determine its importance (Ramsey and Sohi, 1997). Finally, per Ramsey and Sohi (1997) responding is the behavioral component of listening that is necessary for additional communication to take place.

Clearly, listening is a key component to effective communications. One cannot have a meaningful conversation, or relationship for that matter, without actively listening to what the other party to the conversation is actually saying in words, body language, tone of voice, gestures, etc. Sales managers cannot effectively lead their representatives without having the ability to sense the message received from them, to evaluate that message in the proper context, and to then respond in an appropriate manner. With open communication being defined as the extent to which representatives can communicate openly with the sales manager and find her/him supportive (Deeter-Schmelz, Goebel, and Kennedy, 2008), it is evident that a sales manager's listening skills will lead to enhanced open communications with sales representatives.

As an important construct in professional selling, sales representative self-efficacy is defined as one's confidence in her/his ability to perform well in a specific task domain (Bandura, 1997). Extant research has investigated very few antecedents to salesperson self-efficacy (Krishnan, Netemeyer, and Boles, 2002). However, one study conducted by Jaramillo and Mulki (2008) found that supportive leadership, defined as behaviors directed toward the satisfaction of subordinates' needs and preferences such that concern is displayed for subordinates' welfare while a friendly and psychologically-supportive work environment is created, positively influenced a salesperson's self-efficacy. When sales managers listen to their sales representatives and engage in open communications with them the managers are encouraging the development of a friendly and psychologically-supportive work environment. Enhanced communications and listening from a manager allows employees to feel more comfortable in their work roles and to be more productive overall (Deeter-Schmelz, Goebel, and Kennedy, 2008; Jaramillo and Mulki, 2008). In addition, social cognitive theory suggests that self-efficacy is a personal trait that can be altered through persuasive suggestion (Gist and Mitchell, 1992). Consequently, when a salesperson receives effective feedback, which is the extent to which an employee receives information about how well he/she is performing from a manager (Sims, Szilagyi, and Keller, 1976), feelings of competence and confidence in one's ability to perform job responsibilities will increase.

Stated more formally, the antecedent hypotheses are as follows:

H1: Sales manager listening skills are positively associated with open communication.
H2: Sales manager listening skills are positively associated with sales representative self-efficacy.
H3: Sales manager open communication is positively associated with sales representative self-efficacy.
H4: Effective feedback from the sales manager is positively associated with sales representative self-efficacy.

Outcome Hypotheses

Research consistently has demonstrated a relationship between self-efficacy and various aspects of performance. Barling and Beatlie (1983), for example, discovered a link between self-efficacy and insurance sales performance. Wood, Bandura and Bailey (1990) uncovered a similar relationship with managerial performance. In a meta-analysis of 114 studies, Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) found a strong correlation between self-efficacy and work-related performance.

Previous research has identified two outcome variables associated with sales manager effectiveness: customer relationship development and sales representative job performance (Deeter-Schmelz, Goebel and Kennedy, 2008; Deeter-Schmelz, Kennedy and Goebel, 2002). Customer relationship development refers to the ability of the representative to develop and maintain relationships with clients, whereas sales representative job performance reflects the ability of the representative to be productive and contribute to firm success (Deeter-Schmelz, Goebel and Kennedy, 2008). Each of these elements could be considered a component of work-related performance; thus, we would expect a salesperson's feelings of competence and confidence in his or her ability to perform to be associated positively with customer relationship development and salesperson job performance. Moreover, given that the ability to develop and maintain customer relationships should result in greater sales productivity, we would expect a positive relationship between customer relationship development and sales representative job performance. Indeed, this assertion has been supported in earlier research (Deeter-Schmelz, Goebel and Kennedy, 2008).

Few studies have examined the construct satisfaction with sales manager, and no study has explored a relationship between this variable and self-efficacy. Several studies have, however, found a link between self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Using a career decision theory perspective, Perdue, Reardon and Peterson (2007) identified a positive relationship between self-efficacy and work task satisfaction. Liu, Song and Want (2011) found that self-efficacy served to moderate the relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction. In a study of remote workers in virtual organizations, Staples, Hulland and Higgens (1999) argued that self-efficacy is critical to improving both work effectiveness and job satisfaction. Given that one's manager is a critical component of a salesperson's job satisfaction (Futrell, 1979; Lagace, Goolsby and Gassenheimer, 1993), it seems that self-efficacy would influence satisfaction with sales manager positively.

Based on the previous discussion, the outcome hypotheses are as follows:

H5: Sales representative self-efficacy is positively associated with customer relationship development.

H6: Customer relationship development is positively associated with representative job performance.

H7: Sales representative self-efficacy is positively associated with sales representative job performance.

H8: Sales representative self-efficacy is positively associated with satisfaction with manager.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

Sales people attending sales training programs offered throughout the United States by a national consulting firm are the source of the data for this study. As part of participating in the training program, sales people were offered the opportunity to complete the questionnaire that included items related to sales manager effectiveness. The questionnaires were administered by the program instructor and forwarded to a member of the author team for inclusion in the data set. As an incentive for completing the questionnaire, respondents were given the opportunity to receive a copy of the study's results. In total, 99 questionnaires were returned by the training program instructor. However, three surveys contained incomplete data and were eliminated from the analysis leaving a final data set containing 96 observations. With 100 percent participation by sales people attending the training programs, there are no nonrespondents.

Respondents to the questionnaire were predominantly male (67%), held a four-year degree or above (72%), and possessed a mean of fourteen years of sales experience. Study participants reported working a mean of 49 hours per week and that the mean percentage of their salary paid to them as a base salary was 47% versus 53% paid as a bonus or commission. Finally, respondents reported the organization for which they worked as having sales of $25 million or less (48.2%), between $26 million and $100 million (42.4%), and over $100 million (9.4%).

Measures

The scales utilized for this study were taken from extant literature with minor modifications to fit the current study's context or were developed specifically for this study. Items for all scales were measured on one to seven Likert-type scales and all but two of the scales used anchors of *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*. Those measures taken from extant literature include the listening scale, which is a 13-item scale measuring the sensing, evaluating, and responding dimensions of listening as developed by Ramsey and Sohi (1997). Effective feedback also was developed previously (Sims, Szilagyi, and Keller, 1976). This is a three-item scale that uses anchors of *A Minimum Amount* to *A Maximum Amount*. Salesperson self-efficacy was developed originally by Chowdhury (1993). However, we use a six-item version of the scale as adapted by Sujan, Weitz, and Kumar (1994). Representative job performance is a 5-item scale with anchors of *Below My Peers* and *Above My Peers*. This scale was developed by Behrman and Perrault (1982) with additional items added by Sujan, Weitz, and Kumar (1994).

Scales used to measure the constructs of open communication and customer relationship development originate with this study. These scales were developed using the procedure outlined by Churchill (1979) and resulted in a five-item scale for open communication and a two-item scale for customer relationship development. Finally, the scale measuring satisfaction with the manger is a seven-item, blended scale with three items borrowed from Hackman and Oldham (1974, 1975) and the other four items being developed specifically for this study. Table 1 presents each scale's descriptive statistics and the correlation matrix. Please see the appendix for a listing of all measures.

TABLE 1
CORRELATION MATRIX

Variable	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Listening Skills	57.74	12.29	.94						
2. Open Communication	27.06	8.26	.81[a]	.97					
3. Effective Feedback	16.08	3.98	.71[a]	.58[a]	.94				
4. Sales Rep. Self-Efficacy	22.16	3.45	.48[a]	.40[a]	.36[a]	.83			
5. Customer Rel. Development	12.74	1.50	.33[b]	.28[b]	.27[b]	.43[a]	.83		
6. Rep. Job Performance	23.55	6.25	.29[b]	.39[a]	.42[a]	.56[a]	.16	.92	
7. Satisfaction with Manager	36.40	11.03	.87[a]	.89[a]	.63[a]	.37[a]	.25[b]	.31[b]	.98

[a] Significant at $p < .001$
[b] Significant at $p < .05$
Note: Numbers on the diagonal are reliabilities. Off-diagonal elements are Pearson correlation coefficients and S.D. refers to the measure's standard deviation.

Measure Reliability and Validity

All measures were subjected to principal components exploratory factor analysis using an oblique rotation, and then to confirmatory factor analysis. Following the recommended approach that scales be assessed using smaller confirmatory factor models (Bentler and Chou, 1987; Menon et al., 1999), measure analyses were based on groups of related constructs with model antecedents (open communication, listening, and effective feedback) being assessed separately from model outcomes (self-efficacy, representative job performance, customer relationship development, and satisfaction with manger). Of the forty-one items comprising the seven constructs, four were deemed problematic after the exploratory factor analysis because they either did not load on their *a priori* factor, exhibited a low factor loading (< .50), or had a high cross-loading (> .30) on a different factor. The four problematic items were confirmed when we tested the measurement models with confirmatory factor analysis. After removal of these items the confirmatory factor analyses for the antecedent measurement model was deemed adequate based on fit statistics of χ^2 = 281.45 with 146 degrees of freedom ($p < .01$), goodness of fit index (GFI) = .77, nonnormed fit index (NNFI) and comparative fit index (CFI) of .97 and .98 respectively, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .092. For the outcomes measurement model, the fit statistics are χ^2 = 263.84 with 126 degrees of freedom (p < .01), GFI = .77, NNFI = .94, CFI of .95, and RMSEA = .010. Additionally, all item loadings on their respective constructs were statistically significant.

Subsequent to purifying the scales and testing the measurement model for adequate fit, reliability estimates were calculated using Cronbach's alpha. As presented in the diagonal elements of Table 1, each of the reliability estimates is greater than .70. To assess discriminant validity of the measures, we adopted the procedure recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). This test involves conducting two-factor confirmatory factor analyses of pairs of constructs twice: once with the correlation between the two constructs constrained to unity and once with the parameter freely estimated. Chi-square difference tests are then conducted to determine if the unconstrained model has a significantly lower chi-square value than the constrained model. In cases where the unconstrained model has a significantly lower chi-square value, discriminant validity is upheld. In total, twenty-one pairwise tests were conducted and the chi-square differences were all significant, thus confirming discriminant validity.

Finally, the data were tested for common method bias using the procedure followed by Griffith and Lusch (2007). First, this procedure uses CFA to determine if a single method factor provides an alternative explanation of the analysis (Podsakoff *et al*. 2003). For this data, the fit of the one-factor model for antecedents was significantly worse than the antecedent measurement model (measurement model χ^2 = 262.17, d.f. = 146 while the one factor model had χ^2 = 857.74, d.f. = 152). The same also is true for the outcome constructs with the measurement model χ^2 = 249.92, d.f. = 126 and the one factor model χ^2 = 1215.59, d.f. = 135. The second step in the procedure is to employ the use of a marker variable, which is a variable not theoretically related to other variables in the study, to determine if that variable is in fact significantly related to other variables (Lindell and Whitney, 2001). Following these recommendations, we used the number of hours worked per week by the respondents as the marker variable and found that none of the model constructs were significantly related to that variable. Based on the results of these two tests, we conclude that common method bias is not a serious problem.

Results

Given the exploratory nature of this research, the model depicted in Figure 1 and the related hypotheses were tested with seemingly unrelated regression (SUR). SUR is an appropriate methodology when the proposed model has multiple outcomes that are directionally (either positively or negatively) but not causally related. This approach to model testing is similar to that followed by Menon et al. (1999) and Fu, Richards, and Jones (2009). In addition, when estimating sets of equations that are theoretically related, SUR provides the best linear unbiased estimates of the coefficients (Johnston, 1984; Zellner, 1962).

As with Menon et al. (1999), a canonical correlation analysis was conducted as an omnibus test to control for the potential that a Type I error may occur because of running five separate regression analyses (Dillon and Goldstein, 1984). The omnibus canonical correlation was significant (Wilks' lambda = .20, F = 19.32, p < .0001). Therefore, we concluded that it was appropriate to proceed with individual multiple regression analyses for each dependent variable. The standardized results of the SUR procedure testing the proposed model are shown in Table 2.

All individual regression analyses are highly significant and explain a relatively large portion of the variance (Table 1). In addition, the system-weighted R^2 of .45 is high and comparable in size to that found in other research using this procedure (Menon et al., 1999).

As seen in the table, listening is significantly and positively related to open communication, thus confirming H1. In addition, the listening construct explains a relatively high level of the variance in open communication (adjusted R^2 = .64), which indicates that for sales people to have open communications with their sales manager, listening is a key component. Listening also is a significant predictor of the sales representative's self-efficacy, which confirms H2 and the importance that sales representatives' place on their sales manager's listening skills for confidence in their ability to perform job tasks well. However, contrary to expectations open communication does not significantly influence the salesperson's self-efficacy and neither does effective feedback, thus resulting in H3 and H4 not being supported.

TABLE 2
SUR RESULTS FOR A PRELIMINARY MODEL OF SALES MANAGER EFFECTIVENESS

	Dependent Variables				
Independent Variables	**Open Comm.**	**Self-Efficacy**	**Customer Rlp Devel.**	**Rep Job Perf.**	**Satisfaction With Mgr.**
Listening	.71 (.04)*	.57 (.05)*	nr	nr	nr
Open Communication	nr	.15 (.06)	nr	nr	nr
Effective Feedback	nr	.05 (.1)	nr	nr	nr
Sales Rep. Self-Efficacy	nr	nr	.50 (.04)*	.62 (.18)*	.69 (.25)*
Customer Rlp. Devel.	nr	nr	nr	-.11 (.44)	nr
F value (*p* level)	149.08 (.0001)	10.12 (.0001)	20.24 (.0001)	20.52 (.0001)	20.32 (.0001)
Adjusted R^2	.64	.25	.19	.32	.19
System weighted R^2			.45		

* Standardized betas significant at less than .01.
Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors.
nr – indicates that no relationship was hypothesized for these variables.

Of the relationships hypothesized among the outcome variables, only H6 is not supported; for this group of respondents it seems that developing customer relationships is not seen as a strong contributor to representative job performance. Clearly, a salesperson's perception of her/his ability to sell influences the representative's ability to effectively perform job tasks such as develop customer relationships (H5) and experience enhanced job performance (H7). Finally, sales representative self-efficacy is significantly and positively related to satisfaction with the sales manager, which confirms the notion that a representative's perception of ability to perform job tasks is directly related to satisfaction with the sales manager (H8).

In summary, of the three effective sales management antecedents tested in this study, only listening was found to significantly influence sales representative self-efficacy. On the other hand, self-efficacy influenced positively the three outcome variables of customer relationship development, representative job performance, and satisfaction with the manager.

STUDY IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate a preliminary model of sales manager effectiveness from the perspective of the sales representative. Our findings highlight the role of listening skills in open communication with the sales manager and the salesperson's own self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, in turn, contributed to the sales representatives' job performance, development and maintenance of customer relationships, and satisfaction with his or her sales manager. These findings have important implications for managers and researchers.

The significance of listening skills has been underscored in previous research (e.g., Ramsey and Sohi, 1997). Our results suggest such skills can improve communications with the sales manager as well as the sales representative's confidence in his or her ability to perform well (i.e., self-efficacy). Further, listening skills affected key performance-related outcome variables indirectly. Practitioners seeking to improve the performance of sales representatives and sales managers might therefore take steps to improve the listening skills of these sales professionals. Certainly such skills can be developed through the use of training and role plays.

The importance of self-efficacy should not be overlooked. Our findings reinforce previous research asserting a strong link between self-efficacy and performance variables (Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998). Likewise, self-efficacy was positively linked with satisfaction with manager. Given that satisfaction with manager is a key component of overall job satisfaction (Futrell, 1979), and a potential inverse relationship between job satisfaction and intention to leave (Veloutsou and Panigyrakis, 2004), organizations should seek out methods to improve sales representatives' self-efficacy.

Beyond listening skills, researchers should explore other antecedent variables as a means to provide guidance to sales organizations. We were surprised that our data did not support a relationship between (1) open communication and (2) effective feedback and sales representative self-efficacy. Future research should re-examine these links as a means to support or refute our findings. Other variables, such as coaching skills and interpersonal skills (Deeter-Schmelz, Goebel and Kennedy, 2008), might also be considered. Understanding sales people's perspectives of sales managers is also helpful for an organization in developing more effective sales management. Factors that sales people view as important and relevant to their success need to be explored in more depth. Ultimately, our goal is to provide practitioners and researchers with actionable information that can result in a more effective sales force and improved sales manager effectiveness.

As with all research, we must acknowledge limitations of this study. Our sampling, while national in scope, may be limited by the nature of the firms who have sent their sales people to off-site training. Since these sales professionals were involved in training, they might be more predisposed to the consideration of the variables we investigated in relationship to their job and their manager. Future research might broaden the methodologies used to understand the perspectives of both sales people and sales managers. Indeed, sales manager effectiveness is critical to sales force success. A broad range of methods and perspectives will be key to developing a robust understanding. This research is but one step.

Authors' Note: The authors' names are listed in random order to reflect equal contribution to this research. The authors would like to thank Tom Cooke, *Learning Outsource Group*, for his assistance with this research.

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APPENDIX – ITEMS MEASURED

Listening:

When having conversations with me, my sales manager…
…focuses only on me
…keeps firm eye contact
…uses nonverbal gestures that suggest he or she was listening to me
…seems bored (reverse scored)[1]
…asks for more details
…paraphrases my questions
…doesn't interrupt me
…changes subjects too frequently (reverse scored)[1]
…tries hard to understand what I was saying
…uses full sentences instead of saying yes or no
…offers relevant information to the questions I asked
…shows eagerness in his or her responses
…answers at appropriate times.

Open Communication

I feel comfortable discussing with my sales manager any problems I might be having
I can talk openly and freely with my sales manager
I feel comfortable going to my sales manager for advice
My sales manager encourages open communication with me
I know I can discuss problems with my sales manager and s/he will be supportive

Effective Feedback

Please indicate the extent to which you…
…receive feedback from your sales manager on how well you're doing
…have opportunities to find out how well you are doing on your job
…know whether you are performing your job well or poorly

Self-Efficacy

I am good at selling
I know the right thing to do in selling situations
I find it difficult to convince a customer that has a different viewpoint than mine (reverse scored)[1]
My temperament is not well-suited for selling (reverse scored)[1]
I am good at finding out what customers want
It is easy for me to get customers to see my point of view

Customer Relationship Development

I am willing to spend time with a customer to develop a long-term relationship
I am able to develop strong, lasting relationships with my customers

Representative Job Performance

Compared to other salespeople in your organization/division, your performance on…
…Selling high profit-margin products
…Generating a high level of dollar sales
…Quickly generating sales of new company products
…Exceeding sales targets
…Assisting your sales manager meet his or her goals

Satisfaction with Manager
I am satisfied with the degree of respect and fair treatment I receive from my sales manager
I am satisfied with the amount of support and guidance I receive from my sales manager
I am very satisfied with the overall quality of supervision I receive from my sales manager
I think highly of my sales manager
The members of our sales force respect our sales manager
My sales manager receives the admiration of many people in my company
Our customers respect my sales manager

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[1] Indicates an item that was eliminated during the scale purification process.

The Effect of the Foreign Brand on Consumer Perception

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The paper empirically examines the influence of brand names (foreign versus national) on consumer perception. The paper also investigates how product ratings affect the relationship between brand names and consumer perception which is measured by brand attitude, purchase intention, advertisement feeling, and advertisement attitude. The results show that the national brand elicits more positive consumer perception than the foreign brand. The findings suggest that product attribute information moderates the relationship between brand names and consumer perception. The results are important and relevant to branding strategies marketers use to counteract competitive brands.

Globalization and free trade agreements have drastically increased the variety of options consumers must consider when buying a product. This plethora of options can cause consumers some consternation. Namely, how does one evaluate a product offering? Consumers rely on several strategies to determine their choices: go with the country of origin (COO), go with the brand, or go with the product attribute he or she most prizes in the product.

Information on COO can affect product evaluations and purchase decisions. Consumers are more interested in whether a particular brand is manufactured by foreign-owned or domestically-owned companies (Haubl, 1996; Papadopoulos & Heslop, 1993). An extensive stream of literature has developed over the past few decades not only to address the influence of COO labels on consumer perception, but also to test factors other than the COO information which can potentially affect consumer evaluation (Al-Sulaiti & Baker, 1998; Samiee, 1994). The COO literature has examined a large number of factors in conjunction with the COO information in a number of frameworks. For example, Sharma et al. (1995) develop a model testing antecedents and moderators of consumer ethnocentrism. Whereas researchers have explored the effects of brand names on consumer perceptions, they have yet to investigate whether product attributes such as product ratings may moderate the effect of a brand name on consumer perception.

This study examines how brand names that reflect COO affect consumer evaluation. Secondly this study investigates how brand names that reflect COO interact with product ratings and what influence they might have on consumer attitude toward the brand, purchase intentions, advertisement feeling, and attitude toward the advertisement. The study relies on sport shoes as a focal product. The study is implemented to answer the following research questions:

(1) Do foreign brand names have a different influence on consumer perception than do national brand names?
(2) Does the product attribute information moderate the impact of brand name on consumer perception?

This paper presents a theoretical framework incorporating brand name and product attribute information. First it addresses the extant literature for each concept. Then, it presents the theoretical framework leading to the development of hypotheses. Methodology designed to test the hypotheses is then specified. The paper concludes with discussions, limitations, and suggestions for further research.

The findings of this study will offer managers and academics a better understanding of how consumers are likely to perceive foreign brands in comparison with national brands and how product attributes, as reflected by product ratings, may affect consumers' perceptions and purchasing intentions.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Country of Origin

Consumers generalize their attitudes and perceptions across products and services based on two factors — their impressions of product attributes, for instance, "product quality", "value of money," "technological superiority," "status of esteem," and "credibility of country of origin" of a brand, and their knowledge and familiarity of the country of origin. When consumer's perceptions of the country of origin (COO) are favorable, they will more likely create favorable consumer evaluations of a product based on factors such as brand name rather than relying on their perceptions of product quality (Peterson & Jolibert, 1995). The authors define COO effect as the extent to which the place of manufacture influences consumer's product evaluations. Customers have used COO as the primary cue in evaluating new products while giving minimal consideration to other product related attributes (Maheswaran, 1994). Iyer and Kalita (1997) state that COO, as a primary cue, affects consumers' general attitude toward the quality of products made in a foreign country. Bilkey and Nes (1982) and Johansson and Nebenzahl (1986) demonstrate that when consumers know the COO, this knowledge affects their perceptions of both generic product categories but also of specific brands.

However, when consumers are knowledgeable about the country before evaluating a product, the COO effects are influential (Hong & Wyer, 1989). Baughn and Yaprak (1993) show that when customers evaluate foreign brand names, culturally-specific factors play a role in weighing the COO as an attribute. Papadoupoulos and Heslop (1993) argue that consumers perceive a product's COO based on three dimensions of the standard attitude model (cognitive, affective, and conative). The cognitive dimension refers to knowledge about specific products and brands. The affective dimension represents favorable or unfavorable attitude towards the COO. The conative dimension relates to actual purchase of a foreign brand. The authors suggest that consumers consider the affective component as the predominant component that overshadows the rational, cognitive component when consumers assess a foreign or national brand name.

Ethnocentric motivations also have an effect on evaluations that take COO into account. Bannister and Saunders (1978) and Cattin et al. (1982) suggest that consumers in Western cultures have higher levels of domestic country bias because they exhibit more favorable evaluations of domestic products than foreign products. In the subsequent study of eight product categories, Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2004) found that the degree of ethnocentrism when evaluating domestic versus foreign brands varies depending, to a large extent, on the nature of the product category.

Products sold under foreign brand names are strongly associated with the country-of-origin (COO) of the brand. Firms market these brands either to emphasize the COO to consumers or to downplay the COO. According to Papadoupoulos and Heslop (1993), firms use the positive association between foreign brands and the COO extensively in their marketing strategies, for instance, the supportive associations of Japan with microelectronics, Sweden with cars, and Germany with beer. Nonetheless, if the COO image is unfavorable, marketers experience formidable barriers when they attempt to position their products or services in the market (Johansson, Ronkainen, & Czinkota, 1994). Yet in some cases, global brands develop beyond their country of origin. For example, Mercedes Benz and Toyota have developed beyond their country of origin, so the marketers focus their promotions and marketing campaigns without associating the brand with the country of origin.

In the globalized economy, brand names and country of origin are no longer a single country phenomenon. Multinational firms design a wide variety of products and brands, often relying on multifirm cooperation to do so. Products may be designed in one country, its components manufactured in a second country, be assembled in a third country, and have their brand associated with yet another country. All this makes it difficult for consumers to figure out the specific country with which the product or brand may be associated. As a consequence, the brand name and country-of-origin of the brand (COB) undergo shifts in terms of their definitions and consumer perception.

Brand Equity

Evaluating brand equity has received significant attention in marketing academic and trade literature. Brand equity has been defined as a set of assets such as name awareness, loyal customers, perceived quality, and associations that are " … linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service" (Aaker, 1991). Farquhar (1989) refers to brand equity as the value added to a product by virtue of its name. Brand strength has been used to rank consumer products by Financial World, Brandweek, and Landor Associates (Owen, 1993). Regardless of the definition, consumers create brand equity in their minds. Therefore, to uncover the equity of a brand, a marketer must understand consumer perception. Brand development and management are the main focus of marketing departments that hope to establish a strong position in their respective market and achieving competitive advantage (Keller, 2003). Their ultimate goal is to differentiate their product from others, add value (by increasing awareness levels, positive thoughts, and feelings toward the brand), and create strong customer loyalty (Aaker, 1991).

Brand knowledge has two dimensions: brand awareness and brand image (Keller, 1993). Brand awareness refers to brand recall and brand recognition; brand image is the perception. Brand image can be described as a network of brand associations in consumer memory. Thus, a brand manager can justify a brand name based on two dimensions. First, to what extent does the name support or enhance the strategic positioning of the product? Second, how easily can the consumer encode, retain, and retrieve the name from memory (Park, Jaworski, & Maclnnis, 1986; Robertson, 1989)?

Brand managers may resort to foreign branding—the strategy of spelling or pronouncing a brand name in a foreign language—to influence the brand image in the minds of consumers. Brand names such as Giorgio di St. Angelo and Klarbrunn might sound or appear relatively strange to American consumers. They may also be less memorable and be more difficult to pronounce than English sounding names; however, they create positive associations that influence how consumer perceive and assess the products. For instance, Giorgio di St. Angelo exudes images of high quality Italian fashion, and Klarbrunn has the flavor of the high purity standards that German products.

Literature in psychology suggests that the existence of stereotypes and the influences of foreign brands on the perception and evaluation affect individual behaviors (Eagly, Ashmore, Makhijani, & Longo, 1991; Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992). National and cultural stereotypes are broad judgments and consensually shared beliefs related to a country, its population, and its culture (Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994). It can be said that foreign brands function like other stereotypes in that they should impact the judgment and perception of any object, including consumer products that are associated with a certain country.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Today, consumers have more exposure to a wider array of imported goods because of ongoing trade liberalization, advances in transportation, improved communication technologies, and other catalysts (Craig & Douglas, 1996). This plethora of imported products and brands has changed the marketplace.

Researchers have found that negative stereotypes about some foreign goods and patriotic feelings about domestic goods have caused consumers to be more likely to negatively stereotype some foreign goods and prefer domestically made goods (Han, 1988; Maheswaran, 1994).

Shimp and Sharma (1987) introduced the concept of consumer ethnocentrism— that it is inappropriate to buy foreign products, and that consumers are encouraged to support domestic companies through the purchase of locally made products. Others have explored how consumer ethnocentrism affects the extent to which consumers select domestic goods over foreign alternatives (Han, 1988; Maheswaran, 1994).

Han's (1988) study on televisions and automobiles found that affective dimension of patriotism is a key driver of consumers' choice while the cognitive dimension has a limited role in the consumer's attitude toward products produced in different countries. Consumers' interest in a product is stimulated by the product's country of origin, thus making consumers more motivated to think more extensively about product information and its evaluative implications (Hong and Wyer 1989).

Kaynak and Cavusgil (1983) investigated consumer perception of different classes of products from 25 countries. The study showed that consumers hold positive attitudes towards products manufactured in their own country but that the same time consumers might select foreign products if product quality and price consideration were sufficiently competitive. Particularly, Kaynak and Cavusgil (1983) realized that consumers may swing away from inferior-quality domestic products when superior foreign products are available in the markets. In addition, consumer attitudes toward foreign-made products change remarkably across product classes.

Economic factors are not the only drivers of consumer preference for domestic versus foreign brands. Consumers often favor of domestic brands because the nationality of that brand is the same as their own nationality, a central part of their own identity. Consumers seek to express their identity through consumption, so locally-made products often possess important social and cultural connotations and may be considered as a symbol for national identity (Askegaard & Ger, 1998). Feelings of animosity rooted in political, military, or economic conflict with another country can strengthen a negative attitude toward foreign products from that country (Klein, 2002; Klein, Ettenson, & Morris, 1998).

Verlegh (2007) argues that consumer positive attitude toward domestic products is related to the social and emotional significance that consumers usually associate with their home country. The study suggests that their own group (in-group) obtains a higher positive bias in ratings of the performance and achievements than other groups (out groups). The author attributes this in-group preference to a common need for maintaining a positive evaluation of the self and the social groups one belongs to. Therefore, we suggest the following hypothesis:

> *H1: A national brand is likely to elicit a higher level of (a) attitude toward the brand, (b) purchase intention, (c) advertisement feeling, and (d) attitude toward the advertisement than a foreign brand.*

The impact of a brand name tends to outweigh other information about the product. Thus, we might consider the brand name as a suitable heuristic for purchasing decisions. Some argue that branding itself is more influential than the effect of product qualities and attributes. In addition, some consumer research argues that the brand names are critical factors that affect purchasing decisions as they are perceived as a "high-scope" cue that has different meanings for a wide variety of attributes. As a result, branding can be viewed as a sufficient criterion for consumers' evaluation of a product, even to the point that it helps consumers stay away from other products or brands (Haubl, 1996; Hong & Wyer, 1989; Iyer & Kalita, 1997; Na, Holland, Shackleton, Hwang, & Melewar, 2008).

Consumers use product information to evaluate a product. For a car buyer, Mercedes Benz as a brand name would be a strong evaluative criterion that may impact the decision-making process. Nonetheless, product attributes such as a five-year guarantee from a competing brand would affect the decision-making process. In addition, when consumers evaluate product quality, they obtain attribute information for their decision-making process from various sources including advertising, trial experience, word of mouth, and others.

One critical attribute that can influence the consumers' evaluation process is the product rating. Because consumers usually choose a brand based on the practical functions of the product (Chattalas, 2005; Chattalas, Kramer, & Takada, 2008), when consumers make purchase decisions based on that certain attribute, product ratings can play an important role. Product ratings help consumers predict the quality of a product and, affect the consumers' ability to predict the nature of the benefits derived. This makes one wonder whether product ratings can affect the perception of branding in the process of product evaluation? Na et al. (2008) point out that presenting consumers with information on the product's attributes could reduce the reliance on brand name in the product evaluation process. This would imply that product ratings could change consumers' judgment on brand information value. If product ratings influence consumer perception, it can possibly provide a practical approach for improving consumers' evaluation of a product against competitive brands.

National brands are already known to consumers because of prior experience, advertisement, or word of mouth. Because of frequent exposure, consumers can easily recognize which national brands are superior. Customers often use product ratings as a key criterion to differentiate one brand from the other. However, with foreign brands, the consumer's knowledge is much more limited. Consequently, consumers are skeptical of the imported goods because product quality and customer support are unknown. With limited information available, product attribute information about the foreign brand may not be influential enough to change consumer perception or evaluation of the product. Although perceptions can be changed when consumers see high product ratings for a foreign brand, the change in their perception is as not significant as that for the national brand. Therefore, we hypothesize as follows:

> *H2a: For foreign brands, there is no significant difference in attitude toward the brand between high and low product ratings. For national brands, there is a significant difference in attitude toward the brand between high and low product ratings.*
> *H2b: For foreign brands, there is no significant difference in purchase intentions between high and low product ratings. For national brands, there is a significant difference in purchase intentions between high and low product ratings.*
> *H2c: For foreign brands, there is no significant difference in advertisement feeling between high and low product ratings. For national brands, there is a significant difference in advertisement feeling between high and low product ratings.*
> *H2d: For foreign brands, there is no significant difference in attitude toward the ad between high and low product ratings. For national brands, there is a significant difference in attitude toward the ad between high and low product ratings.*

METHODOLOGY

Pretest

Two fictitious brand names of shoes were developed for use in this investigation. One name sounded foreign and represented the foreign brand. The other name sounded English and represented the national brand. To develop these names, two American graduate students and two foreign graduate students were asked to brainstorm possible shoe names. The two American students were responsible for brainstorming shoe brand names that typically sounded like English names. The two foreign graduate students brainstormed brand names that sounded foreign to an English speaker. *Cougaron* was chosen to represent the national brand and *Taika* was chosen as the foreign brand. These names were used in the advertisement posted on the online survey.

Participants and Design

Two hundred thirty-three undergraduate students from a large Southwestern university (151 women and 82 men) completed the online survey in exchange for extra course credit. Most of students were 20 to

30 years old (85.8%). The study had a 2 (foreign brand versus local brand) x 2 (low product ratings versus high product ratings) between subjects design in which brand name and product ratings were manipulated factors. Students were randomly assigned to different groups. The dependent variables were attitude toward the brand, purchase intention, attitude toward the advertisement, and advertising feeling.

After logging in, participants read an instruction page. Participants then viewed an advertisement for a sport shoe. This product was selected because it was familiar to the participants and because they would likely have an interest in purchasing a pair of shoes. The brand name was placed at the top of the advertisement for the shoe. Product ratings were placed on the right of the picture. The product ratings served as attribute information of the product. These attributes were selected from key criteria that sport shoes companies use in their advertisements. Attribute information used included overall rating, comfort, fit/sizing, quality, value, performance. At the lower part of the advertisement, a short description about this product was used to emphasize specific features of the shoe designed for basketball. All four advertisements were the same. Only the brand names and the different levels of rating of the product advertised.

Participants were randomly assigned to the four groups. Each group saw only one advertisement in which only one particular brand name and one level of product ratings were presented. This advertisement was followed by the questions measuring attitude toward the brand, attitude toward the advertisement, advertisement feeling, and purchase intention as dependent variables. The respondents then answered two manipulation check questions. At the end, the respondents were then asked to answer demographic questions.

Measures

Attitude Toward the Brand and Purchase Intention.

Spears and Singh's (2004) scales were adapted to measure attitude toward the brand and purchase intention. In the attitude toward the brand scale, five seven-point semantic differential scales were used: "do you think this brand is unappealing/appealing, bad/good, unpleasant/pleasant, unfavorable/favorable, and unlikable/likable". Respondents' ratings on these five items were averaged to form attitude toward the brand (alpha = .95). In purchase intention measure, five, seven-point semantic differential scales were applied: "rate your intention to purchase this brand: never/definitely, definitely do not intend to buy/definitely intend, very low/high purchase interest, definitely not buy it/definitely buy it, and probably not/probably buy it". Purchase intention was calculated based on the average of respondents' rating on the five items (alpha = .98).

Attitude Toward the Advertisement and Advertisement Feeling.

Feelings and attitude toward the advertisement were operationalized using the Madden, Allen, and Twible's (1988) inventory with known psychometric properties. Eight adjective items (good, cheerful, pleased, stimulated, soothed, insulted, irritated, repulsed) were used to measure feelings. Respondents were asked to memorize how they felt during exposure to the stimulus. They responded to the questions for each of the eight adjectives: "the advertisement for the brand makes you feel …" on a scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much so). Again, all the responses to these prompts were averaged to form advertisement feeling (alpha = .88). Attitude toward the advertisement was designed to measure respondents' evaluative judgment of the stimulus advertisement on a six-item, seven-point semantic differential scale. The adjectives were pleasant/unpleasant, likable/unlikable, interesting/boring, tasteful/tasteless, artful/artless, and good/bad. Using the same method as mentioned above, attitude toward the advertisement was calculated with alpha = .97.

Manipulation Checks

Two manipulation check questions were created with regard to perceived brand name and perceived product ratings to ensure that participants answered correctly.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was first conducted with perceived brand name as dependent variables and brand name described in the four scenarios as an independent variable. Results revealed that there was a significant difference between foreign versus national brand name, $F(1, 231) = 24.542$, $p < .001$. The national brand name received significantly higher value ($M = 1.26$) than the foreign brand name ($M = 1.04$), indicating that the brand name manipulation check was successful.

A similar ANOVA with perceived product ratings as the dependent variable and product ratings in the four scenarios as an independent variable was conducted to check the manipulation of product ratings. Results revealed that there was a significant difference between low product ratings versus high product ratings, $F(1, 231) = 19.690$, $p < .001$. The high product ratings had a significantly higher mean ($M = 4.09$) than the low product ratings ($M = 3.63$), suggesting that the product ratings manipulation check was successful.

Tests of Hypotheses

Brand Names and Consumer Perception

We conducted four one-way ANOVAs, each of which was run using each dependent variable: attitude toward the brand, purchase intention, advertisement feeling and attitude toward the advertisement. The results from ANOVA showed that national brand names elicited significantly higher favorable consumer perception than do foreign brand names. Particularly, attitude toward the national brand was significantly higher than attitude toward the foreign brand ($F(1, 231) = 4.264$, $p < .05$, $M_{na} = 4.29$ versus $M_{fo} = 3.89$). Intention to purchase the national brand was significantly higher than intention to purchase the foreign brand ($F(1, 231) = 10.594$, $p < .05$, $M_{na} = 3.114$ versus $M_{fo} = 2.395$). Feeling of national brand advertisement was significantly higher than feeling of foreign brand advertisement ($F(1, 231) = 8.333$, $p < .05$, $M_{na} = 2.979$ versus $M_{fo} = 2.534$). Attitude toward the national brand advertisement was significantly higher than attitude toward the foreign brand advertisement ($F(1, 231) = 5.802$, $p < .05$, $M_{na} = 3.773$ versus $M_{fo} = 3.313$) (see Table 1). The results were consistent with H1a, b, c, and d.

TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF TREATMENT CELL STATISTICS

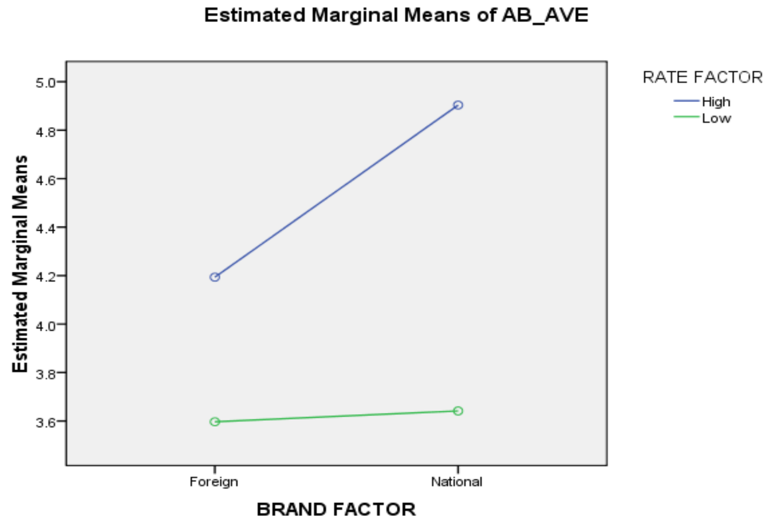
Dependent Variables	Foreign brand (n = 116)	National brand (n = 109)
Attitude toward the Brand	3.890 (1.35)	4.290 (1.60)
Purchase Intentions	2.395 (1.57)	3.114 (1.80)
Advertisement Feeling	2.534 (1.00)	2.979 (1.36)
Attitude toward the Ad	3.313 (1.41)	3.774 (1.51)

* Cell sizes
** Means (standard deviations)

Interaction Effects on Brand Attitude

As can be seen Figure 1, a two-way interaction between brand name and product ratings was marginally significant for attitude toward the brand, $F(1, 229) = 3.285$, $p = .07$, partially supporting H2a. Planned comparisons indicated that for the foreign brand, higher product ratings produced higher attitude toward the brand ($M_{hi} = 4.193$) than did low ratings ($M_{lo} = 3.597$, $F(1, 122) = 6.281$, $p < .05$). The similar pattern was observed for the national brand: the high product ratings produced significantly higher brand attitude ($M_{hi} = 4.904$) than did the low product ratings ($M_{lo} = 3.642$, $F(1, 107) = 19.904$, $p < .005$). The main effects of brand name and of product ratings were significant, $F(1, 229) = 4.227$, $p < .05$ and $F(1, 229) = 4.048$, $p < .05$, respectively.

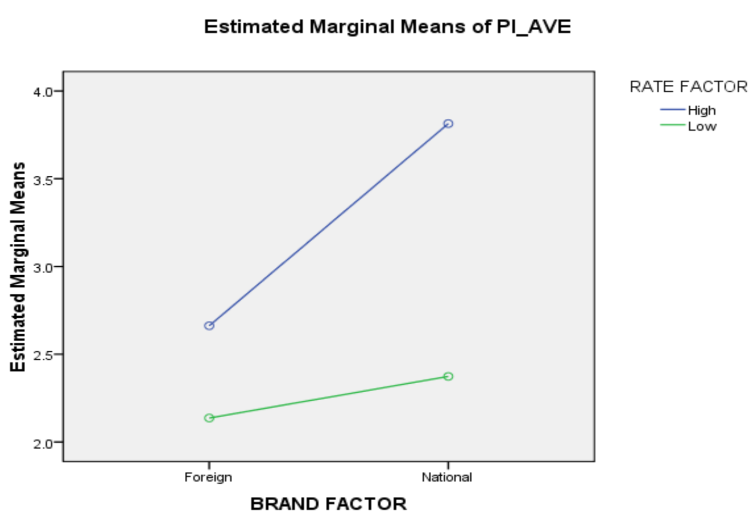
FIGURE 1
INTERACTION EFFECTS ON BRAND ATTITUDE



Interaction Effects on Purchase Intention

A similar set of findings was presented when the ANOVA was conducted with purchase intention as the dependent variable. The two way interaction between brand name and product ratings was significant, F (1, 229) = 4.724, p < .05, as can be seen in Figure 2, therefore H2b was supported. For the foreign brand, the high product ratings produced higher intention to purchase (Mhi = 2.662) than the low product ratings (Mlo = 2.137). However, this difference was not statistically significant, F(1, 122) = 3.556, p > .05. For the national brand, the similar pattern was observed. Purchase intention was significantly higher for the high product ratings (Mhi = 3.814) than for the low product ratings, Mlo = 2.374, F(1, 107) = 20.559, p < .05. The main effect of brand name and of product ratings are significant, F (1, 229) = 10.890, p = .001, and F (1, 229) = 21.826, p = .000, respectively.

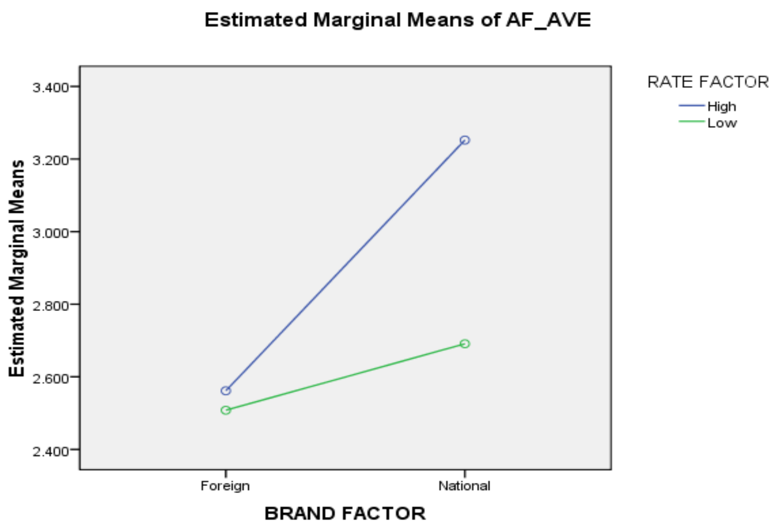
FIGURE 2
INTERACTION EFFECTS ON PURCHASE INTENTION



Interaction Effects on Advertisement Feeling

The ANOVA was conducted with advertisement feeling as the dependent variable. There was a marginally significant interaction between brand name and product ratings, $F(1, 229) = 2.76$, $p = .098$, partially supporting H2c. As shown in the Figure 3, for the foreign brand, the high product ratings did not produce significant higher advertisement feeling ($M_{hi} = 2.561$) than the low product ratings, $M_{lo} = 2.508$, $F(1, 122) = .088$, $p > .05$. However, for the national brand, there was a significant difference in advertisement feeling between the high ratings ($M_{hi} = 3.252$) and the low ratings, ($M_{lo} = 2.691$, $F(1, 107) = 4.907$, $p < .05$). The main effects of brand name and of product ratings were significant, $F(1, 229) = 8.179$, $p = .005$ and $F(1, 229) = 4.048$, $p = .045$, respectively.

FIGURE 3
INTERACTION EFFECTS ON ADVERTISEMENT FEELING

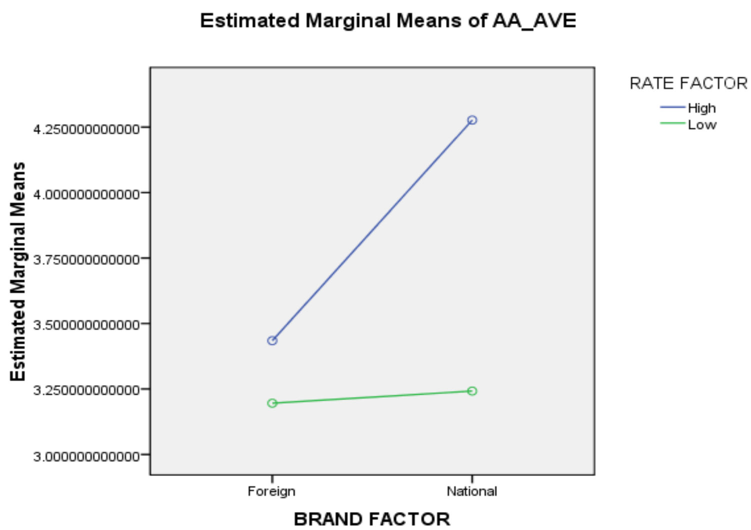


Interaction Effects on Advertisement Attitude

As can be seen Figure 4, a two-way interaction between brand name and product ratings was significant for attitude toward the advertisement, $F(1, 229) = 4.583$, $p < .05$, supporting H2d. Planned comparisons suggested that for the foreign brand, higher product ratings produced higher attitude toward the brand ($M_{hi} = 3.434$) than did low ratings ($M_{lo} = 3.196$). But the difference was not significant, $F(1, 122) = .884$, $p > .05$.

The similar pattern was observed for the national brand: the high product ratings produced significantly higher brand attitude ($M_{hi} = 4.277$) than did the low product ratings ($M_{lo} = 3.242$, $F(1, 107) = 29.149$, $p < .05$). The main effects of brand name and of product ratings were significant, $F(1, 229) = 5.713$, $p = .018$ and $F(1, 229) = 11.726$, $p = .001$, respectively.

FIGURE 4
INTERACTION EFFECTS ON ADVERTISEMENT ATTITUDE



DISCUSSION

The research investigated the effects of brand names (foreign versus national) and the interaction between brand names (foreign versus national brands) and product ratings on consumer perception. The results support the hypothesis that the national brand elicits more positive consumer perception than the foreign brands. In this study, consumer perception is operationalized by four constructs: attitude toward the brand, purchase intention, advertisement feeling, and attitude toward the advertisement. The findings of the study support the hypothesis that the provision of product attributes like product ratings can influence consumer perception in a way that high ratings of national brand is likely to generate a higher positive consumer perception of national brands than low ratings, while the change in consumer perception of foreign brands is not significant between high and low rating. Particularly, in the four dimensions of consumer perception of foreign brands, change in rating has a significant effect on the variation in purchase intentions and attitude toward the advertisement, but has a marginally significant effect on the change in attitude toward the brand and advertisement feeling. The findings provide support other research regarding the effect of product attributes on product evaluation (Bitner, 1992; Donovan, Rossiter, Marcoolyn, & Nesdale, 1994). The rating of a product is one of important factors and can change consumer perception as a consequence using product rating information to advertise a product.

Increased understanding of consumer preferences for foreign versus domestic products and the linkage to product attributes can facilitate more effective product positioning, more efficient strategy development, and overall knowledge of the dynamics of international markets. Greater knowledge of country of origin in all its facets can permit researchers to adjust given aspects of the product or promotion mix so that products can be targeted to the needs of specific markets. By delving more deeply into the various aspects of consumer preferences, scholars may be able to refine extant understanding in ways that advance international consumer behavior research.

The study contributes to the consumer research theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study provides more insights to the brand equity theory. In the previous research, product attributes have been perceived as part of the brand; therefore, product attributes were treated as an element that could form brand image. The findings of this study, nonetheless, indicate that the building up of brand equity is dependent not only on specific brand-benefit associations, but also on product attribute-benefit association. It further implies that product attribute association could act as an independent element to enhance the brand equity.

The study also has clear implications for managers. First, the results suggest that by providing proper product ratings that consumers can use to make brand comparisons, the marketers can promote consumer positive evaluation of the national brand while they are able to reduce influence of competitor's brands. This is so critical for companies, particularly companies that are planning to promote new high-quality brands in their markets and to reduce the value of competitors' brands in comparisons. When consumers review product information, they tend to use this information to evaluate the brand. While consumers use this information in the brand evaluation process, they consider a product attribute as information for their evaluation task. As such, providing high product ratings can make consumers shift attention from one brand to another brand and can reduce the influences of competitors' brands when making brand comparisons. In addition, presenting good product attributes can drive consumers away from competitors' brand when consumers consider comparable brands, because they can evaluate the national brands more easily and regard the product attributes as important criteria in the evaluation process.

Secondly, marketers can apply the results of the study in their marketing strategy to protect strong brand. The provision of high quality product ratings can make consumers have more positive perceptions of the brands and help consumers memorize the product attributes easily. The effects found occur because product ratings allow an otherwise ambiguous stimulus to be meaningfully encoded and interpreted, thereby making it more long lasting and verifiable. As a result, marketers can use this to differentiate their brands from competitors' brands by providing high product ratings as an indication of high quality brand. When consumers have a better understanding about the products through product attribute information, they can have more stable preference for the brand. Briefly, the marketers can protect their brands from competitors' brands by paying greater attention to the impact of high quality product attributes.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study provides more insights to the consumer research with respect to the effects of brand names on consumer perception. However, it has some limitations that suggest areas for future research. First, the data was collected from student population, a small part of consumer base; therefore, the findings of the study are limited in terms of generalizability. To generalize the results of this study, it would be desirable to conduct further research with a variety of respondent groups.

Second, the research is limited to a specific product that represents a particular brand with which consumers are not familiar. Further studies are necessary to examine whether a different process holds when consumers expose to a wider variety of product categories of the brands that are well known in the market places. Therefore, if a variety of products were to be investigated, the research would increase its validity and applicability.

Third, the use of an online survey is another limitation of this study. Students completed the survey in exchange of course extra credits in a highly controlled setting. A field study would be desirable to see whether findings are congruent in different environments.

Finally, this study centers on the moderating role of product ratings on the relationship between brand name effect and consumer perception. The effects of brand names on consumer evaluation can be differentiated by other factors, for instance, the consumers' knowledge of the products, product involvement, and consumers' needs. As consumer perception about the products depends largely on the consumer's knowledge and motivation, another avenue for further research could be to investigate the role of these factors.

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Assessment of Marketing Strategies for Ecotourism Promotion: A Case of RDB/Tourism and Conservation in Rwanda

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This study aimed at assessing the marketing strategies for Promoting Ecotourism in Rwanda. The study involved desk and field research and convenience sampling was also used for tourists, while simple random sampling was used for the local people and RDB/T&C staff. We used SPSS for analysis of data and hypotheses were tested using Kolmogorov-Smirnov to investigate differences in the level of tourists' satisfaction, level of importance, degree of agreement/disagreement on tourism product, price, promotion, place, people, process and physical evidence. Tourists were generally satisfied with tourism offering and lack of infrastructure is still a challenge of ecotourism in Rwanda.

INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism prevents problems resulting from mass tourism and overlaps with other forms of tourism such as scientific and education tourisms (Mieczkowski, 1995). Started from developing world regions, ecotourism offers opportunities for local communities (Wearing and Neil, 1999; Wearing and McDonald, 2002). Ecotourism also promotes and contributes to the development of local areas (Orams, 1995; Buckley, 2000; and Weaver, 2001). Wallace and Pierce (1996), Wearing and Neil (1999), Bjork (2000), Epler Wood (2002), Fennell (2002) and Ceballos-Lascura (1987) all have provided definition of ecotourism, but we will quote the one given by Wikipedia: "Ecotourism is a form of tourism involving visiting fragile, pristine, and relatively undisturbed natural areas, intended as a low-impact and often small scale alternative to standard commercial (mass) tourism. Its purpose may be to educate the traveler to provide funds for ecological conservation, to directly benefit the economic development and political empowerment of local communities, or to foster respect for different cultures and for human rights".

Studies conducted worldwide in 2000's, after the serious environmental degradation where high temperatures started heating the globe, showed that ecotourism is considered the fastest growing market in the tourism industry with an annual growth rate of 5% worldwide and representing 6% of the world gross domestic product and 11.4% of all consumer spending (UNWTO, 2009). Tourism is changing rapidly as nature, heritage, and recreational destinations become more important, and as conventional tourism is forced to meet tougher environmental requirements. This presents a challenge to governments and private enterprise to develop new approaches to the tourism market. Successful tourism must benefit local population economically and culturally to give them incentives to protect the natural resources which create the attractions.

For the case of Rwanda through RDB/T&C marketing strategies for promoting ecotourism are not properly implemented due to the following reasons: For example, product strategy was not successfully implemented due to over dependent on the single iconic product (mountain gorillas) and this hampered the growth of tourism as the iconic product has reached full capacity. Due to lack of product diversification, Rwanda has limited product offerings on which tourists can spend money. Prices for tourism products have to take into account the complexity created by seasonality of demand and inherent perishability of the product (Cooper et al., 2008). There is also a need to influence trade contacts such as retail agents and suppliers, as well as opinion formers such as journalists and travel writers (Cooper et al., 2008). Marketers argue that a distribution system is the mix of channels used to gain access, or means by which a tourism service is made available to the potential buyers of the product. In addition to traditional four P's, Victor et al., (2009) insisted that the extra three-P framework is particularly useful for tourism which is typically the people component, the process component and the physical evidence component.

The special characteristics of the tourism product have led to specific forms of distribution. The tourism product is one where no transfer of ownership takes place and service is simply rented or consumed (Cooper et al., 2008).

Services were affected by limited skills of staff in hospitality and tourism industry where the provider becomes part and passel of the service provision. Well-being of the local people was affected by insufficient projects and lack of marketing their products. Environmental conservation was also affected by the ex-poachers in the parks who used to kill some animals in the parks, and destroy some flora by fire for their benefits. It is easy to recognize that most of the variability of the tourism product stems from the substantial human interactions inherent in the experience. It is a useful exercise to categorize the participants for marketing purposes (Victor et al., 2009). The travel and tourism experience consists of both process and outcome. For travel and tourism, perhaps more than for any other service products, the outcome is highly dependent on the quality of service delivery as perceived by the user (Victor et al., 2009).

Physical evidence can be rooted in the five senses of sight (especially color and aesthetics), sound, scent, touch and taste. Because tourism products are characterized by the inseparability, visitors are present in the production premises and the design of the physical setting for the delivery process is a vital part of the product experience (Victor et al., 2009).

Ecotourism

According to Lascurain (1987) ecotourism is environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations. The involvement of the local communities not only benefits the community and the environment but also improves the quality of the tourist experience. Local communities can become involved in ecotourism operations and in the provision of knowledge, services, facilities and products (David et al., 2002). It is well understood that in Africa that the process usually employed in establishing parks was to alienate people living on the newly protected land. Local people have developed a distrust of both the wildlife management authorities and the concept of protected areas and species conservation in general. Sound environment of tourism facilities highlighted by Chawla (2006) and especially hotels can increase the benefits to natural areas. Cleaner production techniques can be important tools for planning and operating tourism facilities in a way that minimizes their environmental impacts. Tourism has the potential to increase public appreciation of the environmental and to spread awareness of environmental problems when it brings people into closer contact with nature and the environment Chawla (2006). Tourism can significantly contribute to environmental protection, conservation and restoration of biological diversity and sustainable use of natural resources. Because of their attractiveness, pristine sites and natural areas are identified as valuable and the need to keep the attraction alive can lead to creation of national parks and wildlife parks (ibid).

Ecotourism in Rwanda

Tourism is identified as a priority sector to achieve the country's development goals as set out in the Vision 2020 strategy. Rwanda has made a significant progress in developing and managing its tourism sector in recent years having increased tourism revenue from US$26million in 2005 to US$210million in 2008 (TMPR, 2009). According to (TMPR, 2009) Rwanda has six dormant volcanoes, twenty-three lakes and numerous rivers. These spectacular volcanoes and dense natural forests dominate the north of the country. The presence of the mountain gorillas makes the Volcanoes National Park the most popular visitor attraction in Rwanda. In 2009, there were just 18,900 gorilla tracking visitors representing 92 per cent of the tourists that have visited this place and a total of just under 20,000 visits to the park of which 95 per cent were foreign visitors (Rwanda Tourism statistics, 2009). According to RDB/T&C (2009) and (TMPR, 2009), NNP contains one of the largest tracts of mountain forest in East or Central Africa. This Park is rich in biodiversity with over a thousand plant species, birds, butterflies and primates. There are a number of guided walks and chimpanzee tracking available. RDB/T&C specifies that the activity is an extra charge and even accommodation in the Park is acceptable for tourists.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Ecotourism is today a promising branch of tourism that refers to the responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people. It also requires a two way link between tourism and the environment (Valentine, 1993). In the recent years, tourism researchers show that ecotourism is becoming a branch of tourism where countries should put much emphasis to earn more foreign currencies and attract many ecotourists with much consideration on protecting the environment and improving the well being of the local people. This is evidenced by the statistics in Rwanda which show the current trend of tourism in the country (RDB/T&C, 2009). For all these efforts made in protecting biodiversity and promoting ecotourism towards changing Rwanda as a safe destination to visit, there are some problems that keep hindering ecotourism in the country such as limited control to local people surrounding the natural areas, destruction of culture of the natural areas, lack of facilities and services, product gaps, insufficient marketing, inadequate marketing of the sector, skills deficiencies, limited flights to Rwanda, Rwanda's invisibility in the international market place, limited product offer in terms of variety, quantity and quality and inadequate information dissemination and documentation to tourists (RDB/T&C 2009) and (TMPR, 2009).

These problems can be mitigated by designing the appropriate marketing strategies such as product strategy, price strategy, promotion strategy, place (distribution) strategy, the people component strategy, the service delivery process strategy and managing physical evidence and design strategy in the pursuit of providing better services to tourists and meeting or sometimes exceeding their expectations. A lot needs to be done in promoting the ecotourism in Rwanda and for that, this study was undertaken to focus on product strategy, price strategy, promotion strategy, place (distribution) strategy, the people component strategy, the service delivery process strategy and managing physical evidence and design strategy as these marketing strategies in a case they are well implemented give an impression to accelerate the ecotourism development and finally the study focused on the factors that affect the duration of stay for tourists in the country and the factors that have lead to improve the well being of the local people and the environmental conservation.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

First, the main objective of this study was to assess the marketing strategies which are most suitable for both RDB/T&C and its partners in the same industry in promoting ecotourism in Rwanda. Second, to find out how various tourism products offered by NNP/VNP, satisfy tourists visiting Rwanda. Third, to evaluate how prices set by RDB/T&C are affordable to tourists visiting NNP/VNP; to assess the promotional tools used by RDB/T&C to position ecotourism attractions available in NNP/VNP. Last, to examine the way RDB/T&C makes its tourism products available and accessible to the tourists visiting NNP/VNP; to find out how RDB employees and the local people are well prepared and informed to provide better hospitality to tourists visiting NNP/VNP; to examine the way RDB employees participate in the service delivery process to satisfy the tourists visiting NNP/VNP; to investigate the extent that NNP/VNP are environmentally friendly to the tourists' satisfaction; and to find out the factors that contribute to the improvement of the well being of the local people and the environmental conservation.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The paper seeks to answer the following questions: (1) How various tourism products offered by Nyungwe /Volcanoes National Parks satisfy tourists visiting Rwanda? (2) Are the prices set by RDB/T&C for their products affordable to tourists visiting Nyungwe /Volcanoes National Parks? (3) What promotional tools used by RDB/T&C to position ecotourism attractions available in Nyungwe /Volcanoes National Parks? (4) How RDB/T&C makes its tourism products available and accessible to the tourists visiting Nyungwe / Volcanoes National Parks? (5) How RDB employees and the local people are well prepared and informed to provide better hospitality to tourists visiting Nyungwe /Volcanoes National Parks? (6) How RDB employees participate in the service delivery process to satisfy the tourists visiting Nyungwe/ Volcanoes National Parks? (7) How Nyungwe /Volcanoes National Parks are environmentally friendly to the tourists' satisfaction? (8) What are the factors that contribute to the improvement of the well being of the local people and the environmental conservation?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study were significant to government, tourism service providers, and local people in a variety of ways. For the government policy makers, the results help them to make informed decisions, formulate and implement the appropriate policies and legislations all to improve the ecotourism sector. For RDB/T&C this study helped in understanding means that they can utilize the available resources to attract many tourists and hence compete well in providing convincing information to tourists. For the local people, the results of this study help them to know the role to play first and the associated benefits of ecotourism for them in return.

METHODOLOGY

This part covered the research design methods and techniques that used in the data collection, the various sources of data and types of data that were collected, the main research instruments that were used in data collection as well as the techniques that were used to analyze data and test the hypotheses. The researcher approached the study using descriptive research design to describe the suitable marketing strategies and tourists' reactions on these strategies. The areas covered by this study were NNP/VNP. These two places were preferred because many tourists prefer to visit them as they are rich in biodiversity of fauna as well as their easy accessibility. In this study the target population was RDB/T&C staff, local people surrounding the two national parks and the tourists visiting ecotourism attractions in Nyungwe and Volcanoes National Parks.

Sample and Sampling Design

This study used simple random sampling technique for RDB/T&C staff and the local people and convenience sampling technique for tourists visiting Nyungwe and Volcanoes national parks. The researcher selected the sample based on the fact that the sample was most likely to provide the desired information and was a reasonable one in order to represent the true situation.

Sample Size

This study had three kinds of sample, the first category contained 60 international tourists, and the second category contained 20 people from RDB/T&C staff and 40 from the local people that surround Nyungwe/Volcanoes National Parks.

Types and Sources of Data

Primary data were gathered from international tourists, RDB/T&C as well as the local people that surround Nyungwe/Volcanoes National Parks. Secondary data were obtained from published and unpublished materials such as journals, articles, text books, thesis and dissertations as well as websites to access the information concerning marketing strategies and tourism in general.

Data Collection Methods and Analysis

Under this study questionnaires were used to collect data from respondents. Questionnaires were prepared in such a way that the following were observed, anonymity, being as short as possible, key information were covered, logical and user friendly questions were also taken into consideration. The researcher also decided to use an interview to supplement the information collected using the questionnaire. We used SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) and hypotheses were tested using Kolmogorov-Smirnov.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

This section presents an analysis of the data collected from the distributed questionnaires to 60 tourists, 20 RDB/T&C staff and 40 local people around these two parks and from interviews and the findings derived from the analysis. Out of the 120 distributed questionnaires the researcher recovered 102 which represents a percentage of 85%. The first part contains a descriptive analysis while the second part deals with testing the hypotheses that guided the study. The collected data were analyzed using quantitative techniques. Data describing different marketing strategies were analyzed through descriptive analysis. Quantitative data that were collected to test hypotheses that guided the study in order to draw conclusions and were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Reliability was tested using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (Mitchell, V., 1996). The reliability of the tourists' instrument was 0.768 that for RDB / T&C staff was 0.712, while the reliability for the local people's instrument was 0.732. To ensure validity before adjusting the research instruments, the researcher conducted the pilot study to check the accuracy and made the necessary corrections accordingly. Raw data were edited to detect various errors, omissions, ambiguities of responses as well as irregularities.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS FOR TOURISTS

Responses of Tourists Toward Different Products Offered by NNP/VNP

Table1indicates responses of tourists toward different products offered by NNP/VNP these products satisfy them. With regard to how the majority of tourists who visited these places were either very satisfied or satisfied with their visits to these places as it is evidenced by the level of satisfaction on each product as follows: For mountain gorilla trekking, 88.9% were very satisfied while 11.1% were satisfied. For those, whose their visits was mountain climbing 80% were very satisfied, 6% satisfied, 7.1% were dissatisfied and 6.9% very dissatisfied. With regard to Golden monkey, 72.7% of them were very satisfied, 11.1% satisfied, 11.1% dissatisfied, 5% very dissatisfied and. About nature walk, 45.7% of them were very satisfied, 34.6% satisfied, 7.1% neutral, 12.6%. During their visit to the two natural areas, 43.4% of tourists were very satisfied by camping, 19.7% were satisfied with it, 12.8% were neutral, 13.3% were dissatisfied, 10.8% were very dissatisfied. For those whose main target was birding, 49.4% of them were very satisfied, 29.6% were satisfied, 11.1% were dissatisfied, and 7.4% were very dissatisfied. In short the majority of tourists who visited different products in these two National Parks were at least satisfied with the products they visited and this should be viewed by RDB/T&C as a good achievement and keeps upgrading the services in connection to these products so that it captures even those few who were not satisfied with their visits and tries to make them at least satisfied.

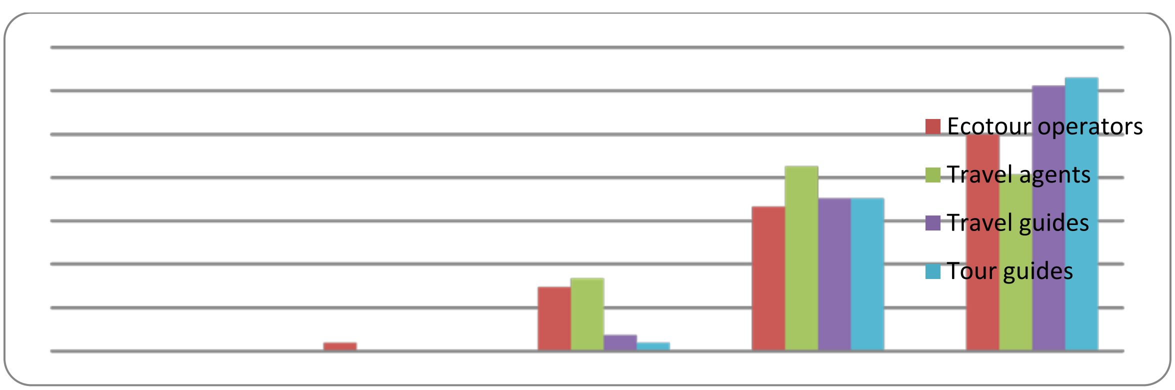
TABLE 1
RESPONSES TO THE WAY VARIOUS TOURISM PRODUCTS OFFERED BY NN/VNP SATISFY TOURISTS VISITING RWANDA

Products offered	Very satisfied in %	Satisfied in %	Neutral in %	Dissatisfied in %	Very dissatisfied in %
Mountain Gorilla trekking	88.9	11.1	0	0	0
Mountain climbing	80	6	0	7.1	6.9
Golden monkey	72.7	11.1	0	11.3	5
Nature walk	45.7	34.6	7.1	12.6	0
Camping	43.4	19. 7	12.8	13.3	10.8
Birding	49.4	29.6	2.4	11.1	7.4

Accessing the Tourism Products in Both NNP and VNP

It was found that in availing and accessing the tourism products in both NNP and VNP, the tourists rated the importance of the following intermediaries as follows: 1.9% of the contacted tourists rated ecotourism operators as unimportant, 14.8% were neutral, 33.3% of them said that they are important intermediaries in the availability and accessibility of NNP / VNP tourism products, while the remaining 50% said that these intermediaries are very important. Out of these tourists, 16.7% were neutral to express their stands on the importance of travel agents, 42.6% of them said that they are important while the remaining 40.7% said that they are very important. Concerning the travel guides, 3.7% of the contacted tourists were neutral, 35.2% said that they are important while 61.1% said that they are very important. Finally, 1.9% of these tourists were neutral on how tour guides are important intermediaries in the availability and accessibility of NNP / VNP tourism products. 35.2% said that they are important while the remaining 63% said that they are very important. This simply explains how important these four intermediaries are to tourists visiting these two places and how prepared they are in terms of hospitality and communications skills in order to make tourists coming to Rwanda highly delighted.

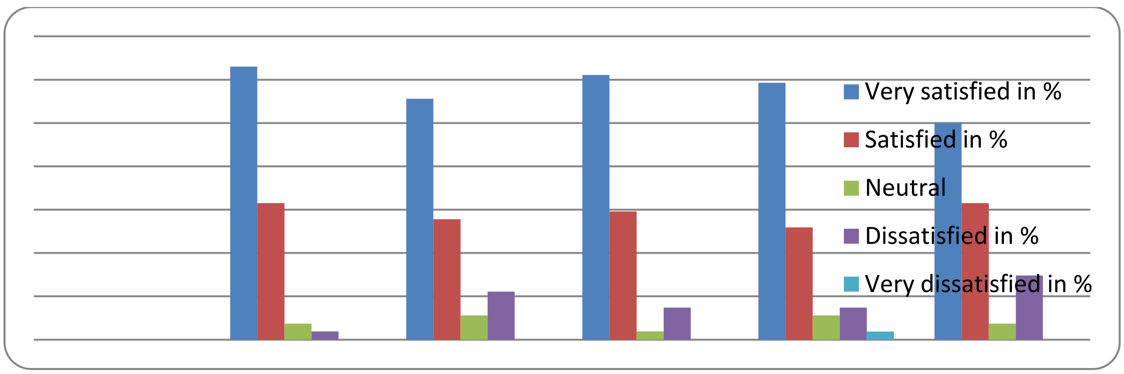
FIGURE 1
RESPONSES OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INTERMEDIARIES USED IN THE AVAILABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF NNP/VNP TOURISM PRODUCTS



Tourists' Level of Satisfaction

It was found that 63% of the tourists were very satisfied on the way RDB employees participate in the service delivery process in terms of courtesy, 31.5% were satisfied, 3.7% were neutral while 1.9% were dissatisfied . Regarding reliability, 55.6% of the contacted tourists said that they were very satisfied, 27.8% were satisfied, 5.6% were neutral on that, while 11.1 % of them were dissatisfied. Concerning responsiveness, 61.1 % of the contacted tourists said that they were very satisfied, 29.6% were satisfied, 1.9% of them were neutral on that while 7.4% of them were dissatisfied. In as far as assurance is concerned, 59.3% of the tourists said that they were very satisfied, 25.9% were satisfied, 5.6 % were neutral on that, 7.4% were dissatisfied, while 1.9 were very dissatisfied. In terms of empathy 50% of the contacted tourists were very satisfied, 31.5% were satisfied, 3.7% were neutral, while 14.8 were dissatisfied with this attribute. In short, we conclude that at least 80% of the most contacted tourists on the way RDB employees participate in service delivery process were at least satisfied with all the attributes displayed by these employees and this is seen as a good things for the service provider as a satisfied tourist can tell others in his or her place of origin about the tourism products and services delivery process in Rwanda and the outcome is the increase in the number of tourists visiting Rwanda.

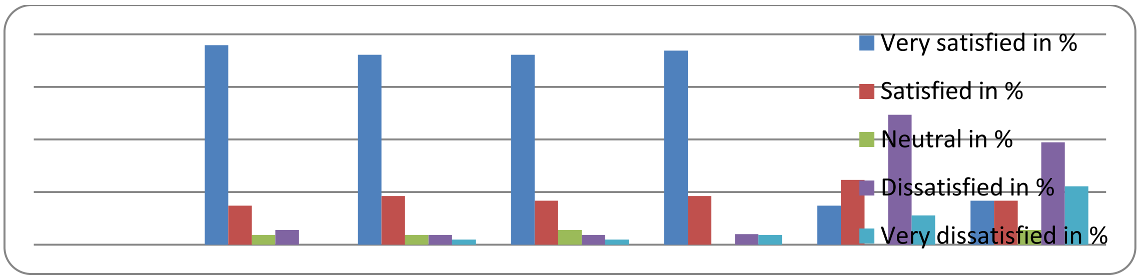
FIGURE 2
RESPONSES TO THE TOURISTS' LEVEL OF SATISFACTION ON THE WAY RDB EMPLOYEES PARTICIPATE IN THE SERVICE DELIVERY PROCESS



Tourists' Satisfaction on the Environmentally Friendly

Figure 3 shows that the tourists' satisfaction of the environmentally friendly represented by NNP / VNP along the following attributes were as follows: 75.9% of them were very satisfied with the landscape of these two national parks, 14.8% were satisfied with it, 3.7% were neutral while 5.6 were dissatisfied with this attribute. In terms of vegetation, 72.2% of these tourists were very satisfied with the vegetation they have seen in these two parks, 18.5% were satisfied with vegetation found in NNP / VNP, 3.7 % were neutral on that, 3.7% were dissatisfied with that while 1.9% were very dissatisfied. Regarding weather 72.2% of the contacted tourists said that they were very satisfied with the weather represented by NNP / VNP, 16.7 % said that they were satisfied with it, 5.6% were neutral on that, while 3.7% and 1.9% were dissatisfied and very dissatisfied by the weather represented by NNP / VNP respectively. Concerning wildlife, 73.8% of the tourists reached by the researcher said that they were very satisfied with wildlife available in NNP / VNP, 18.5% of them said that they were satisfied, 4% were dissatisfied while 3.7% were very dissatisfied. Regarding the infrastructure around NNP / VNP, 14.8% of the contacted tourists were very satisfied, 24.6% of them were satisfied, 49.4% were dissatisfied while the remaining 11.1% were very dissatisfied. In as far as games are concerned, 16.7% of them said that they were very satisfied, 16.7% were satisfied, 5.6% were neutral while the remaining 38.9% were dissatisfied and 22.2% were very dissatisfied respectively. This explains that landscape, vegetation, weather and wildlife were at least 89% satisfying the tourists but infrastructure, and games were at least 60% not satisfying the tourists coming to visit NNP / VNP. This is a challenge for RDB/T&C and it needs to update the existing infrastructure (Roads, Hotels, and Lodges) around these National Parks and construct the other ones with high technology as well as introducing games in recreational centers around these two parks towards meeting and sometimes exceeding the expectations of the tourists visiting Rwanda.

FIGURE 3
RESPONSES TO THE TOURISTS' SATISFACTION ON THE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY REPRESENTED BY NNP/VNP



DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS FOR RDB/TC STAFF

Table 2 shows that 31.2% of the selected RDB/T&C staff said that international print media are unimportant in positioning the ecotourism attractions available in NNP / VNP, 6.2% of them were neutral, 31.2% said that they are important, while the remaining 31.2% said that they are very important. Concerning the international TV stations, 18.8% of them were neutral, 37.5% said that they are important while the remaining 43.8% said that they are very important. About international Radio stations, 18.8% of them said that they are unimportant, 18.8% were neutral, 6.2% of them said that they important while the remaining 56.2% of them said that they are very important. Regarding internet/website, 6.2 % said that it is important while the remaining 93.8 % said that it is very important in positioning the ecotourism attractions available in NNP / VNP. Trade shows and exhibitions were not left behind, 100% of the selected staff said that they are very important in positioning the ecotourism attractions available in NNP / VNP. From the above analysis it is very important for RDB/T&C to focus on the internet/website, trade shows and exhibitions as well as the international TV as these promotional media can attract a lot of people in different parts of the world in short time. For the internet/website it is easier for RDB/T&C to make some of its products and services accessible 24 hours a day.

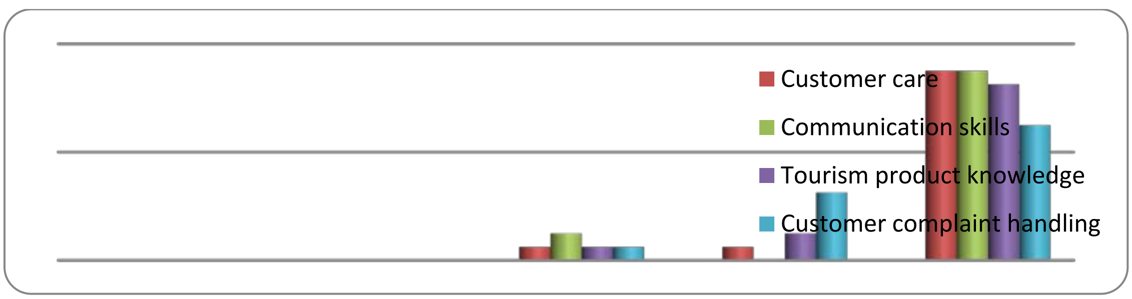
TABLE 2
RESPONSES TO THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTIONAL TOOLS USED BY RDB/T& C TO POSITION ECOTOURISM ATTRACTION AVAILABLE IN NNP/VNP (%)

Promotional Tools	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very important
International print media	0	31.2	6.2	31.2	31.2
International TV stations	0	0	18.8	37.5	43.8
International Radio stations	0	18.8	18.8	6.2	56.2
Internet/website	0	0	0	6.2	93.8
Trade shows and exhibitions	0	0	0	0	100

RDB Employees

Figure 4 shows that the majority of RDB/T&C staff contacted during data collection, 6.2% of them were neutral to reveal the reality about training in customer care, 6.2% said that they were trained in that while 87.5% of them said that they were highly trained in customer care in order to provide better hospitality to tourists visiting NNP / VNP. Concerning communication skills, 12.5% of the contacted respondents were neutral to reveal that they were neither trained nor untrained in these fields while the majority represented by 87.5% of them said that they were highly trained in communication skills in order to provide better hospitality to tourists visiting NNP / VNP. With regard to tourism product knowledge, 6.2% of them were neutral, 12.5% revealed that they were trained in that while 81.2% confirmed that they were highly trained in tourism product knowledge in order to provide better hospitality to tourists visiting NNP / VNP. Finally, in as far as customer complaint handling is concerned, 6.2% were neutral on that, 31.2% revealed that they were trained and 62.5% said that they were highly trained in that area. From the above analysis, it is clear that RDB employees are well prepared to provide better hospitality to tourists visiting NNP / VNP as it is evidenced by at least 87.5% of those who were contacted that they were at least trained in customer care, communication skills, tourism product knowledge and customer complaint handling. This explains that a well trained employees especially in tourism industry is likely to provide quality service to tourists and motivate them to revisit NNP / VNP and other tourist attractions available countrywide.

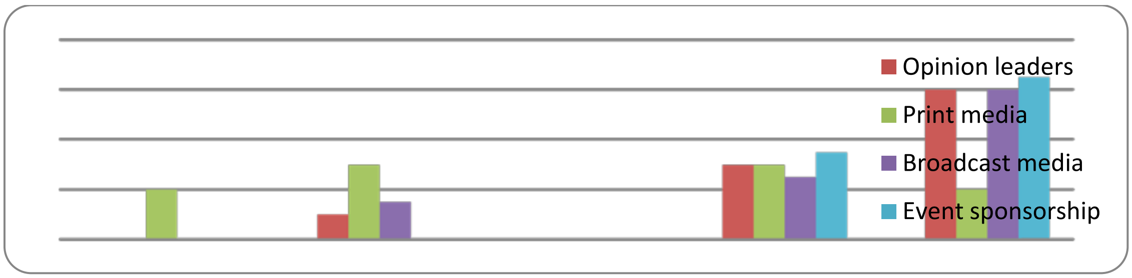
FIGURE 4
RESPONSES TO WHETHER RDB EMPLOYEES ARE WELL PREPARED TO PROVIDE BETTER HOSPITALITY O TOURISTS VISITING NNP/VNP



DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS FOR THE LOCAL PEOPLE

Figure 5 shows that for the local people to be able to provide better hospitality to tourists visiting NNP / VNP need first to be informed and it was found that, 10% of the local people said that they were uninformed by the opinion leaders, 30% said that they were informed by opinion leaders while the remaining 60% confirmed that they were highly informed by the opinion leaders on the best way to provide better hospitality to tourists visiting NNP / VNP. Concerning the print media 20% of them, said that they were highly uninformed by these media, 30% said that they were uninformed by these media too, 30% said that they were informed by print media, while 20% said that they were highly informed by these media. In as far as broadcast media are concerned, 15% of the contacted local people said that they were uninformed by neither radio nor television, 25% said that they were informed by either radio or television on how to provide better hospitality to tourists visiting NNP / VNP while 60% confirmed that they were informed by these media on how to provide better hospitality to tourists visiting NNP / VNP. Lastly 35% of the contacted local people said that they were informed by event sponsorship specifically “Naming Ceremony” (Annual ceremony to name young mountain gorilla babies) while the event sponsorship like this one highly informed 65% of the local people surrounding NNP / VNP on how to provide better hospitality to tourists visiting these two national parks. This means that, the focus should be put on opinion leaders, broadcast media and event sponsorship as these channels seem to be effective in informing the local people on how to provide better hospitality to tourists visiting NNP / VNP as it is evidenced by at least 85% of the contacted local people who confirmed that these channels make them to be at least informed on how to provide better hospitality to tourists visiting their surrounding natural areas. Print media even if they are in moderate use they can be used to complement these three in full use to make those who can read newspapers and magazines to be aware that providing better hospitality to tourists can boost up the ecotourism in Rwanda.

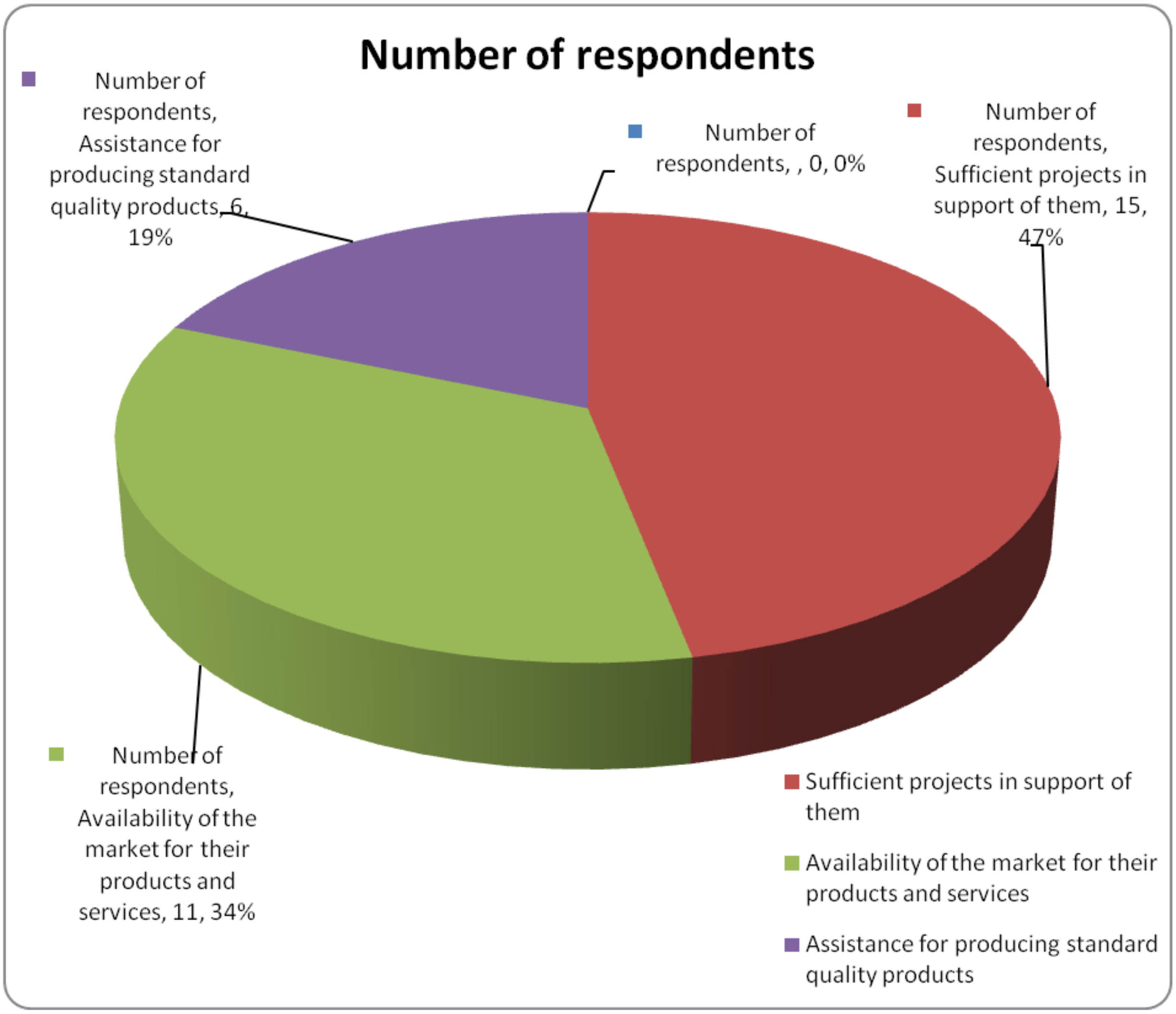
FIGURE 5
HOW LOCAL PEOPLE ARE INFORMED TO PROVIDE BETTER HOSPITALITY TO TOURISTS VISITING NNP/VNP



Factors that Contribute to the Improvement of Well Being of the Local People

Figure 6 reveals that 47% of the contacted local people that living in the boundaries of NNP / VNP revealed that sufficient projects in support to the local people is the major factor that contributes to the improvement of well being of the local people and the environment conservation. This is because when these people have projects in support of them, they get involved in income generating activities that make them more beneficial towards improving their well being and finally be motivated in participating fully in the activities aimed at conserving an environment. Apart from that, 34% of these local people said that availability of the market for their products is another factor that contributes to the improvement of well being of them because in these boundaries of the national parks (Nyungwe/Volcanoes) you find a lot of people in the projects that are fully funded by RDB/T&C to improve their well being. The major projects available there include Basket making project, bee keeping project, mushroom planting project, tailoring projects, Artist project, fruit planting project, livestock projects for cows, rabbits, ghosts, sheep and chickens. The remaining 19% said that the assistance for producing standard quality products can contribute to the improvement of the well being of the local people and conservation of an environment. This means that when these people are in a position to produce standard quality products can produce in targeting not only the domestic market but also the international one and the received cash help them to improve their well being and protecting an environment.

FIGURE 6
FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF WELL BEING OF THE LOCAL PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION



HYPOTHESES TESTING

This section presents the analytical part of the study. It encompasses seven hypotheses which arose out of nine research questions. Kothari (2008) has defined hypothesis as proposition (s) set forth as an explanation for the occurrence of some specific group of phenomena either asserted merely as a provisional conjuncture to guide some investigations or acceptable as highly probable in the light of established facts. Therefore, in this section, the researcher wanted to test the level of satisfaction among respondents towards tourist products offered by NNP / VNP, degree of agreement or disagreement among respondents towards price affordability of tourist products offered by NNP / VNP, importance of promotional tools by RDB/T&C to position ecotourism in Rwanda, importance of intermediaries in making tourist products available and accessible to tourists. Level of training and information for both RDB employees and local people to provide better hospitality to tourists visiting NNP / VNP, level of satisfaction of tourists on the way RDB employees participate in the service delivery process and the level of satisfaction on environmentally friendly represented by NNP / VNP.

Hypothesis One

The researcher hypothesized that the level of tourist's satisfaction towards tourism products offered NNP / VNP can be greatly differ depending on the type of products visited by tourists and the place visited too. Therefore, Null Hypothesis states that there is no difference in the level of satisfaction with tourist products offered by NNP / VNP, while Alternative Hypothesis states that there is a difference in the level of satisfaction with tourist products offered by NNP/ VNP. The statistical table below shows that the observed level of significance is less than 0.05 that is the observed significance level 0.000and 0.001<critical significance level 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The conclusion is therefore that there is a difference in the level of satisfaction with tourist products offered by NNP / VNP. This means that for mountain gorilla trekking the satisfaction for tourists differ as some were very satisfied and others satisfied with visiting this tourism product. For mountain climbing, there is also a difference in satisfaction level for visiting this product because 80% were very satisfied, 6% were satisfied, 7.1% dissatisfied and 6.9% were very dissatisfied. Concerning golden monkey, 72.7% were very satisfied, 11.1% were satisfied, 11.3% were dissatisfied and 5% very dissatisfied. With regard to nature walk, satisfaction level differs as 45.7% were very satisfied, 34% satisfied, 7.1 neutral on that and 12.6% dissatisfied. As far as camping is concerned, 43.4% were very satisfied with it, 19.7% satisfied with it, 12.8% were neutral, 11.3% dissatisfied and 10.8% very dissatisfied. Finally, 49.4% were very satisfied with birding, 29.6% satisfied, 2.4% neutral, 11.1% dissatisfied and 7.4% very dissatisfied.

TABLE 3
TESTING THE DIFFERENCE IN THE LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH TOURIST PRODUCTS OFFERED BY NYUNGWE AND VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARKS

Descriptive Statistics

Test variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Level of satisfaction offered by mountain gorilla trekking	54	1.91	1.866	1	6
Level of satisfaction offered by mountain climbing	54	2.80	2.122	1	6
Level of satisfaction offered by golden monkey	54	2.00	1.705	1	6
Level of satisfaction offered by nature walk	54	2.61	1.975	1	6
Level of satisfaction offered by camping	54	2.85	2.123	1	6
Level of satisfaction offered by birding	54	2.30	1.644	1	6

One –Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

	Level of satisfac-tion offered by mountain gorilla trekking	**Level of satisfac-tion offered by mountain climbing**	**Level of satisfac-tion offered by golden monkey**	**Level of satisfac-tion offered by nature walk**	**Level of satisfac-tion offered by camping**	**Level of satisfac-tion offered by birding**
N	54	54	54	54	54	54
Normal Parameters	1.91	2.80	2.00	2.61	2.85	2.30
Mean	1.866	2.122	1.705	1.975	2.123	1.644
	.446	.294	.388	.325	.267	.312
Std. Deviation	.446	.294	.388	.325	.267	.312
Most Extreme Differences	-.313	-.199	-.279	-.207	-.191	-.215
Absolute	**3.277**	**2.163**	**2.851**	**2.390**	**1.962**	**2.295**
	.000	**.000**	**.000**	**.000**	**.001**	**.000**
Positive						
Negative						
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z						
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)						

a. Test distribution is Normal

b. Calculated from data

Hypothesis Two

The aim of hypothesis two was to test whether or not the promotional tools commonly used by RDB/T&C staff equally differ in their importance in positioning ecotourism attractions available in NNP / VNP. Null Hypothesis: There is no difference in the importance of promotional tools used by RDB/T&C to position ecotourism attractions available in NNP / VNP. Alternative Hypothesis: There is a difference in the importance of promotional tools used by RDB/T&C to position ecotourism attractions available in NNP / VNP. The next table (table 4) shows that the observed significance level is less than 0.05 that is observed significance level 0.000 and 0.002 are all less than the critical significance level 0.05. Therefore we reject the null hypothesis and the conclusion is that there is a difference in the importance of promotional tools used by RDB/T&C to position ecotourism attractions available in NNP / VNP. This is evidenced by the findings from table 4 whereby the internet/website, trade shows and exhibitions as well as the international TV stations play bigger role in positioning ecotourism attractions available in NNP / VNP than the way international print media and international radio stations do. The internet/ website, trade shows and exhibitions as well as the international TV stations can attract a lot of people in different parts of the world at immediate time.

TABLE 4
TESTING THE DIFFERENCE IN THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMO TOOLS USED TO POSITION ECOTOURISM ATTRACTIONS AVAILABLE IN NNP/VNP

Descriptive Statistics

Test variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Importance of international print media in promoting Rwanda's ecotourism attractions	16	2.50	.894	2	4
Importance of international TV stations in promoting Rwanda's ecotourism attractions	16	1.94	.250	1	2
Importance of international Radio stations in promoting Rwanda's ecotourism attractions	16	1.88	.342	1	2
Importance of internet/website in promoting Rwanda's ecotourism attractions	16	1.25	.447	1	2
Importance of trade shows and exhibitions in promoting Rwanda's ecotourism attractions	16	1.06	.250	1	2

One sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Importance of international print media in promoting Rwanda's ecotourism attractions	Importance of international TV stations in promoting Rwanda's ecotourism attractions	Importance of international Radio stations in promoting Rwanda's ecotourism attractions	Importance of internet /website in promoting Rwanda's ecotourism attractions	Importance of trade shows and exhibitions in promoting Rwanda's ecotourism attractions
N		16	16	16	16	16
Normal Parameters[a]	Mean	2.50	1.94	1.88	1.25	1.06
	Std. Deviation	.894	.250	.342	.447	.250
Most extreme differences	Absolute	.462	.536	.518	.462	.536
	Positive	.462	.401	.357	.462	.536
	Negative	-.288	-.536	-.518	-.288	-.401
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		**1.848**	**2.145**	**2.071**	**1.848**	**2.145**
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		**.002**	**.000**	**.000**	**.002**	**.000**

Test distribution is Normal.
Calculated from data

Hypothesis Three

Satisfaction for tourists means that they are happy with the way they enjoyed the tourism products and the surrounding environment of the natural areas. The aim of this hypothesis is to test the difference in the level of satisfaction for tourists with the environmentally friendly of Nyungwe/ Volcanoes National Parks. Null Hypothesis: There is no difference in the level of satisfaction for tourists with environmentally friendly of Nyungwe/ Volcanoes National Parks. Alternative Hypothesis: There is a difference in the level of satisfaction for tourists with environmentally friendly of Nyungwe/ Volcanoes National Parks.

TABLE 5
TESTING THE DIFFERENCE IN THE LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY OF NNP/VNP

Descriptive Statistics

Test variables	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**
Level of satisfaction on landscape along environmentally friendly to tourists	54	1.15	.359	1	2
Level of satisfaction on vegetation along environmentally friendly to tourists	54	1.26	.650	1	5
Level of satisfaction on weather along environmentally friendly to tourists	54	1.24	.642	1	5
Level of satisfaction on wildlife along environmentally friendly to tourists	54	1.48	.966	1	5
Level of satisfaction on infrastructure along environmentally friendly to tourists	54	2.72	1.338	1	5
Level of satisfaction on games along environmentally friendly to tourists	54	2.46	1.437	1	5

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

	Level of satisfaction on landscape along environmentally friendly to tourists	**Level of satisfaction on vegetation along environmentally friendly to tourists**	**Level of satisfaction on weather along environmentally friendly to tourists**	**L Level of satisfaction on wildlife along environmentally friendly to tourists**	**Level of satisfaction on infrastructure along Rwanda tourist services staff in delivery**	**Level of satisfaction on games along Rwanda tourist services staff in delivery**
N	54	54	54	54	54	54
Normal Parameters	1.15	1.26	1.24	1.48	2.72	2.46
Mean	.359	.650	.642	.966	1.338	1.437
Std.	.512	.451	.461	.413	.279	.256
Deviation	.512	.451	.461	.413	.279	.256
Most Extreme Differences	-.340	-.345	-.354	-.309	-.256	-.209
Absolute	**3.763**	**3.317**	**3.387**	**3.036**	**2.054**	**1.881**
	.000	**.000**	**.000**	**.000**	**.000**	**.002**
Positive						
Negative						
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z						
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)						

a. Test distribution is Normal
b. Calculated from data

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test in the above table shows that the observed significance for the all attributes used to rate the environmentally friendly represented by NNP / VNP is less than 0.05 that is the observed significance level 0.002 < critical significance level 0.05. Therefore we reject the null hypothesis and the conclusion is that there is difference in the level of satisfaction for tourists with environmentally friendly of Nyungwe/ Volcanoes National Parks. This means that the level of satisfaction in all these attributes used to rate the environmentally friendly of the natural areas differs in terms landscape, vegetation, weather, wildlife, infrastructure and games whereby some tourist in each attribute were very satisfied, satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, dissatisfied and very dissatisfied. This means may explain that tourists cannot get the same level of satisfaction because of their countries of origin. For example, if the tourist is from the country where the landscape is different from that of Rwanda, it is obvious that him or her will not get the same level of satisfaction with another from the country with the same landscape of Rwanda, In terms of weather if tourists are from the countries with the hot weather like the Arabs countries in the Middle East, they cannot get the same level of satisfaction with other from let say Scandinavia in the Northern Europe. The same for tourists from developed countries where the infrastructures are in good conditions will differ in satisfaction with their colleagues from some African countries where the infrastructure is still a challenge.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research findings were made in line with the objectives and research questions of the study. The chapter ends up with conclusions and recommendations for RDB/T&C, local people and government as well as suggested areas for further research. The study found that a big percentage of the tourists who were in visits in either NNP / VNP were at least satisfied with tourist products they managed to visit even if this big percentage of them was at least satisfied but there is a small percentage of them who were not satisfied at all. The findings in VNP showed that Mountain Gorilla trekking is the most tourist products that attract many tourists in that park this has to tell RDB/T&C that tourists visit this products because, there is no other attractive diversified product which can attract their attention and spend their time enjoying it too. The researcher found that most of the tourists visiting NNP prefer Nature work and birding as their products of choice and this means that RDB/T&C has to target and position other products to the tourists as other best alternative to spend their money for while they are visiting Rwanda.

The researcher found that at least 70% of the tourists who visited either NNP / VNP were at least agree with the price charged on the tourist products they came to visit. The study findings shows that the most promotional tool used by RDB to position ecotourism attractions available in NNP / VNP is trade shows and exhibitions, followed by internet/website and international TV stations respectively. This means that for trade shows and exhibitions RDB in participating to tourism related exhibitions has to keep adding value to what it used to offer in the previous exhibitions in order to position Rwanda's ecotourism to many people. Trade shows and exhibitions were found to have more direct influence as these exhibitions are visited by a huge number of people from worldwide. Concerning its website, the study found that it is providing the helpful information to the tourists who want to visit Rwanda, but cannot facilitate some transactions to tourists like booking their visit online and paying for the services online.

International TV stations were found to be one of the media which can help Rwanda to position its ecotourism attractions worldwide but the cost of it is too high and even the number of viewers to them are not many but to make them more effective they have to be supplemented by international print media as these can deliver the message even for those who cannot see and capture wide coverage of the listeners.

The research findings shows that RDB/T&C makes its tourism products available and accessible through the use different intermediaries, such as ecotour operators, travel agents, travel guides and tour guides, but these intermediaries have to know that as they are the ones to be in much interactions with the tourists have to show good cooperation to them and build good relationship with them towards encouraging them to do more businesses with tourism players in the country.

The study findings revealed that at least 87.5% of RDB employees are at least trained in customer care, communication skills, product knowledge and tourism handling complaints. These are to ensure that they provide quality service to tourists and meet or sometimes exceed tourists' expectations. The study findings revealed that, local people rated highly the event sponsorship to be the most channels to get them informed, followed by the opinion leaders and broadcast media respectively. Print media is not of much use to inform them because they are not interested in the culture of reading.

The research findings showed that the attributes such as landscape, vegetation, weather and wildlife were at least 89% satisfying the tourists this is because the landscape of Rwanda is that of special nature as it makes them to easily control vast areas of the country. The findings from tourists showed that they were not even happy with games as they did not enjoy it contrary to the case of Akagera National Park where they have a variety of games to enjoy. This means that in these two national parks, tourists do not enjoy this services which can in the end affect their duration of stay in the country.

The study findings show that, the well being of the people was improved somehow as there are lots of projects in support to this local community. These projects assist people to improve their well being whereby projects like Basket making project, bee keeping project, mushroom planting project, tailoring projects, Artist project, fruit planting project, livestock projects for cows, rabbits, ghosts, sheep and chickens. The majority of these projects' members used to be poachers bee keepers, farmers, who used to kill animals in the parks, land searchers for their family and their cattle. The study found that market availability for the products/services of the local community also helped to improve their well being and as a result they cooperate in all activities aimed at protecting an environment as they are the ones to benefit from it first.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We observed that fencing the boundaries of National Parks is not yet started and it is recommended that the whole Parks' boundaries should be fenced to avoid animals which can damage people's lives and properties. Since product diversification is still limited to few tourist products it is therefore recommended that RDB/T&C should focus on diversifying tourist products in order to give tourists a wide variety of tourist products and services to spend their money for. RDB/T&C should assist the local people in market study for their products since they produce good and quality products but with limited market to serve. RDB/T&C should accomplish its already started project of fencing the boundaries of both National Parks to protect the local people from the danger of the wild animals that sometimes threaten the lives of people living in the boundaries of parks RDB/T&C should bring many projects to keep supporting the local people in order for them to enjoy the benefits of not being far from these parks. RDB/T&C should keep sensitizing the local people to participate in various conservations programs/activities to enable them to protect the surrounding natural areas. RDB/T&C should keep upgrading its website as it is not helping tourists to perform their transactions on line.

Government of Rwanda

Tourism facilities around NNP / VNP are still in poor conditions. These tourism facilities are roads, hotels, and lodges. Therefore we proposed that the Government of Rwanda should invest heavily in these infrastructures or create good climate for foreign investors since in a case they are not in a good condition, affect the tourists' satisfaction and the result is to hinder the promotion of Ecotourism, in the country. More efforts are still needed by the Government to sell Rwanda as a tourist destination. A lot of opportunities still exist for public sector to market Rwanda internationally. The use of foreign embassies present in Rwanda, Rwandan Commissioners abroad, official tours by government authorities abroad, international conferences taking place in Kigali have not yet been effectively implemented.

Local People

We also found that some tourists are not happy with local people calling them the word "MUZUNGU" and recommends that instead of using this word they should use the word "Friend" in order to build good relationship with them. Some local people around these two natural areas have the habit of begging tourists and this affect negatively the good image of Rwanda as an international touristic destination.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The major limitation during this study was the respondents' willingness to provide all the information requested. Apart from respondents' willingness, time and resource (financial) constraints compelled the study to use a very small sample from the whole population of RDB/T&C staff, tourists visiting Nyungwe/ Volcanoes National Parks and the local people living in the boundaries of these two parks. Lastly, few empirical researches have been done in the same area of study and hence intensive review of past studies was limited. For an intensive and comprehensive understanding of the area of study, we suggest that further research on assessment of the marketing strategies for promoting the cultural tourism in Rwanda should be conducted. Also, an assessment of marketing strategies for promoting e-tourism in Rwanda would be a valuable addition to this study.

CONCLUSION

Although the Government of Rwanda through its RDB/T&C has made efforts to make sure that ecotourism in Rwanda becomes one of the key sector where the country can focus on to generate much foreign currencies that can be used for the country's foreign transactions such as imports for both consumer and capital goods. In achieving these RDB/T&C has decided to apply different marketing strategies such as product strategy with the main focus on product diversification. Pricing strategy should focus on offering offer good value for money. The researcher found that promotional tools such as trade shows and exhibitions, internet /website and international TV stations to be of much use for their wide coverage and immediate message delivery. Distribution of these tourist products is undertaken by tour guides, travel guides, travel agents and ecotourism operators. RDB employees and local people were trained and informed to provide better hospitality to tourists visiting Rwanda's Ecotourist Products and the areas of training found to be customer care, communication skills, tourist product knowledge and tourist complaint handling for RDB staff and opinion leaders, broadcast media as well as event sponsorship such as Naming ceremony for mountain gorilla's young babies to inform the local people on how to provide better hospitality to tourists visiting Rwanda. Satisfied tourists with courtesy, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy displayed by Rwanda's tourist service staff in delivery is promising good results. Finally the environment which is friendly to tourists motivates them to enjoy their visit in NNP / VNP as varieties of vegetation, conducive weather and wonderful wildlife make them to really enjoy the beauty of the country of thousands hills.

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Unraveling the Movement from the Marketplace: Lesbian Responses to Gay-Oriented Advertising

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This research examines the effect of lesbians' in-group/out-group considerations of gay males on their responses to both gendered and non-gendered gay-oriented imagery. The findings indicate that lesbians' consideration of the extent to which they feel they share group membership with gay males plays a vital role in determining their attitudes towards advertisements that depict lesbian, gay male, or non-gendered ad content. These findings suggest that advertisers' current practice of predominantly using advertisements with gay male imagery is unnecessarily disenfranchising lesbians who do not consider themselves as sharing an in-group with gay males.

INTRODUCTION

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) consumer market is currently estimated to have an overall buying power of over $835 billion (Witeck and Combs, 2011). Over the past decade, corporate recognition of the attractiveness of LGBT consumer spending patterns has led to quite a dramatic increase in LGBT-oriented promotional activities. In 2004, 36% of Fortune 100 companies advertised directly to LGBT consumers, and US corporations now spend about $212 million annually in LGBT print media, according to the Gay Press Report from Rivendell Marketing and Prime Access, which tracks 284 U.S. LGBT press publications. Another $12 million was spent in online LGBT media, and over $7 million more spent annually on sponsorships in the LGBT community, totaling over $231 million in annual corporate spending in the LGBT community (Wilke, 2007).

Ragusa (2005) suggests that, between 1980 and 2000, Corporate America changed from stigmatizing and avoiding homosexuals to establishing a gay market niche. In doing so, it moved through three distinct phases in its treatment of the LGBT population: (i) corporate shunning in the 1980s, (ii) corporate curiosity and fear in the 1990s, and (iii) corporate pursuit in the 2000s. During this same time period, the gay social movement shifted from the calls for sexual freedom and fluidity that flourished in the 1970s and 1980s (Altman, 1987) to present day demands for equal treatment under the law. In discussing the role of the marketplace within social movements, Peñaloza (1996) states that, the marketplace may be viewed as an important domain of social contestation whereby disenfranchised groups engage in ongoing struggles for social and political incorporation. She suggests that, marketplace incorporation is important in the path to social legitimization of gay males and lesbians. Many corporations appear to have moved beyond mere inclusion of gay consumers in their marketing activities to a role of Corporate Advocacy in the current decade. Last year, companies such as Microsoft, Starbucks and Google were among 48 corporations signing a brief arguing to the federal appeals court in Boston that the Defense of Marriage

Act was bad for business. In New York, corporations were influential in persuading legislators to pass a bill legalizing same-sex marriage.

However, while corporate advocacy and inclusion in the marketplace and workplace is playing an important role in the gay social movement, observers have suggested that advertisers appear to consider the gay market as synonymous with the gay male market. Despite calls for an appreciation of the diversity between the gay male and lesbian markets (Bowes 1996; Freitas et al. 1996). marketers have, almost exclusively, used gay male imagery in advertising placed in gay print media (Baxter 2010). Critics have attributed his bias towards gay male consumers to one of two realities: (1) marketers have simply chosen to ignore the lesbian market, preferring to devote their advertising research to the supposedly more lucrative gay male market, or (2) they endorse the belief that a gay-male-oriented ad will also be effective in targeting lesbians who will translate subtext and code in gay marketing in order to see themselves represented in the advertising (Shulman 1998.)

Given corporations' increasing activism on behalf of equal rights for the LGBT population, it may be that their tendency to treat LGBT consumers as members of a single market stems from corporations' increasing participation in the public debate on equal rights for LGBT individuals. Discrimination based on sexual orientation at all levels of public policy unites the LGBT population in its fight to achieve equal rights in a way. Hence, based on their experience with the LGBT population united in their fight for equal rights in the public policy environment, companies who participate in the gay social movement may assume that the LGBT population can also be treated as a homogeneous market segment. However, the gay social movement's fight for equal rights for LGBT individuals may unite gay males and lesbians for a common cause while the marketplace may not. Given the need for gay males and lesbians to unite as a homogeneous group based on sexual orientation in the public policy arena as they fight for the same basic civil rights, an alternate, or perhaps additional, explanation of the predominance of gay-male-oriented ads is that advertisers may assume, while pursuing the gay male market, that a one-size-fits-all approach to the gay market will also capture lesbians (Oakenfull 2007).

This assumption is based on a lesbian's readiness to identify with gay males as members of a homogenous group based on sexual orientation. Bhat (1996) makes a strong argument for the lack of homogeneity that would exist in a gay and lesbian consumer segment. The author suggests that, in the vast majority of situations, sexual orientation cannot be considered a meaningful segmentation variable that results in homogeneous responses to a firm's marketing mix. A closer examination of both their lifestyles and resulting behavior patterns suggests meaningful difference between those of lesbians and gay men. Lesbians are more likely than gay men to be in a relationship (Hughes, 2007). live with a partner (Experian Simmons, 2012,) and have children (O'Connell & Feliz, 2011.) Conversely, they are less likely than gay men to socialize at gay bars or events, being more oriented toward private social and entertainment behavior, and less likely to live in urban neighborhoods.

Additionally, previous research has provided evidence that gay males and lesbians respond differently to various types of advertising content (Oakenfull and Greenlee, 2005; Oakenfull, 2007.) Oakenfull (2007) suggests that differences in advertising response can be attributed to fundamental differences in gay identity between the sexes. Feminist theorists (Etorre 1980, Rich 1980, Kitzinger 1987; Rust 1992, 1993) claim that the lesbian identity is distinct from that of gay males, as lesbians face simultaneous oppression based on their sex as well as their sexual orientation (Rich 1980; Rust 1992, 1993; Bristor and Fischer 1995). Rich believes that a definition of the lesbian existence necessitates a disassociation of lesbian from male homosexual values and allegiances. Hence, marketers may, in fact, be disenfranchising lesbians when a more informed treatment of lesbian consumers that considers that lesbians may vary in the degree to which they identify with gay males as part of the same group, would allow marketers to attract lesbians as a distinct consumer segment or as part of a shared gay market with gay males.

Given their typical differences in terms of lifestyle, economic welfare, and identity as gay, lesbians may vary in the degree to which they feel part of a homogeneous group with gay males. In this research, drawing on social identity theory and previous research on gay consumers' responses to gay-oriented advertising, the effect of lesbians' in-group/out-group considerations of gay males on their responses to both gendered and non-gendered gay-oriented imagery is examined.

GAYS AND LESBIANS IN ADVERTISING: A REVIEW OF ACADEMIC LITERATURE

Despite the growing number of firms that have begun to tap into the gay male and lesbian market, the topic has received very little attention from academic researchers. To date, relatively few published studies have empirically examined the effect of gay advertising content on consumers' attitudes toward the advertisement and none of these studies treat lesbians as a separate consumer segment.

Burnett (2000) provides the first evidence of the effect of sex differences in gay males' and lesbians' attitude toward gay-oriented advertising in general. Specifically, the study found that gay males hold a more negative attitude toward advertising than lesbians, and that lesbians are less interested in appropriate homosexual portrayals in advertising than are gay males. Thus, given the differences that appear to exist between gay males and lesbians in their attitudes toward advertising, one may question whether these differences influence the efficacy of various types of advertising content that are currently designed to target gay consumers.

Oakenfull (2007) examines how a gay individual's sex and level of gay identity play an important role in determining his or her response to various types of gay-oriented advertising messages. The research examined the effect of sex and level on gay identity on gay consumers' responses to advertising the varied on two dimensions: (i) the manner in which gayness was depicted, either with a same-sex couple (explicit) or with gay symbolism (implicit). and (ii) the sex of the same-sex couple used in the advertising. A three-way interaction of sex, gay identity, and ad content was found which was driven by both sex and gay identity effects for the ads that featured gay male imagery and implicit gay imagery.

This research builds off the extant literature to examine the assumption that lesbians can readily identify with gay male imagery based on their shared sexual orientation with gay males. Following Oakenfull's (2007) use of both gendered and non-gendered ad stimuli, we will explore the nuances of the lesbian identity and examine their impact on lesbians' responses to various types of gay-oriented advertising.

THE DUAL IDENTITY OF LESBIANS

Researchers have appraised the positive impact of the congruity between consumers' self-concept and advertising appeals on attitude and purchase intention (Hong & Zinkhan 1995) and between self-concept and brand image on the liking of the brand (Dolich 1969) and on purchase intention (Landon 1974). Social identity theory asserts that group membership creates in-group/self-categorization and enhancement that favor in-group at the expense of the out-group (Haslam 2001.) Thus, in order to be effectively targeted by gay male-oriented advertising, lesbians would have to consider themselves to be part of the same in-group as gay males, based on their shared identity as homosexual individuals. In line with this thinking, gay males and lesbians would be expected to respond equally well to gay-oriented advertising with depictions of either sex. Troiden (1988) classifies homosexual identity as a cognitive construct and a component of self-concept. Drawing on Cass's (1984) conceptualization of identity, Troiden (1988) incorporates the importance of reference to social categories relevant to a specific social setting or situation.

> *Homosexual identity refers to a perception of self as homosexual in relation to social settings, imagined or real, defined as romantic or sexual. A perception of self as homosexual assumes the form of an attitude – a potential line of action regarding self or others – that is mobilized in romantic or sexual settings (Troiden, 1988).*

Thus, Troiden (1988) argues that self-placement in the social category homosexual is a necessary part of homosexual identity formation, occurring commonly through interactions with other self-defined homosexuals during the coming out process (Dank, 1971; Plummer, 1975; Ponse, 1978). Hence, from an interactionist perspective, the term *homosexual* inves more than a certain kind of sexual orientation or sexual behavior. It also encompasses an identity and way of life.

However, feminists take issue with the treatment of gay identity as the dominant identity among lesbians and suggest that lesbians are commonly treated as female versions of male homosexuality (Rich 1980; Rust 1992, 1993). They argue that the lesbian identity is distinct from that of gays, as lesbians face simultaneous oppression based on their sex as well as their sexual orientation (Bristor and Fischer 1995). Adrienne Rich, a lesbian feminist, describes a lesbian continuum that puts woman-identifiedness at its core, a result of the socio-historical oppression of females. She writes:

> To equate lesbian existence with male homosexuality because each is stigmatized is to deny and erase female reality once again. To separate those women stigmatized as homosexual or gay from the complex continuum of female resistance to enslavement, and attach them to a male pattern, is to falsify our history. Parts of the history of lesbian existence is, obviously, to be found where lesbians, lacking a coherent female community, have shared a kind of social life and common cause with homosexual men. But this has to be seen against the differences: women's lack of economic and cultural privilege relative to men, qualitative differences in female and male relationships. (Rich 1980, p. 635)

Rich believes that a definition of the lesbian existence necessitates a disassociation of lesbian from male homosexual values and allegiances. She perceives the lesbian experience as being a profoundly *female* experience, with particular oppressions, meanings, and potentialities we cannot comprehend as long as we simply bracket it with other sexually stigmatized existences (Rich 1980). As such, lesbianism is more than sexuality; it is the emotional and psychological identification of women with other women.

For lesbians, the gay rights movement of the 1960s and 70s was experienced in tandem with the ideologies of Second Wave feminism that underpinned the women's movement (Sender, 2004.) Rich's lesbian continuum and the influence of the women's movement have contributed to the idea of a socio-political lesbian who rejected the commodified sexual world of gay men (Badgett 2001.) According to Sender (2004). lesbian feminism separated lesbians from gay males whom they saw as invested only in the hedonistic here and now of an increasingly open public sexual culture. The concept of a socio-political lesbian has been confirmed in empirical studies based on lesbian samples (see Etorre 1980, Kitzinger 1987, Ponse 1978,) but largely ignored by theories of homosexual identity development. Eliason (1996) suggests that this may be due to the fact that such theories are based on individual, intrapsychic variables that cannot account for such a concept; a perspective based largely in the socio-political context of feminism is required to capture the essence of the political dimension of lesbian identity. While the term political lesbian is widely used in studies of lesbian identity, the term political gay man does not appear to exist (Eliason 1996). In fact, research findings indicate that for gay men, sexual identity has been primarily associated with gay activity, whereas for lesbians there is a much stronger political and emotional component (Eliason 1996). Hence, despite the fact that lesbians have a shared identity as homosexual with gay males, due to the patriarchal nature of society as a whole and the distinctiveness of lesbian identity, lesbians may be less willing to readily identify with advertising containing gay male imagery than marketers assume.

For many homosexuals, however, their homosexual identity becomes a *master status* (Becker, 1963) at some points in their lives, where their homosexual identities are viewed as defining characteristics of self, and as attributes relevant to most social interactions and situations (Troiden 1988). According to Troiden (1988). this elevation in the importance of homosexual identity can be linked to the degree to which an individual perceives several factors to exist in society at any point in time: these include the social sigma surrounding homosexuality and homosexuals (Cass 1979, Plummer 1975, Ponse 1978 Troiden, 1979); the lack of legitimacy of the bisexual options (Blumstein and Schwarz 1977, Paul 1985); the culturally-defined link between homosexuality and gender-inappropriate behaviors (Cass, 1979; Plummer 1975); the heterosexual assumption – the presumption that everyone is heterosexual and that the logical progression of adult life includes marriage and family (Plummer 1971, Ponse 1978); and the tendency of dominant groups to inferiorize minorities to protect the hierarchy of access (Adams 1978).

Hence, the role that homosexual identity plays as a *master status* (Becker 1963) relative to lesbian identity may vary among lesbians, based on their perception of influences in their own environment.

Puntoni et al. (2011) states that viewers who believe that they belong to the target market display more favorable attitudes toward the ad than do viewers who feel excluded. As such, we may expect the depiction of either gay males or lesbians in gay-oriented imagery in advertising to have a differential effect on the responses of lesbians who feel that they are members of an in-group based on their homosexual identity that is shared with gay males than those who do not. Hence, some lesbians may view other lesbians as the in-group while considering gay males as an out-group, while others will consider themselves as part of an in-group based on sexual orientation with gay males. Drawing from identity theory, one would expect consumers to respond less favorably to advertisements that do not reflect their self-identity (Jaffe 1991). Relating this thinking to previous research on gay male consumers' responses to gay advertising (Bhat, Leigh and Wardlow 1996, Grier and Brumbaugh 1999). it is hypothesized that:

> *H1: Lesbians who consider themselves in an in-group with gay males will have a more positive attitude towards ads with gay male imagery than will lesbians who consider gay males an out-group.*

> *H2: Lesbians who consider gay males an out-group will have a more positive attitude towards ads with lesbian imagery that those with gay male imagery.*

As with many subcultures, the gay and lesbian subculture has developed markers of gay identity (Tharp 2001) such as clothes, symbols, language and appearance (Altman 1987, Kates 1998, Meyer 1994) that hold specific meaning to members of the subculture. Examples of such gay iconography and symbolism which are linked to the gay subculture include the rainbow, freedom rings, pink triangle, and references to family, pride and coming out. Subaru has placed an advertisement in gay and lesbian media that cleverly incorporates gay symbolism and code on the license plate and bumper sticker of three cars so as to appeal to different types of gay and lesbian consumers (Pertman 2001.) Oakenfull (2007) found that lesbians varied in their responses to ads with non-gendered gay imagery based on their level of gay identity.

In the context of this study, given the polarizing effect of gay male imagery on lesbians who consider gay males an out-group, the use of non-gendered gay imagery in advertising may allow all lesbians to identity with the advertisement based on their sexual orientation without the risk of alienating their lesbian identity. Hence, we suggest that all lesbians may respond similarly to advertising with non-gendered imagery, regardless of in-group/out-group perceptions based on sexual identity. Additionally, consistent with Oakenfull (2007), we would not expect lesbians to have any preference between the lesbian ad imagery and the non-gendered imagery, given that each taps into their lesbian in-group identity. However, lesbians who consider themselves distinct from gay males will consider the non-gendered ad as a reflection of their identity as lesbian and prefer it over the disenfranchising effect of ads with gay male imagery, while lesbians who see themselves in an in-group with gay males will respond equally well with either ad. Hence, it is hypothesized that:

> *H3: Lesbians who consider gay males an out-group will have a more positive attitude toward ads with non-gendered gay-oriented imagery than ads with gay male imagery.*

METHOD

Stimuli

Three advertisements representing varying types of advertising content are utilized in the study. The advertising stimuli created for the study include advertisements that depict 1) gay male imagery, 2) lesbian imagery, and 3) non-gendered gay imagery. The ad with lesbian imagery shows two women in an embrace, while the gay male ad shows two men in the same embrace. In each ad, one of the couple is taking a beverage out of a six-pack and features the headline Another One Coming Out, which taps into gay speak or gay-subcultural language as a reference to gays and lesbians identifying themselves to others as gay (Altman 1987, Kates 1998, Meyer 1994.) The non-gendered gay-oriented ad shows a close-up of a hand removing the bottle from the six-pack with the same headline, but does not include any people explicitly. Ad stimuli were developed for two different brands – Starbucks and Blue Moon - to ensure that brand familiarity and brand affect had no effect on the results.

Participants and Procedure

Estimates of homosexuality within the US population run from 3 percent to 10 percent. Thus, a randomized sampling procedure would be unlikely to yield a sizable sample of homosexual participants. A snowball sampling procedure was utilized where the author distributed surveys to self-identified lesbians at a gay and lesbian choral festival in Montreal, Canada, a gay pride festival in Columbus, Ohio, and to employees at a mid-size mid-western university. Participants in the study included 172 self-identified lesbians. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 74 years old, with a mean age of 34 years old. Household incomes ranged from under $25,000 to over $200, 000, with a mean of $82,000.

Prior to being shown the ads, each participant was asked to indicate whether they had recently purchased or consumed the brand being studied to measure brand usage. Additionally, using a nine-point semantic differential scale in each case, they were asked to indicate the extent to which they were familiar with the brand, their image of the brand (very negative to very positive). their opinion of the brand (very unfavorable to very favorable). and their feelings for the brand (dislike very much to like very much.)

The author felt that a within-subject research design that allowed participants to see all three ads would lead to hypothesis guessing when both the gay male and lesbian ads were presented. Additionally, given the challenges of ascertaining a sizeable sample of lesbian participants, there were concerns that a full between-subjects research design may require an unattainable sample size of lesbians. Hence, each participant was then presented with two ads – one gendered and one non-gendered. The order that the advertisements were presented was counterbalanced to control for order effects. For the gendered ad, each participant was given either the ad with gay male imagery or the ad with lesbian imagery.

Participants were asked to review each ad in turn and to answer a three-item attitude toward the advertisement measure accompanying each advertisement. Specific questions on a 9-point semantic differential scale included: How good or bad would you say this ad is? (very bad to very good); What is your overall reaction to this ad? (very unfavorable to very favorable); and How much would you say you like or dislike this ad? (dislike very much to like very much). They were then asked to repeat the procedure for the non-gendered gay-oriented ad, with instructions not to refer back to the previous ad. The survey concluded with general demographic measures including sexual orientation, age, gender, and household income.

Lesbians' in-group/out-group attitude towards gay males was measured with a 9-point semantic differential scale where participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statement *I feel that gay males and lesbians are part of the same group* (strongly disagree to strongly agree.)

RESULTS

Manipulation Check and Attitude Measure Reliability

As expected, Starbucks had significantly higher brand usage ($F_{1,\ 167}$ = 38.366, p =.000). brand familiarity ($F_{1,\ 167}$ = 95.292, p =.000). and brand affect ($F_{1,\ 150}$ = 7.402, p =.007) than had Blue Moon. Cronbach alpha coefficient measures of reliability for the three-item brand affect measure yielded a satisfactory result of α =0.96 with n = 152. As predicted, brand usage, brand familiarity and brand affect had no effect on participants' response to advertising depicting the brands. Cronbach alpha coefficient measures of reliability for the three-item attitude toward the advertisement (Aad) measure yielded a satisfactory result of α = .97 with n = 166. Table 1 shows the means for Aad as a result of the counterbalanced order in which ads were presented to participants. A series of ANOVAS showed the order that the ads were presented (gendered vs non-gendered) for both the gay male ad and the lesbian ad had no effect on attitude towards the ad. The mean for the measure of being in an in-group with gay males was 6.27 with a median of 6.0. A median split was performed to establish a variable to represent in-group and out-group feelings towards gay males among lesbians.

TABLE 1
EFFECT OF ORDER OF AD PRESENTATION (GENDERED VS. NON-GENDERED)

Dependent Variable	**Order**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std Error**
Attitude towards lesbian ad	Lesbian first	51	5.94	0.312
	Non-gendered first	47	6.34	0.321
Attitude towards non-gendered ad	Lesbian first	52	6.54	0.251
	Non-gendered first	47	6.26	0.266
Dependent Variable	**Order**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std Error**
Attitude towards gay male ad	Gay male first	52	4.92	0.322
	Non-gendered first	48	4.79	0.326
Attitude towards non-gendered ad	Gay male first	53	5.77	0.29
	Non-gendered first	50	5.86	0.333

H1 (Effect of In-Group Perceptions on Lesbians' Responses to Ads with Gay Male Imagery)

Consistent with Hypothesis 1 and presented in Table 2, an analysis of variance procedure shows that lesbians who consider themselves in an in-group with gay males will have a significantly more positive attitude towards ads with gay male imagery (M= 5.53) than will lesbians who consider gay males an out-group (M = 4.40; $F_{1, 101}$ = 6.332, p =.013.)

TABLE 2
EFFECT OF GENDER OF AD IMAGERY ON OUT-GROUP LESBIANS' RESPONSES TO ADS DESCRIPTIVES

Attitude Towards Gendered Ad

Gender of Ad	**Factor**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Error**	**95 percent Confidence Interval**	
					Lower Bound	**Upper Bound**
Gay Male Ad	**g&l out-group**	57	4.4	0.255	3.89	4.91
	g&l in-group	45	5.53	0.389	4.75	6.32
	Total	102	4.9	0.229	4.45	5.36
Lesbian Ad	**g&l out-group**	35	5.77	0.355	5.05	6.49
	g&l in-group	67	6.33	0.273	5.78	6.87
	Total	102	6.14	0.217	5.71	6.57

ANOVA

Attitude Towards Gendered Ad

Gender of Ad		**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Gay Male Ad	Between Groups	32.1	1	32.1	**6.332**	**0.013**
	Within Groups	506.919	100	5.069		
	Total	539.02	101			
Lesbian Ad	Between Groups	7.131	1	7.131	**1.489**	**0.225**
	Within Groups	478.948	100	4.789		
	Total	486.078	101			

H2 (Effect of Gender of Ad Imagery on Out-Group Lesbians' Responses to Ads)

Consistent with Hypothesis 2 and presented in Table 3, an analysis of variance procedure shows that lesbians who consider themselves in an out-group relative to gay males will have a significantly more positive attitude towards ads with lesbian imagery (M= 5.77) than they will towards ads with gay male imagery (M = 4.40; $F_{1, 91}$ = 10.204, p =.002.)

TABLE 3
EFFECT OF GENDER OF AD IMAGERY ON OUT-GROUP LESBIANS' RESPONSES TO ADS DESCRIPTIVES

Attitude Towards Gendered Ad

Feel Gay Males and Lesbians Same Group	**Factor**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Error**	**95 percent Confidence Interval for Mean**	
					Lower Bound	**Upper Bound**
g&l out-group	**Gay Male Ad**	57	4.4	1.926	3.89	4.91
	Lesbian Ad	35	5.77	2.102	5.05	6.49
	Total	92	4.92	2.093	4.49	5.36
g&l in-group	**Gay Male Ad**	45	5.53	2.608	4.75	6.32
	Lesbian Ad	67	6.33	2.232	5.78	6.87
	Total	112	6.01	2.411	5.56	6.46

ANOVA

Attitude Towards Gendered Ad

Feel Gay Males and Lesbians Same Group		**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
g&l out-group	Between Groups	40.577	1	40.577	**10.204**	**0.002**
	Within Groups	357.891	90	3.977		
	Total	398.467	91			
g&l in-group	Between Groups	17.015	1	17.015	**2.98**	**0.087**
	Within Groups	627.976	110	5.709		
	Total	644.991	111			

H3 (Out-Group Lesbians' Attitudes Toward Gay Male vs. Non-Gendered Gay-Oriented Advertising)

Consistent with Hypothesis 3 and presented in Table 4, a paired samples t-test procedure shows that lesbians who consider gay males an out-group will have a significantly more positive attitude toward ads with non-gendered gay-oriented imagery (M = 5.61) than towards ads with gay male imagery (M = 4.4; t_{55}= 3.921, p =.000.)

TABLE 4
OUT-GROUP LESBIANS' ATTITUDES TOWARD GAY MALE VS. NON-GENDERED GAY-ORIENTED ADVERTISING

Paired Samples Statistics

Feel Gay Males and Lesbians Same Group	Gender of Ad		Mean	N	Std. Error Mean
g&l out-group	Gay Male Ad	Attitude Towards Gendered Ad	4.41	56	0.26
		Attitude Towards Non-gendered	5.61	56	0.312
	Lesbian Ad	Attitude Towards Gendered Ad	5.77	35	0.355
		Attitude Towards Non-gendered	6.49	35	0.311
g&l in-group	Gay Male Ad	Attitude Towards Gendered Ad	5.53	45	0.389
		Attitude Towards Non-gendered	6.09	45	0.308
	Lesbian Ad	Attitude Towards Gendered Ad	6.33	67	0.273
		Attitude Towards Non-gendered	6.4	67	0.224

Paired Samples Test

Feel Gay and Lesbians Same Group	Gender of Ad	Paired Differences					
			Mean	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
g&l out-group	Gay Male Ad	Attitude Towards Gendered Ad - Attitude Towards Non-gendered	-1.196	2.284	-1.808	55	0
	Lesbian Ad	Attitude Towards Gendered Ad - Attitude Towards Non-gendered	-0.714	2.652	-1.625	34	0.12
g&l in-group	Gay Male Ad	Attitude Towards Gendered Ad - Attitude Towards Non-gendered	-0.556	2.889	-1.423	44	0.204
	Lesbian Ad	Attitude Towards Gendered Ad - Attitude Towards Non-gendered	-0.075	2.636	-0.718	66	0.817

CONCLUSIONS

This research examined the effect of lesbians' attitudes toward group membership with gay males on their responses to various types of gay-oriented advertising. The results are consistent with the theoretical perspectives offered and advance prior research in several important directions. The findings of this study indicate that lesbians' consideration of the extent to which they feel they share group membership with gay males plays a vital role in determining lesbians' attitudes towards various types of advertising imagery.

Consistent with perspectives from lesbian feminist theory that focus on the power-hierarchy that exists within homosexual society as a result of societal gender-inequities (Rich, 1980; Rust, 1992, 1993) and social identity theory's ideas on in-group bias, this research found that, while all lesbians utilize an in-group attitude towards ads with lesbian imagery and non-gendered gay-oriented advertising, responses to gay male imagery are dependent on in-group/out-group judgments of gay males. Drawing from Identity Theory which suggests that consumers respond most favorably to advertisements reflecting their self-identity (Jaffe, 1991). the key to effectively reaching lesbian consumers is understanding the nuances of the lesbian identity distinct from that of gay males.

The findings of this study suggest that advertisers' current practice of predominantly using advertisements with gay male imagery (Baxter 2010, *Wall Street Journal* 1999) is unnecessarily disenfranchising lesbians who do not consider themselves to share an in-group with gay males. If advertisers do want to utilize a one-size-fits-all approach to reaching the gay population, this research suggests that they can do so by utilizing non-gendered ads with gay symbolism to create a dynamic where all gay males and lesbians are targeted as an in-group. Puntoni et al. (2011) refers to ads that overtly target gay consumers through the use of ambiguous cues as gay window dressing. However, while Peñaloza (1996) suggests that the use of gay and lesbian symbolism has the quality of providing an inside joke, shared between the gay and lesbian audience and the advertiser, but meaningless to heterosexuals, gay and lesbian consumers may see this attempt to fly under the gaydar as a lack of commitment to the gay social movement (Gudelanas 2010).

As such, it seems increasingly important that marketers begin to consider this group of consumers not as the *gay and lesbian market* but as *the gay market and the lesbian market.* Fugate (1997) takes issue with the treatment of the homosexual market as a homogeneous consumer segment citing the group's inability to meet Craven's (1987) criteria of being identifiable, sufficient, stable, and accessible. While societal shifts in the acceptability of homosexuality and the growth of gay media over the past decade have rendered many of Fugate's (1993) arguments outdated, Bhat (1996) makes a strong argument for the lack of homogeneity that would exist in a gay and lesbian consumer segment. The author suggests that, in the vast majority of situations, sexual orientation cannot be considered a meaningful segmentation variable that results in homogeneous responses to a firm's marketing mix. Bhat (1996) warns against the use of demographic variables, such as sexual orientation, as a base of segmentation, which should be an underlying characteristic that differentiates segments. When marketers do create segments based on sexual orientation, Bhat (1996) would argue, and this author agrees, that marketers are using a descriptor as a base of segmentation. He warns that such a practice leads to stereotyping, assuming that everyone who fits the descriptor would behave a certain way. As Bhat (1996) goes on to suggest, and as this research supports, not everyone in a demographic or psychographic segment would perceive all marketing activities in the same way.

Even if one were to disregard Bhat's (1996) concern about the meaningfulness of sexual orientation as a segmentation variable, the idea of a market segment where gay and lesbian consumers form a homogenous consumer group based on their sexual orientation seems intractably linked to societal intolerance of homosexuality. While the current need for political power to achieve basic human rights draws gays and lesbians together, it may be a mistake to assume that the market should do likewise. Hence, it may be that marketers' current practice of targeting gay males while excluding lesbians is in fact sound marketing practice, if the objective is to effectively target a homogeneous market segment.

As this research suggests, gays and lesbians are difficult to target as one consumer segment. The problem with the current marketing practice of using predominantly gay male imagery in gay-oriented advertising may lie not in the execution but in the stated intent. Marketers' (and owners of mixed gay media's) claims that their activities (or media) are designed to reach both gays and lesbians result in either the disenfranchisement or, at the very least, the negligence of lesbians. Sender (2004) points out an asymmetry that exists in marketers' perceptions of advertising in mixed gay media. While they consider the use of lesbian ad imagery in mixed gay and lesbian media, such as *The Advocate*, as uneconomical due to the lost 70 percent of male readers, there is no such concern about the lost 30 percent of lesbians when using gay male imagery in advertising (Sender 2004).

DISCUSSION

Because of a paucity of data on gay consumers, advertisers eyeing the gay market often are left either to make assumptions about the segment's spending and media habits or to advertise via gay publications and grassroots marketing efforts, which reach only smaller number of the market. Additionally, when conducted, research on the gay market has tended to group lesbians with gay males, without offering specific information on the lesbian market. While there's no doubt that lesbians have different demographics and buying habits than gay males, little is formally known about their purchase motivation or attitudes.

While stereotypes about gay males have drawn the attention of marketers (they earn more money than the general population, have expensive tastes, enjoy fashion, theater, home decorating, dance, music, art, design, gourmet goods). lesbian stereotypes have caused most mainstream marketers to stay away. Common stereotypes label them as politically-minded feminists who don't subscribe to consumerism and, as a result, don't like fashion, makeup, or shopping in general (Wilke 2005). Additionally, lesbian couples are wrongly assumed to suffer twice as much as a heterosexual couple from the sex differential in incomes in the US, making a lesbian household less attractive than both gay male and heterosexual households to marketers (Badgett 1997.) Analysis of the US Census also indicates that 57 percent of same-sex couples have both partners of a household working, compared to 48 percent of opposite-sex couples. Additionally, in a recent survey, 59 percent of lesbians lived with a partner compared with 37 percent of gay men. Hence, while lesbians are likely to earn less than all men, lesbian households are more likely to consist of two incomes than are either gay male or heterosexual households.

The recent advent of *The L Word*, the series on Showtime, has challenged some of these stereotypes and put a sexy, contemporary gloss on lesbian life and has brought lesbians more to the forefront. A deeper look at lesbian incomes and spending patterns reveals the need for a treatment of lesbians as an attractive consumer segment separate from both heterosexual women and gay males. On average, lesbians earn 20 percent to 34 percent more than heterosexual women according to a 2005 Simmons Gay and Lesbian Consumer Study. Readers of *Curve*, a major lesbian-oriented print magazine, report annual salaries averaging $71,000 and 61 percent are college graduates (Warn 2006). According to the 2007 Lesbian Consumer Index by Community Marketing, 96 percent of lesbians hold at least one credit card, compared to 76 percent of US households overall. Additionally, in 2002, Ford Motor Co. learned from collaborative research with Harris Interactive that specific differences existed between lesbians and gay men in the types of vehicles they drove and the features they preferred

The gay media landscape has finally begun to recognize the potential of the lesbian market and is becoming slightly representative of the full spectrum of the gay rainbow in the past few years. *Curve*, with a circulation of 63,000, is now joined by a number of regional lesbian magazines, such as New York City's *Velvet Park* and Los Angeles' *Lesbian News*. Additionally, *Jane & Jane* was launched this summer as a quarterly upscale lifestyle magazine, while *Olivia*, best known for its lesbian cruise line, has plans to launch a magazine directed to its direct-mail list of over 275,000 current and previous customers, 89 percent of whom make over $50,000 and 58 percent have incomes exceeding $100,000 (Warn, 2006.)

However, despite the growing availability of gay-targeted media offerings, readers of lesbian magazines represent a small proportion of all lesbians in the population, making them difficult to target. While dedicated lesbian publications suffer from low circulation, mixed audience gay publications don't attract substantial numbers of women. For example, only 25 percent of readers of *The Advocate*, titled the leading gay and lesbian magazine in the world, are lesbian. The 2004 Gay/Lesbian Consumer Online Census, consisting of 5000 mostly 18 – 24 year olds, found that lesbians consume less of all types of gay media than gay males. 29 percent of gay males read gay-oriented magazines weekly, compared to only 15 percent of lesbians; 28 percent of gay males read gay-oriented newspapers weekly, compared to only 14 percent of lesbians; and 48 percent of gay males visit gay-oriented U.S.—based Web sites daily, compared to 23 percent of lesbians.

That said, convincing marketers of the viability of the lesbian consumer market is not without its challenges. Lesbian consumers suffer from stereotypes of anti-consumerism stemming from the tenets of

Second Wave feminism's opposition to capitalism in general, and the beauty and fashion industries specifically (Sender 2004.) While new stereotypes of lesbians in popular culture (e.g. Lipstick Lesbians, Sexy Androgyny) have permeated over recent years, the anti-consumer, anti-feminine stereotype of lesbians continues to shape marketers' perceptions of the attractiveness of the market. Additionally, marketers often defend their negligence of the lesbian market by citing the difficult of accessibility. Sender (2004) quotes the head of an ad agency that supposedly focuses on the LGBT market as saying, there are just hundreds of thousands, millions of lesbians who are paired off, living together, who are living quiet lives on the edge of woods or in the heart of the city or whatever, that … are very hard to reach. Apparently, what makes lesbians inaccessible is their lack of similarity to the distinct behavior patterns of gay men. Lesbians are more likely than gay men to be in a relationship (Hughes, 2006). are more likely to have children, are less likely to socialize at gay bars or events, are more oriented toward private social and entertainment behavior, and may not live in urban neighborhoods. However, rather than being insular and invisible, this places them in line with mainstream culture, especially at similar life-stages. The bigger challenge for lesbians who do want to see themselves represented in the marketplace may be their lack of representation among marketing and agency decision makers. While gay male professionals have played a large role in the development of the gay male market as educators, consultants, and decision-makers within corporations and agencies, lesbians have yet to evolve as an influential force within the same professional sphere.

Limitations

This research represents the first study that focuses exclusively on lesbians as a credible consumer segment. To date, the majority of published consumer research in this area is heavily focused on the gay male market (see Bhat et al. 1996, Grier and Brumbaugh 1998, Kates 1998, 1999, 2002, 2004). This research attempts to explore the impact of lesbians' dual identity as gay and female on their responses to gay-oriented advertising. However, the author does not mean to imply nor reinforce a binary or static notion of queerness as gay male or lesbian with this study's in-group/out-group theoretical treatment of self-identified lesbians as a distinct consumer segment. The binary perspective adopted in this study merely reflects an attempt to move beyond the assumption that gay means *gay male* and an attempt to provide a conceptualization of a lucrative, sizeable and identifiable market segment that has been ignored by practitioners and academics alike. In fact, the tenets of social identity theory applied here can be stretched to provide a very interesting conceptual basis upon which to incorporate the identities of bi-sexual and transgendered individuals into marketing thought.

The author recognizes the limitation of using advertisements with real brands. However, real advertisements were not used in this study to control for a variety of potential confounding variables. As reported, the existence of a-prior brand factors such as brand usage, brand familiarity, and brand affect were found to have no effect on participants' responses to advertising depicting the brands.

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Aligning Communicated and Conceived Brand Promise in Professional Services Firms

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Professional services advertising plays an important role in signally service quality. Prior research has focused on the expectations of clients in the decision to engage a professional services provider. Yet, little is known about how professional services providers incorporate this information and craft advertising messages that address these expectations such that they are aligned with client needs. This research examines the advertisements of corporate law firms (n = 140) and finds that while most firms are prioritizing the importance of legal expertise, they are failing to recognize the importance of relationships in making connections with prospects and customers.

INTRODUCTION

Attracting new clients and retaining loyal clients is a primary marketing goal for professional services firms. This can only be achieved by delivering a high level of service quality such that client expectations are met or exceeded. On the other hand, evaluating high quality service is also a challenge for clients and potential clients of professional services firms as many professional services firms are difficult to differentiate (Day & Barksdale, 1992). While professional services providers such as lawyers, accountants, advertising agencies, and financial planners depend heavily on personal selling and relationship building for their sales programs (Koku, 2009), advertising also has an important role to play in signaling the promise of service quality and helps to establish a positive image of the firm (Trasorras et al., 2009). Quality service delivery must be promised and delivered with both the unequivocal resource commitment from the provider and the explicit awareness by the provider of client expectations (Kotler & Bloom, 2002). Advertising in professional services has not received a significant amount of attention in the marketing literature; however it enables professional services providers to bridge the gap between the promise and the expectation of service delivery.

Previous research indicates that professional services firms communicate quality service through advertising (Hite et al., 2000) as well as other promotional tactics such as events and seminars. Advertising cultivates commitment and trust by aligning promises and expectations (Moorman et al., 1993). The promise of service quality cues increases the perceived credibility of the service provider among clients (Clow et al., 1996), which can enhance the corporate reputation. The communication effectiveness of a professional services provider is one of the primary drivers of establishing a relationship commitment (Sharma & Patterson, 1999), which can enhance satisfaction and loyalty. Advertisements make promises about a company’s brand. Professional services providers may invest considerable resources in advertising, yet the academic research has not examined how these service providers achieve congruence between their own brand promises and the expectations of their prospects and clients.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Professional services are at the extreme of service brands in that they are highly intangible, complex, and customized, making the selection of a service provider difficult and risky. Professional services are credence goods (Darby & Karni, 1973) whereby the benefits of these complex services are both difficult to define prior to sale and may be difficult to evaluate even after the service has been provided. Professional services are heterogeneous and are frequently delivered by highly educated and trained people (Thakor & Kumar, 2000). Professional services clients usually do not receive a refund for services if they are dissatisfied, for example, with a negative legal decision, a poorly tolerated medical treatment, a weak advertising response, or a loss in the financial markets. The client usually has to complete the transaction with the service provider as contractually obligated. Even when the service outcome is satisfactory, a client may still have difficulty ascertaining if the payment of services rendered was appropriate.

Professional services providers are under pressure to change the way in which they related to their markets as a result of more informed clients and an increasingly competitive environment (Reid, 2008). Both technical quality and building more connected relationships with clients are becoming key elements for professional services providers' success. However, the challenge is understanding clients' expectations of service quality at the marketing planning stage, such that effective marketing tactics can be developed (Pels et al., 2001). For these reasons, this research examines the advertising messages that promise quality service by professional services providers and whether these promises are congruent with the factors that clients use to form perceptions of quality service.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A consistent corporate identity enables a firm to attract qualified leads and retain more loyal customers. The creation of a corporate identity involves both understanding what you stand for as a company, responding to client expectations, as well as conforming to industry reputation. The corporate identity literature has expanded from a focus on logos and taglines (van Riel and Balmer, 1997), to a concept which is defined as who the company is and how it wants to be perceived by stakeholders (Balmer, 2001). The corporate identity combines corporate personality, corporate culture, corporate and employee behavior, and industry identity (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006). The manifestation of the corporate identity is expressed in corporate brand communication, including controlled communication such as advertising. Corporate branding activities address the key question of what promises are being communicated to stakeholders that are intended to increase the value of the firm and its service offerings (Hatch & Schultz, 2003).

Industry identity is particularly relevant in professional services where the reputation of certain practitioners has been tarnished due to uncontrolled crises. Stakeholders tend to group companies together to blame them when scandals or ethical predicaments occur. Some professional services providers have consistently low images that never seem to improve despite significant image campaigns. According to Gallup's annual poll of industry image, which has been conducted since 2001, the industries which consistently rank at the bottom of the list include: banking, real estate, advertising, public relations, and the legal field (Gallup, 2012). Industry identity, therefore, may have a significant impact on the overall corporate identity (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006).

A coherent alignment of identity is a desired state for a company because it has brand, reputation, and performance implications (Anisimova & Mavondo, 2010). The congruency between communicated and conceived identity is based on Balmer's AC4ID Test. This fourth generation of the ACID test identifies several identity types which group around the corporate brand (Balmer, 2012). Communicated identity is controlled by the organization and includes corporate communication such as advertising, sponsorships, corporate branding, public relations, and web sites (Balmer, 2001). It answers the question of who the corporation claims to be. The conceived identity is a perception held by key stakeholders and encompasses the expectations organization's corporate brand. It addresses how stakeholders perceive and interpret corporate images and messages. The AC4ID test holds that there should be meaningful alignment between the identity modes such that the corporate brand provides utility and longevity to both the corporation and its stakeholders.

When applied to controlled communication, a brand promise is comprised of words and images that express what clients can expect from interactions with a professional services firm. These corporate brand promises are intended to increase the value of the firm and its service offerings (Hatch &Schultz, 2003).

HYPOTHESES

The business-to-business literature provides preliminary insights into the how clients select service providers. Day & Barksdale (1992) identified four factors that underlie the decision of clients in the selection of a professional services provider: (1) experience, expertise, and competence; (2) an understanding of clients' needs and interests; (3) interaction, relationships, and communication; and (4) contractual conformance. Their research however, did not prioritize the importance of each factor to the client. Hart & Hogg (1998) found that expertise was the most important factor that clients used to evaluate corporate legal services. This was followed by accessibility and involvement, industry specialization, and finally, fees for advice given.

The factors of importance for clients to stay with professional services providers are similar to those for evaluating whether to initially engage with professional services providers. The most important reason for staying was expertise, followed by relationship responsiveness (Stewart, Hope & Muhlemann, 1998). Palihawadana & Barnes (2004) conducted a study on client loyalty and defection in the corporate legal industry in which they ranked the reasons why clients stay with their law firms based on a random sample of businesses in the U.K. The top three factors were identified as (1) technical quality and integrity, (3) relationship responsiveness and (3) compatibility including industry expertise, reputation, and size. In sum, the reasons for how clients select service providers from most to least important is expertise, relationships, industry knowledge, and contractual conformance.

> *H1: Professional services advertising messages will be congruent with the expectations of clients such that legal expertise, relationships, industry knowledge, and contractual conformance will be prioritized.*

Professional services advertising is impersonal however, it is part of the earliest stages in the relationship development process, as the initial step in an information flow with a client. The advertisement contains a message of commitment by the firm to high quality service delivery. These are rational benefits of a service engagement. The goal of professional services advertising is to gain the attention of potential clients by emphasizing the firm's capabilities and resources and to build a positive image among stakeholders via an instrumental approach. This approach emphasizes expertise and problem-solving knowledge so that the audience for the advertisement can make a pragmatic decision on whether to qualify themselves as a potential client.

Research on the most effective dimensions of business-to-business advertising showed both positive and negative impacts of particular advertising cues (Lohtia, Johnston & Aab, (1995). The rational appeal was positive across all four dimensions in their model: the company's orientation or visibility, advertising characteristics, selling proposition, and audience's affective response to the advertisement. Thus, a rational message approach should be used for effective business to business advertisements with logical information being provided on firms' capabilities.

> *H2: Rational advertising dominates professional services advertising.*

Corporate branding in professional services comprises both the promise of service delivery and the creation of sensory based images such as sounds, words, images, and colors that enable a positive brand experience for prospects and clients. (Abratt & Kleyn, 2012). Lohtia et al. (1995) found significant negative cues that diminished advertising effectiveness, including: information on the number of years of experience of the firm, the telephone number, the size of the text (i.e., too much text relative to white space), and the display of crowds of people. Negative cues are those that are less important that the primary content messages. Thus, we hypothesize that more effective professional services advertising will minimize negative cues.

H3: Negative cues will be minimized in professional services advertising.

If the factors that clients use to evaluate professional services providers are known, then the messages that professional services provider use in their advertising should be consistent. Thus, the level of congruity between the information provided in professional services advertising and the attitude held by the target of the advertisement may influence advertising effectiveness (Jayanti, 1996).

METHODOLOGY

The context for this study is advertising by corporate law firms. Law firm advertising began in 1977, when the U.S. Supreme Court held in Bates v. Arizona, 433 U.S. 350 held that the legal profession would not be harmed by advertising. The court ruled that prohibiting advertising by law firms was a violation of the constitutional right to free speech. A meta-analysis (Hite & Fraser, 1988) found that professionals were concerned that advertising might have a negative impact on image and credibility. Advertising by law firms is still regulated by each state's bar association, with some states being relatively liberal and others having strict guidelines of what type of illustration or copy is permitted. Nevertheless, advertising by law firms is common place for both corporate and criminal law firms.

The sample advertisements focused on regional and national law firms serving the business-to-business corporate market. The data used in the analysis includes 140 advertisements from regional and national publications. The regional publications include weekly newspapers or monthly magazines aimed at the local business community, such as *The Business Journals*, which publish over three dozen city-focused newspapers. The national trade magazines are aimed at in-house legal counsel and lawyers in law firms. They include *IP Law & Business*, *Corporate Counsel*, and *American Lawyer*. The target audiences for these publications include in-house legal counsel who frequently engages outside counsel due to work overload and/or specialty advice, as well as C-level executives, and business owners.

Content analysis of business advertising has assessed variables such as layout style, headline composition, color, length of copy and vocabulary (Korgaonkar, Bellenger & Smith, 1986; Lohtia, et al., 1995). Content analysis of the advertisements was used (Neuendorf, 2002)and a coding sheet was designed based on Resnik & Stern (1977) with modifications by Lohtia et al. (1995). The advertisements were initially coded by the author. The information in Table 1 was collected.

To establish inter-rater reliability 92 coders were trained in one undergraduate marketing class and two executive MBA classes. Each of the coders evaluated 4 advertisements, resulting in 368 observations. Coder agreement ranged from 75.83 percent to 98.36 percent. A binomial test (Table 2) was first conducted to determine if the proportion of responses where there were two categories (1 = yes, 2 = no) were different. The difference between national versus regional publication and whether there was a logo or not was not significant. All other measures were significant ($p < .05$).

TABLE 1
ANALYZED CONTENT

Was the publication national or regional?
Did a logo appear in the ad?
Did a tag line appear in the ad?
Did a telephone number appear in the ad?
Did a web site address appear in the ad?
Did the headline or copy indicate the age of the firm, how many years it had been in business or when it was founded?
Did the headline or copy indicate a cue that the firm was a global enterprise?
What was the advertising appeal?
What was the brand promise?

TABLE 2
BINOMIAL TEST

	Category	N	Observed Prop.	Significance
National Regional	1	72	.51	.800
	2	68	.49	
Logo	1	71	.51	.933
	2	69	.49	
Tag Line	1	51	.36	.002 *
	2	89	.64	
Phone	1	91	.65	.001 *
	2	49	.35	
Web site	1	133	.95	.001 *
	2	7	.05	
Age/Years in Business	1	21	.15	.001 *
	2	119	.85	
Global orientation	1	30	.21	.001 *
	2	110	.79	

* $p < .05$

The chi-squared test serves a purpose similar to the binomial test, except that it can be used when there are more than two categories to the variable. The test shows that the differences for advertising appeal and brand promise are significant ($p < .05$). Day & Barksdale's (1992) selection criteria were used in the analysis of H1, which hypothesized that professional service providers' advertising messages, or brand promises, was congruent with client selection factors. For inter-rater reliability, coders were trained to recognize some of the following additional cues to assist them in classification as illustrated in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3
CODING FOR BRAND PROMISE OF LAW FIRM ADVERTISEMENT

Brand Promise	Additional Cues
(1) Legal expertise	Experience, knowledge of areas of law, competence, service quality, qualifications of firm/partners, abilities of partners, list of services offered, recognized by awards/peers
(2) Industry knowledge	Understands client's business, focused on client's business problems, client-firm partnership, working together, knows client's industry, team players
(3) Client relationship	Communication, interaction, listens and responds, rapport, trust, integrity, commitment, dedication to client, personal attention
(4) Conformance	Competitive fees, getting results, resolution, solutions-oriented, cost-effective, winning trials/verdicts

Note. The number on brand promise is the coding number and is used in the cross-tabulations

This analysis suggests that law firms are not listening to what their clients are saying about what factors are most important to them when it comes to expectation of quality service delivery. Palihawadana & Barnes (2004) found that service quality and expertise followed by relationships were the most important loyalty factors. Industry expertise ranked low on the list. The analysis finds that law firm advertising is correctly identifying expertise as a critical service delivery factor, but the advertising as a whole appears to be overemphasizing the importance of understanding the client's business, or industry knowledge. Clients stay with their law firms because of their expertise in complex legal issues and understanding the client's business is not a main reason for loyalty. Relationship management was the next most important loyalty factor, but only captured about 15 percent of legal advertising brand promise in advertising. Hypothesis 1 is not supported. The percentages revealed in the coding analysis are summarized as follows: Law firm's own expertise: 47.1 percent, law firm's understanding of clients' industry: 30 percent, law firm's relationship with client: 15 percent and law firm's efficiency: 7.9 percent.

The coding for advertising appeal included several prompts. An advertisement was considered rational if it was factual, informational, practical, and had logical reasoning. An advertisement was considered positive emotional if it used warmth, humor, or clever copy and illustrations. An advertisement was coded as negative emotional if it used fear, risk, or presented a mild threat (such as going to trial, avoiding conviction) in either the copy or the illustration. For advertising appeal, the most common was rational at 69.3 percent, followed by emotional positive found in 19.3 percent of the advertisements, and lastly emotional negative found in 11.4 percent of the advertisements. H2 was supported.

H3 was examined for the presence of cues such as number of people depicted, race, gender, logo, tag lines, web site address, age of firm, and global orientation. First, the advertisements were examined for the presence of the race and gender of persons appearing in the advertisement. For race, 38 of the 140 advertisements had a person in the ad in which race could be assessed. For gender, 44 of the 140 advertisements had a person in the ad in which gender could be assessed. If a person was in the advertisement, 81.6 percent of the time, that person was white, while 18.5 percent of the time the person was another race, or if there was more than one person, both white and another race was depicted. If a person was in the ad, the gender was male 64.4 percent of the time, and female 39.1 percent of the time. When more than one person was in the ad, both males and females were depicted 29.5 percent of the time, with the balance being both males. Generally, when people were depicted, small groups were used and these photographs may or may be actual members of the firm.

Several variables were assessed on whether they were included or not included in the ad, such as logo, tag line, web site, age of firm, and whether the firm communicated a global orientation. A phone number was only found on 65 percent of advertisements, while a web site was found on nearly 95 percent of the advertisements. Larger corporate law firms may have a decentralized organizational structure in which each regional office has its own independent marketing function with separate phone numbers. The advertisements may have also served as corporate or institutional advertisements with no call to action. A phone call is an invitation to begin the sales process, while the purpose of the advertisement may have been image building.

Corporate identity including logos and tag lines, were treated with relative indifference. Law firms are reluctant to fully embrace a branding philosophy (De Chernatony and Horn, 2003) and may not see the value in creating a distinctive corporate image. The use of a tag line, in addition to being one of the least used cues, was also one of the lowest frequency items in the analysis of inter-rater reliability. In discussions with raters, many of them found it difficult to tell the difference between a tag line and a headline or a call-out.

The age of the firm was not included in most of the advertisements. Copy which referred to the global presence of a law firm, including words such as worldwide, global, or international, was also not heavily used by either the national publications or the regional publications. There was no significance in the cross-tabulations, under the assumption that law firms who advertise in national publication may have a more global orientation that regional or local law firms. Another explanation may be that law firms, regardless of size or target market so not see a global orientation as a key selling proposition. A summary of the frequencies is illustrated in Table 5.

H3 was generally supported and the presence of negative cues was generally minimized. Cues which do not specifically address content such as performance quality are considered negative cues.

TABLE 5
FREQUENCIES

	Yes, included in ad	No, not included in ad
Logo	50.7%	49.3%
Tag line	36.4%	63.6%
Phone number	65.0%	35.0%
Web site	95.0%	5.0%
Age of firm	15.0%	85.0%
Global orientation	21.4%	78.6%

An analysis of cross-tabulations examines two variables at the same time by reflecting the joint distribution within a limited number of categories. The cross tabulation between advertising appeal and brand promise was significant (Chi-Square = .002). If the advertising appeal was rational, then the likelihood is that the brand promise will be focused on (1) legal expertise, (2) industry knowledge, and (3) relationships. If the advertising appeal was emotional-positive, then the likelihood is that the brand promise would be (1) Industry knowledge, (2) legal expertise, and (3) relationships. If the advertising appeal was emotional-negative, then it is most likely that the brand promise is (1) industry knowledge followed by (2) legal expertise with no relationship messages. This is illustrated in Table 6: Crosstab Ad Appeal * Brand Promise. Relatively, emotional-positive advertisements considered industry knowledge, legal expertise and relationships equally important which has implications for the importance of supplementing the rational messages with some emotional content.

TABLE 6
CROSSTAB AD APPEAL * BRAND PROMISE

		Brand Promise				
		1 Legal expertise	2 Industry knowledge	3 Relationships	4 Conformance	Total
Ad Appeal	1 – Rational	53	23	13	8	97 (69%)
	2 – Emotional-positive	9	10	8	0	27 (19%)
	3 – Emotional-negative	4	9	0	3	16 (12%)
Total		66	42	21	11	140

Chi-square Significance = .002

RESULTS

Prior research found that selection criteria that clients use to choose or stay with a professional services provider is prioritized by the following factors, expertise, relationships, industry knowledge, and contractual conformance. Each of these criteria was explored by content analysis of 140 advertisements by national and regional corporate law firms. One of these brand promises, expertise, predominated in all of these advertisements. Further, each of these brand promises had a significant impact on the advertising appeal utilized. Brand promises featuring expertise were related to rational appeals. Brand promises related to expertise, industry knowledge, and relationships were significantly associated with emotional-positive appeals. Brand promises related to industry knowledge were significantly associated with emotional-negative appeals.

Law firms do prioritize the importance of expertise in their advertisements, but they under emphasize relationships and over emphasize industry knowledge. Thus, there is a lack of balance between the professional services provider and the client in the signals being sent via advertising messages. Law firm marketers should listen more carefully to what their clients are saying and evaluate whether emphasizing industry knowledge is an important brand promise impacts client acquisition and retention. This study suggests that emphasizing relationships may be most effective when emotional advertising appeals are used. Building relationships in a professional services context leads to greater customer satisfaction and higher customer retention (Eriksson & Vaghult 2000).

For a professional services firm, the length of time in business as depicted in an advertisement signals the successful delivery of quality services over many years. A significant number of law firms, both national and regional, however, did not emphasize this potential competitive advantage in their advertisements. Lohtia et al. (1995) found that the number of years of experience had a negative impact on advertising effectiveness, so despite the impressive difference between law firms who had been in business for almost 100 years and those who had only a few years of operations, it does not benefit law firms to emphasize this fact in their advertising. The significant and low percentage of this omission indicates that this information should be used cautiously in professional services advertising.

The data suggest that law firms emphasize mostly rational advertising appeals. Nearly 69 percent of the advertisements in our sample were rational. They may be missing an opportunity to increase advertising effectiveness by not supplementing their advertising messages with more emotional-positive appeals. The use of an emotional-negative appeal is probably the least effective because there is already a negative affect toward the law industry in general. Tellis (2004) identifies several advantages of emotional advertising over rational advertising including that processing requires less effort, and the content is more interesting, easier to recall, may stay in memory longer, and may lead to the desired action sooner than rational-based advertising.

CONCLUSIONS

This analysis of a convenience sample of advertising for professional services was revealing in how message appeals are congruent or not congruent with the factors that lead to client satisfaction and loyalty. The analysis confirms the majority of corporate legal advertising appeals are consistent with at least the most important reason for client loyalty: and the level of expertise and competence of law firm advice. Marketers are evidently missing several opportunities to provide signals to the second most important selection criteria – relationships. While it is true that one corporate client is doing business with another partnership entity, fundamentally, doing business in a professional services context is about relationships, trust, and quality of communication that is nurtured and developed over a period of time.

Another implication for marketing managers is that law firms should leverage their age or number of years in business as a signal of quality with caution. While the age of the firm connotes stability, legitimacy, experience and past success, clients did not hold this attribute as high as several other factors. Age can also create the perception of being old fashioned, inflexible or not innovative. And, finally, legal advertising should make more of an effort to create advertisements with a more emotional-positive appeal because of the finding that clients want an emphasis on relationships and client care. The idea that more emotionally-based advertisements should be utilized in the legal services industry may be incongruent with the more prevalent rational informative approach in business to business; however this moderate level of incongruity may lead to more elaborate processing of the advertisement and lead to a more favorable attitude toward the ad and toward the brand.

The present findings may serve to provide corporate law firms in particular and professional services providers in general with more insight into the effort to match client expectations with the law firm brand promise.

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Human Flourishing Theory in Advertising: Case Studies

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This manuscript examines the subject of human flourishing and its use in current advertisements. Human flourishing was developed by Aristotle over 2000 years ago. Despite clear examples of human flourishing appeals currently being used by advertising practitioners, there has been little academic research in the advertising or marketing literature. This manuscript attempts to interpret the developments of human flourishing and develops them for advertisers. The authors define human flourishing theory in the advertising context and provide three case studies of advertisements believed to represent human flourishing appeals for television, print, and websites.

INTRODUCTION

Although the notion of human flourishing (*eudaimonia*) first defined by Aristotle is not a new idea, the academic community has shown a renewed interest in the topic. In the past few years, research about human flourishing traits such as self-fulfillment, happiness, life satisfaction, well-being, contentment, and gratitude, had increased (Ruyer 2004, Fredrickson and Losado 2007, Layard 2007, Youkins 2008, and Seligman 2008). Time magazine reported in 2005 that there had been an "explosion of research" and "seldom has an academic field been brought so quickly and deliberately to life" as with the topic human flourishing, loosely defined as "happiness." However, what hasn't been studied fully, from an academic perspective, is the use of human flourishing theory in the context of modern advertising.

If marketing and advertising practitioners are at the forefront of recognizing consumer trends related to happiness, then it would be reasonable to assume that human flourishing appeals might represent an acceptable appeal used in modern advertising. The main questions that this manuscript aims to answer are: what is human flourishing; and how is the human flourishing appeal being used by advertising practitioners.

HUMAN FLOURISHING DEFINED

Aristotle first defined human flourishing theory. What he called *eudaimonia* (flourishing), was not a momentary state, but a condition of living a good life. Happiness, he wrote, was not limited to feeling good, but it encompassed a fulfillment of life, dreams and expectations (Aristotle 1980). After thousands of years, philosophers are still discussing human flourishing theories (Brighouse 2000, Raz 2003, and Youkins 2008). In addition, human flourishing theories have been developed in the economic (Layard

2007) and psychological disciplines (Ruyer 2004, Fredrickson and Losado 2007, and Seligman 2008). It is important to note the differences in the schools of thought. In philosophy, for instance, the theme of ethics, virtue and value are common themes, while in psychology, the common themes are motivational theory and the theory of the self. Descriptions of a number of approaches can be found in Table 1.

TABLE 1
HUMAN FLOURISHING THEORY AUTHORS

Author	Timing	Discipline	Definition
Aristotle	322-388BC	Philosophy	• What amounts to the good life. • Eudaimonia (Greek: human flourishing. • Fulfillment of life's dreams and expectations • Part of an activity
Harry Brighouse	2000	Philosophy	• Happiness and flourishing are not the same. Flourishing is a richer property than happiness, sensitive to many more features of a person's life than inner states.
Joseph Raz	2003	Philosophy	• Personal well-being that involves wholehearted engagement in valuable activities and relationships
Edward Younkins	2008	Philosophy	• Human flourishing involves the rational use of talents, abilities, and virtues in the pursuit of chosen values and goals. An action is considered to be proper if it leads to the flourishing of the person performing the action.
Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi	2003	Psychology	• Enjoying what you do • Doing something well • Absorbed in an activity • Effortless action that is instinctively rewarding
Doret J. De Ruyer	2004	Psychology	• A person is thriving, has a good life A flourishing life and a good life are interchangeable, but having a good life and living a good life are different
Fredrickson and Losada	2007	Psychology	• To live within an optimal range of human functioning, one that connotes, goodness generativity, growth and resilience
Martin Seligman	2008	Psychology	• Achieved if one exercises one's unique strengths and virtues in a purpose greater than one's own immediate goals
Richard Layard	2007	Economics	• Flourishing lives have two features in common: they contain objectively valued goods: and agents have to identify with the life they are leading

Many of the previous discussions on human flourishing theory have centered around three theories of happiness: Hedonistic, Objective List and Desire-Fulfillment (Parfit, 1984). *Hedonistic theories*, primarily from the philosophy tradition, are based on the thinking that what is best is what makes the person happiest. With hedonistic theories, the "good life" is synonymous with the pursuit of pleasure. Thank you, Hugh Hefner. The only experiences that have positive value are pleasant ones. The more pleasure one has in life the happier one is. The reverse is true as well though. The more suffering and displeasure one endures the less happy s/he will be. While a fine dining experience, a good wine, excellent entertainment, or playing on a successful sports team can all be great sources of pleasure, dealing with an illness, injury, or traffic jams can make your life unpleasant. Judgments of "Happiness" will be based upon the summed total of one's pleasant and unpleasant experiences (Brülde 2007).

The second type of theory from the philosophy discipline is the *objective-list theory*. It states certain things or actions are intrinsically good or bad – if you pursue activities that promote happiness, you will be a happy person (Parfit, 1984). The objective-list theories involve several objective values that promise to make life good for a person regardless of their personal opinions of the activities. For instance, you may not like eating broccoli but it is good for you. Broccoli will make you healthy, which in turn will make you happy. Judgments of "Happiness" will be based upon the type of experiences pursued, so one will feel good only by doing good things (Brülde 2007).

The third type of theory is more aspirational – what would be best for someone is what can best fulfill their dreams – called *desire-fulfillment theories*. From the psychology discipline, desire-fulfillment theory focuses on finding the type of life one desires. Positive value for a person depends on if that person's intrinsic desires are fulfilled. In other words, people cannot be happy so long as their desires are still unmet. Ironically, those who tend to have lower expectations of life tend to be more satisfied with their lives than those who always demand more. Judgments of "Happiness" will be based upon how well experiences satisfy one's desires (Brülde 2007).

The modern notion of "human flourishing" has primarily evolved from the objective-list and desire-fulfillment theories of happiness developed from both philosophy and psychology disciplines. In his 2002 book, *Authentic Happiness*, author and president of the American Psychological Association, Martin Seligman states that the most profound sense of happiness is experienced through the "meaningful life" (an objectively superior experience), achieved if one exercises one's unique strengths and virtues in a purpose greater than one's own immediate goals (satisfies longer-term desires).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have been conducted on the theory of human flourishing. Waterman (1993) suggested that human flourishing occurred when people's life activity was consistent with their deeply held values. Under this view of human flourishing, it is a time when people feel intensely alive and authentic, and he measured this with the term "personal expressedness".

King & Napa (1998) asked people to rate features of the good life and found that both happiness and meaning were implicated and important. McGregor and Little (1998) conducted a study to analyze a diverse set of mental health indicators and found similar results. They found two factors, one reflecting happiness and the other meaningfulness, to be an important and distinct part of human flourishing. Furthermore, Ryan and Deci (2001) added that true happiness is found in virtue while doing what one likes to do and is worth doing.

Ryff and Singer (2002) also built on the idea of human flourishing by adding and clarifying the importance of self realization and self determination. They outlined six distinct aspects of human flourishing: autonomy, personal growth, self acceptance, life purpose, mastery and positive relatedness.

While the purpose of this manuscript is not to provide a comprehensive literature review on human flourishing theories, the authors have outlined some of the significant work that has been done in this area in order for the reader to better understand how the concept of human flourishing appears in modern advertisements.

EMOTIONAL APPEALS IN ADVERTISING

An appeal based on promoting human flourishing directly targets consumers' personal ambitions for happiness. When a consumer is considering a personally relevant advertising message for a high-involvement good, they can experience a strong emotional reaction to the advertising appeal. The feelings generated by the advertisement can influence the attitudes a consumer has towards the advertiser and/or the product. These emotional reactions can create very strong loyalties (Hoyer and MacInnis 2007).

Emotional appeals can be categorized as positive or negative. Positive emotional appeals might include love, desire, hope, joy, or excitement. Positive emotional appeals can directly improve attitudes by generating positive feelings which improves the consumers' attitudes. Negative emotional appeals include guilt, fear, anger, or shame. Negative emotional appeals can yield positive changes in attitudes by motivating consumers to act to reduce or avoid the negative emotions. Once action is taken, the consumer feels better (Aaker, Stayman, Hagerty 1986).

Despite the stereotypes, advertisers do not have the ability to make people buy things they don't want or need. Where they are culpable is their ability to persuade consumers to recognize that they are unhappy with their current product choices. Consumers are pushed to recognize their problems, where problems are defined as the difference between their actual state (where they are) and their ideal state (where they want to be). Problem recognition appeals in advertising either a) create dissatisfaction with some component of a person's life and/or b) illustrate what is possible with the purchase of the new product. The theory is that the larger the difference between actual and ideal states, the more likely a consumer will act to resolve the difference (Hoyer and MacInnis 2007). So the greater the level of dissatisfaction, the easier it is for advertisers to persuade consumers to act. However, there may be long-term, negative effects on consumers' general happiness levels due to the accumulated disappointments in actual states.

NEGATIVE EMOTIONAL APPEALS

Negative emotions can be very persuasive under the right conditions. There are three types of customers on whom negative appeals might be effective; desensitized, sophisticated, and tribal consumers. *Desensitized* consumers have become immune to traditional advertising and ignore it, but negative emotional ads can be powerful and cut through the traditional clutter. *Sophisticated* consumers are going to quickly get the references, but are more likely to feel that they are being manipulated. *Tribal* consumers want to belong to a larger group, where negative appeals can be used to persuade them to behave consistent with the larger group. Although aspirational messages might appeal to the tribal consumer, they might get lost in the clutter (Cotte and Ritchie 2005).

POSITIVE EMOTIONAL APPEALS

Ads that promote positive feelings can make the consumer like the ad and then buy the product (Aaker, Stayman, and Hagerty 1986). According to the dual-mediation theory, ads can have both direct and indirect effects. The direct effects are if a consumer likes the ad they will like the product. The indirect effects are if a consumer likes the ad, the consumer will think more about the message arguments in the ad, and well-considered message arguments are more likely to persuade consumers to like the product (MacKenzie, Lutz, and Belch, 1986).

There might also be benefits of pairing strong positive emotions to advertisers' products. According to classical conditioning theory, pairing positive emotional stimuli to product offerings frequently enough can elicit positive emotions when the product offerings are seen, eventually without the stimuli required (Shimp and Engle, 1987). The Coppertone brand, for instance, can still elicit positive feelings from their past use of a small child and little puppy in their classic ads.

Research provided a list of common advertising appeals for our study (Pollay, 1983). He developed the list, which he described as containing all common appeals, by drawing on previous advertising literature and values research in other disciplines. All of the appeals were classified into 42 categories. Descriptions of the appeals are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
POLLAY'S LIST OF APPEALS

Effective: Feasible, workable, useful, pragmatic, appropriate, functional, consistent, efficient, helpful, comfortable (clothes), tasty (food), strength, longevity of effect
Convenient: Handy, time-saving, quick, easy, suitable, accessible, versatile
Durable: Long-lasting, permanent, stable, enduring, strong, powerful, hearty, tough
Ornamental: Beautiful, decorative, ornate, adorned, embellished, detailed, designed, styled
Cheap: Economical, inexpensive, bargain, cut-rate, penny-pinching, discounted, at cost, undervalued, a good value
Dear: Expensive, rich, valuable, highly regarded, costly, extravagant, exorbitant, luxurious, priceless
Distinctive: Rare, unique, unusual, scarce, infrequent, exclusive, tasteful, elegant, subtle, esoteric, hand-crafted
Popular: Commonplace, customary, well-known, conventional, regular, usual, ordinary, normal, standard, typical, universal, general, everyday
Traditional: Classic, historical, antique, legendary, time-honored, long-standing, venerable, nostalgic
Modern: Contemporary, modern, new, improved, progressive, advanced and introducing
Natural: References to the elements, animals, vegetables, minerals, farming, unadulterated, purity (of product), organic, grown, nutritious
Technological: Engineered, fabricated, formulated, manufactured, constructed, processed, resulting from science, invention, discovery, research, containing secret ingredients
Wisdom: Knowledge, education, awareness, intelligence, curiosity, satisfaction, comprehension, sagacity, expertise, judgment, experience
Magic: Miracles, magic, mysticism, mystery, witchcraft, wizardry, superstitions, occult sciences, mythic, characters, to mesmerize, astonish, bewitch, fill with wonder
Productivity: References to achievement, accomplishment, ambition, success, careers, self-development, being skilled, accomplished, proficient, pulling your weight, contributing, doing your share
Relaxation: Rest, retire, retreat, loaf, contentment, be at ease, be laid-back, vacations, holiday, to observe
Enjoyment: To have fun, laugh, be happy, celebrate, to enjoy games, parties, feasts and festivities, to participate
Maturity: Being adult, grown-up, middle-aged, senior, elderly, having associated insight, wisdom, mellowness, adjustment, references to aging, death, retirement, or age-related disabilities or compensations
Youth: Being young or rejuvenated, children, kids, immature, underdeveloped, junior, adolescent
Safety: Security (from external threat), carefulness, caution, stability, absence of hazards, potential, injury, or other risks, guarantees, warranties, manufacturers' reassurances
Tamed: Docile, civilized, restrained, obedient, compliant, faithful, reliable, responsible, domesticated, sacrificing, self-denying
Morality: Humane, just, fair, honest, ethical, reputable, principled, religious, devoted, spiritual
Modesty: Being modest, naive, demure, innocent, inhibited, bashful, reserved, timid, coy, virtuous, pure, shy, virginal
Humility: Unaffected, unassuming, unobtrusive, patient, fate-accepting, resigned, meek, plain-folk,
Plain: Unaffected, natural, prosaic, homespun, simple, artless, unpretentious
Frail: Delicate, frail, dainty, sensitive, tender, susceptible, vulnerable, soft, genteel
Adventure: Boldness, daring, bravery, courage, seeking adventure, thrills, or excitement

Untamed: Primitive, untamed, fierce, course, rowdy, ribald, obscene, voracious, gluttonous, frenzied, uncontrolled, unreliable, corrupt, obscene, deceitful, savage
Freedom: Spontaneous, carefree, abandoned, indulgent, at liberty, uninhibited, passionate
Casual: Unkempt, disheveled, messy, disordered, untidy, rugged, rumpled, sloppy, casual, irregular, non-compulsive, imperfect
Vain: Having a socially desirable appearance, being beautiful, pretty, handsome, being fashionable, well-groomed, tailored, graceful, glamorous
Sexuality: Erotic relations: holding hands, kissing, embracing between lovers, dating, romance, intense sensuality, feeling sexual, erotic, attractiveness of clearly sexual nature
Independence: Self-sufficiency, self-reliance, autonomy, unattached, to do-it-yourself, to do your own thing, original, unconventional, singular, nonconformist
Security: Confident, secure, possessing dignity, self-worth, self-esteem, self-respect, peace of mind
Status: Envy, social status or competitiveness, conceit, boasting, prestige, power, dominance, exhibitionism, pride in ownership, wealth (including the sudden wealth of prizes), trend-setting, to seek compliments
Affiliation: To be accepted, liked by peers, colleagues, and community at large, to associate or gather with, to be social, to join, unite, or otherwise bond in friendship, fellowship, companionship, cooperation, reciprocity, to conform to social customs, have manners, social graces and decorum, tact and finesse
Nurturance: To give gifts, especially sympathy, help love, charity, support, comfort, protection, nursing, consolation, or otherwise care for the weak, disabled, inexperienced, tired, young, elderly, etc.
Succorance: To receive expressions of love (all expressions except sexuality), gratitude, pats on the back, to feel deserving
Family: Nurturance within the family, having a home, being at home, family privacy, companionship of siblings, kinship, getting married
Community: Relating to community, state, national publics, public spiritedness, group unity, national identity, society, patriotism, civic and community organizations or other than social organization
Healthy: Fitness, vim, vigor, vitality, strength, heartiness, to be active, athletic, robust, peppy, free from disease, illness, infection, or addiction
Neat: Orderly, neat, precise, tidy, clean, spotless, unsoiled, sweet-smelling, bright, free from dirt, refuse, pests, vermin, stains and smells, sanitary

Researchers have translated these appeals into underlying forces or motives that help shape purchasing decisions. These appeals, combined with purchase motives identified by the Rossiter-Percy model below, provide a suitable framework for analyzing the human flourishing appeals in advertising.

TABLE 3
DECISION MOTIVES IN THE ROSSITER-PERCY MODEL AND EMOTIONAL SEQUENCES

Negatively originated (informational) motives	Emotional Sequence
1. Problem removal	Annoyed to relieved
2. Problem avoidance	Fearful to relaxed
3. Incomplete satisfaction	Disappointed to optimistic
4. Mixed approach-avoidance	Conflicted to reassured
5. Normal depletion	Mildly annoyed to contented

Positively originated (transformational) motives

1. Sensory gratification	Dull neutral to excited
2. Intellectual stimulation or mastery	Naïve neutral to achievement
3. Social approval	Apprehensive neutral to flattery
4. Social conformity	Left out neutral to belonging
5. Self-approval	Conscious-struck to self-consistent

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

Using the case study method of research, this manuscript examines contemporary advertising messaging. By looking at three case study examples of advertising in different media (television ads, print ads and websites) that contain positively originated motives, the authors illustrate how the human flourishing appeal can be used. This manuscript serves as an exploratory tool to provide a foundation for further inquiry and proves the strategic relevance of the human flourishing appeal in advertising.

METHOD

For this study, the authors examined a number of national advertisements looking for human flourishing appeals. After considering a number of advertisements in different media types, the authors selected what we considered to be excellent exemplars of the human flourishing appeal for further study.

To be considered an advertisement containing the human flourishing appeal, the following components must be present:

1. Emotions: Consumer feelings and emotions found as themes in the advertising message.
2. Terminal Values: The advertisement contains “terminal values” that are ideal and desirable for human beings. Examples provided previously from Pollay’s Advertising Appeals (Table 2) include: freedom, helpfulness, achievement, accomplishment, honesty, confidence, passion, proficiency and enjoyment and helpfulness, etc.
3. Instrumental Values: The advertisement presents products or services as instrumental values, the means to an optimal range of human functioning.
4. Long-term focus: The human flourishing appeal is presented as a long-term benefit about doing well and being one’s self. For example, drinking a Coke to be happy or taking a vacation for pleasure, would not necessarily entail human flourishing. But if one were a traveler who found meaning in learning about other cultures or who sought to better themselves through educational experiences that would likely entail human flourishing.

CASE NUMBER 1: TELEVISION- AMERIPRISE FINANCIAL SERVICES

The first advertisement to be examined is the Ameriprise Financial television spot that featured Denis Hopper. This ad began with a close up shot of the actor sitting on a stool reading from a dictionary: “To withdraw. Go away. To disappear.” He closed the dictionary and looked into the camera, “That’s how the dictionary defines retirement.” The shot opened to reveal him alone on a pristine white beach and he dropped the dictionary on the sand. “Time to redefine. Your generation is definitely not headed for bingo night. You still have things to do right? You have dreams. There is no age limit on dreams. There is no expiration date. In fact, you could write a book about how you are going to turn retirement upside down.” The scene then revealed the beach and a lone chair emblazoned with the Ameriprise logo and a tagline, “Go to What’s Next.” In the final few seconds Dennis Hopper returned and said “cause I just don’t see you playing shuffleboard, you know what I mean?”

This creative execution can be described as one with a human flourishing appeal. By addressing an issue that is on the minds of many people considering retirement, this ad makes an emotional connection from the start. This ad is built on a relevant and believable premise-- being older doesn't have to hold you back from doing what you want to do.

The specific human flourishing appeal in this ad is clearly aspirational - making dreams come true. The ad references terminal values (self-fulfillment) as desirable for human beings and identified in human flourishing theory. The advertisement also presents the Ameriprise core offering as the means to an optimal range of human functioning, -- a fulfillment of life's dreams and expectations.

CASE NUMBER 2: PRINT – LANTAS

The next advertisement to be examined is a print ad that used the human flourishing appeal. *Lantus* was the only 24 hour insulin pharmaceutical product available for sale. It was marketed by Sanofi Aventis. A full page magazine ad featured an African American woman named Angela Younger, in her early 40s, standing next to her motorcycle. The copy told us that Angela had type 2 diabetes and had been a Lantus patient since 2003. The headline read: "Her Passion: Chasing the Wind. Her Power: Lantus 24 hour insulin."

The body copy tells the story about how Angela is able to realize her passion: "Angela was born to be wild. She also has type 2 diabetes, and pills alone weren't giving her the control she needed. So she asked her doctor about LANTUS®, the only 24-hour insulin approved exclusively for use once a day. As part of an overall diabetes treatment plan, including diet, exercise, other diabetes medications, and regular blood sugar testing, taking LANTUS® just once at the same time each day helps control blood sugar all day long. It works for Angela."

The advertisement uses the human flourishing appeal to connect with those who have type 2 diabetes. The ad features Angela who has a passion for riding her motorcycle that is an authentic part of her being. The ad uses Angela in a lifestyle situation to present Lantus as the enabler of human flourishing. It is also important to note that this is a long-term passion, not something she enjoys and then moves on to something else.

CASE NUMBER 3: WEB SITE – VOLVOFORLIFEAWARDS.COM

The third example showed how "human flourishing appeals" were used as part of corporate positioning and how the appeal was extended to websites. In the automotive market, Volvo had been using the tag line "Volvo For Life". The web site, Volvoforlifewards.com, was an informational site that provided personal stories of people who had made a difference in society by pursuing their passions and improving society, consistent with the "safety" equity that Volvo had in the marketplace.

Volvo held the Volvo for Life awards to recognize them and spread the word. The web site also met the criteria of human flourishing appeals and was built around the real-life stories of people who were exercising their unique strengths and virtues – a key element in the human flourishing theory. And in this case it was a purpose greater than one's own immediate goals.

THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The theoretical contribution of this paper is that it develops a theory from the disciplines of psychology and philosophy and applies it to advertising communications. It provides us with a better understanding of the theory of human flourishing by defining what the term means and shows how the use of the human flourishing appeal is a contemporary topic that will likely be utilized by advertisers more in the coming years. This paper makes a significant contribution in that "human flourishing" has never been considered a viable appeal in advertising and suggests that it should become part of the appeal taxonomy.

ADVERTISING IMPLICATIONS

Human flourishing theory is directly applicable to advertisers, and can be a very useful means of communication if applied appropriately. First, advertisers must consider if these appeals will motivate the target audience to buy the advertised products. For example, the human flourishing appeal would not likely resonate with children 13-17, as most children in this category are probably looking more for short-lived pleasure than long term security. However, with more mature segments this type of message might be very appealing and could be more personally relevant.

Consider the "recently remarried-divorced" segment often described as "second-chance" consumers (Halverson 1998). Consumers in this target are likely to react more positively to human flourishing appeals because this target audience frequently wants to develop a new outlook on life. This consumer group, usually 40-49 years of age is more content with life than the average adult so they spend more time seeking fuller, enriching lives for themselves.

The human flourishing appeal should appeal to the senior segment. Although they are not working fulltime, they still seek meaning in their lives. They contribute to the society through volunteer work and/or donations. They attend churches and organizations to satisfy belonging needs and self-actualization needs through services. Many of them even attend colleges and other continuing education programs.

Secondly, advertisers should consider using the human flourishing appeals for products and services that solve a real and valid consumer or customer problem. The visual and verbal elements of human flourishing advertising should minimize the negatives and focus instead on positive, aspirational outcomes. Positive outcomes that increase consumer generativity of new ideas or knowledge is consistent with the underlying themes of human flourishing theory.

And finally, if an advertiser wishes to successfully use the human flourishing appeal, they must be sure that the appeal is used for the right reasons – or risk consumer rejection of the advertising message. Often times, marketers use advertising to create dissatisfaction with an existing product or consumer category. Advertisers then propose a new desired solution. Creating needless dissatisfaction does not promote human flourishing and can backfire if a product doesn't make people feel good about themselves or if the target cannot afford the product.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This manuscript discusses the use of human flourishing appeals in advertising. The human flourishing theory is based on a positive appeal within the consumer generated context of the individual's worldview. Compared to problem recognition appeals that directly compare ideal states versus actual states, human flourishing appeals are an implied comparison between what could be and what is.

Consumer problem recognition can occur anytime a consumer is dissatisfied with their lives when they recognize something better is out there. Anything can trigger it. Even riding in a new car (a rental or friend's) one realizes how comfortable the seats are, how good the stereo system is, how easy the dials are to read, and how nice the new car smells. The ride home in your own car can be a demoralizing experience. With problem recognition appeals the new ideal state stands in sharp contrast to the actual state. The entire problem recognition process as a whole can be a negative experience for the consumer. With human flourishing appeals, the comparison between ideal state and actual state is only implied so it is not quite as stark. Human flourishing appeals offer happiness as its own reward, so there should be less avoidance of the negative consequences.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research into the area of human flourishing appeals might include a content analysis of how the appeals are currently being used by advertisers. Since the authors examined only three advertisements, there are still questions as to how each human flourishing ads might be operationalized across the different media types of television, radio, and print advertisements. There are also potential cultural differences to examine. The United States is one of the few countries that has individual happiness as an ultimate goal. One would expect human flourishing appeals to be more common here than in other countries, such as Japan or China (community-focused cultures). On the other hand, the use of human flourishing advertisements might actually have an advantage in community-centered cultures due to their relative rarity.

Another avenue to examine is based on the experimental questions dealing with the advertising effectiveness of human flourishing appeals. Are there differences in effectiveness based on the strength of the appeal? With negative emotional appeals their effectiveness tends to have an inverted-U shape, where very weak emotional appeals are ignored and very strong emotional appeals are rejected. Some middle strength emotional appeal maximizes the effectiveness of the advertisement. Do the human flourishing appeals share this "Goldilocksian" effectiveness pattern or do they follow a more straight-line pattern.

Finally, does the choice of media used interact with a human flourishing appeal? Because of the more complicated communications required to position a product to benefit the consumer in an unknown future context, longer-form media such as television or magazines might be required over newspapers or outdoor advertisements.

LIMITATIONS

The primary limitation of this study is the case study method examined only three cases, as these cases are not generalizable in the conventional sense. By definition we have no way of know empirically to what extent the case study examples presented represent how human flourishing appeals are used in advertising as a whole.

CONCLUSIONS

This manuscript has discussed many definitions of human flourishing theory that come from various schools of thought and added a new perspective to the idea of human flourishing and advertising. By applying communication and marketing theory to this definition one can see how it might be a useful, strategic appeal for advertisers.

While this study has provided three examples about how human flourishing is manifested in creative advertising appeals, there are many other brands and companies that are using the human flourishing appeal with apparently great success. These include: *Microsoft* - Your Potential. Our Passion; *Samsonite*-Life's A Journey; *Priceless.com* – Are You Searching for The Priceless Things in Life. The authors call upon the academic marketing field to recognize the popularity and usefulness of the human flourishing appeal and to begin to study it in greater depth.

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Venezuelan and Mexican Personality Differences: Economic and Marketing Implications

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Strong commercial ties between Venezuela and Mexico, enhanced by NAFTA, leads universities in these countries to develop attempt to develop new generations of entrepreneurs. This begs the question of the relative effectiveness of the efforts by universities to support this endeavor. The results indicate that the Venezuelan students had a statistically significant greater need for (HA1) achievement, (HB1) aggression, (HC1) dominance, (HD1) exhibition, (HE1) social recognition, and (HF1) lower abasement needs. The findings suggest that the Venezuelan group may be more entrepreneurial and have different management styles and marketing characteristics.

INTRODUCTION

Venezuela and Mexico represent two important NAFTA economies that will become more linked over time, and this linkage may well be strengthened if NAFTA is expanded. Both Venezuela and Mexico have a healthy entrepreneurial element in their economies. While Venezuela's Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) for 2003 was 27.3%, which was higher than Mexico's TEA for 2003 of 12.1%, they both had higher TEA percentage than the World TEA percentage average of 9.6%, and Venezuela's TEA percentage was higher than the South American 2004 average of 16.6% (http://www.gemconsortium.org). With the important trading relationship that has developed between Venezuela and Mexico, the question arises as to why there is this disparity in relative levels of Total Entrepreneurial Activity between two trading partners who are so close in proximity. While there are a number of possible explanations, one that may be worth considering is the difference in personalities/values between Venezuelan and Mexican business people.

Personality or value characteristics related to culture are germane to understanding successful economic and business integration across cultures (Hofstede 1983). The greater the difference between the culture of two countries, and consequently the individual personality characteristics commensurate with the culture, the greater the difficulty in conducting business between the two countries. This difficulty relates to all levels of the business with implications for the external relationships as well as the relationships of those within the organization. For instance, company policy, training, rewards and recognitions, employee relations, communications and degree of centralization should be adapted for differences across countries (Pelled & Xin, 1997; Schuler & Jackson, 1996). Further evidence supports the concept that although values differ from country to country the use of common Latino stereotypes should be used with caution (Lenartowicz, T. & James, P. J., 2002). Studies indicate that the values of managers in many Latin American countries differs especially those serving individual interests (Lenartowicz, T. & James, P. J., 2003). Personality variables have been linked to organizational citizenship behaviors of Mexican salespeople, and these have implications for organizational effectiveness (O'Connell et. al., 2001). Personality differences also imply differences in advertising strategy (Roberts & Hart, 1997) and purchasing behaviors (Gregory & Munch, 1997).

Personality differences affect the rate of integration into the global economy as well as economic development policy. The identity crisis Latin America faces because of its dual integration both within and globally has a high impact on its business environment via its Iberian roots (Recht & Wilderom, 1998). There are important differences in the economies of Venezuela and Mexico as a result, at least in part, by the evolution of entrepreneurship characterized by its on-again-off-again ability to spur economic growth in a society still unable to shake its mercantilist heritage (Larroulet & Couvoumdjian, 2009). Of the Latin and Caribbean countries, Mexico arguably has the fastest rate of integration into the global economy. Venezuela's rate is much slower.(Niroomand & Edward, 2002) which may be a result of the inequities between the "realists" and the "cultural optimists" internal debate between conflicting Marxist concepts which causes speculation as to whether a synthesis of the two is possible or possibly even necessary for success (Ellner, 2010). Mexico is the largest trading nation in Latin America and the eighth largest in the world. Venezuela's economy is about ¼ the size of Mexico's but it is the most important Latin American importer of Mexican goods (IMF). Mexico relies heavily on manufacturing as a percent of exports and imports (78 %) while (Venezuela does not (12 %) (Nirooman & Edward, 2002). The Venezuelan economy is largely natural resource based, holding the largest reserves of oil in the Western hemisphere (estimated at 63 billion barrels); they are the world's fourth largest producer.

The literature is sparse on baseline data concerning personality constructs for the two countries. Mexico and Venezuela share similar language, religions and to some degree ethnicity and heritage (Boscan et. al., 2000). They also have important political, economic and cultural linkages. However, in spite of these culturally shared structures, important differences exist. Mexico has been culturally influenced by, and incorporated numerous values from, its major trading partner the U.S. (Boscan, et. al., 2000). At the same time, distinctions remain. For example, compared with Anglo-American students, Mexican-American students score higher on alienation and defensiveness and lower on social nonconformity and expression subscales (Negy & Woods, 1993).

Studies report personality differences between Mexican, Columbian and Venezuelan students. Specifically, on the MMPI-2, Venezuelans were high on the L scale while Mexicans were high on the *Hy* scale and low on the *Mf* and *Si* scales (Boscan et. al., 2000). The L scale is designed to capture social desirability effects but may reflect a tendency toward caution in presentation of self to others, the limitation of self-disclosure and the need to appear socially competent (Velasquez et. al., 2000). It also is representative of impression management tendencies, which means the "impression" one makes is important and can hide other weaknesses, such as weaknesses in temperament, character and behavior. Venezuelans are reported to pay more attention to dress, grooming and personal care items than those from other countries. In spite of the relatively low GNP per capita ($3020 in 1996) it has been estimated that the average Venezuelan household spends a fifth of its income on personal care and grooming products and the demand for such products may be more inelastic than food. This suggests a higher emphasis on social recognition, status; this is consistent with a higher Power Distance Index Score (PDI) vis-à-vis Hofestede (1983).

The *Hy* scales have been associated with reduced psychological insights, conscious faking of symptoms and unconscious symptoms associated with somatization (Boone & Lu, 1999). This may associate with exhibitionism or the tendency to want to be an object of attention. The *Mf* scale is designed to detect masculine/feminine traits and the Si scale measures social introversion. The Si scale has been negatively associated with needs for achievement, dominance and exhibitionism but positively associated with abasement (Craig, 2000). Traditional Mexican culture emphasizes conformity to traditional norms (Montgomery & Orozco, 1985) and submissiveness (Chandler, 1979).

The twenty universal personality traits identified by Murray (1938) provide the basis of measurement for this study. A personality test developed by Jackson (1987) that builds upon Murray's taxonomy was used herein to measure universal needs. This test has been utilized previously in a number of cross-cultural studies. The present study is an exploratory study intended to provide the basis for a deeper understanding of the differences in the entrepreneurism of the subject populations as well as develop a basis for comparing other economies. This study should also provide into how the dynamics of trade between Mexico and Venezuela may well face some unique challenges, and by extension, have the potential for providing a framework to compare the potential for entrepreneurism in other countries.

METHOD

A random sample of business students from Venezuela and Mexico, recruited especially for this study, provided fifty Mexican respondents from classes of business students in a university in Guadalajara. There were fifty-five Venezuelan subjects selected from university business classes in Caracas. Jackson's Personality Research Form-E was given to the subjects. Each trait measured by the scale utilizes a sixteen-item scale, which has been used in many previous studies (Jackson, 1987). The Personality Research Form requires respondents to answer sixteen true/false statements for each of the twenty universal traits. Each true response is scored with a one and each false response is scored as zero. Possible scores range from zero to sixteen for each trait, with the higher score denoting a greater manifestation of the trait. The Independent sample t-test routine of SPSS PC version 10.1 was used to ascertain possible differences between the two groups for each trait. The mean for both samples and the results of the t-tests are reported in Table 1.

FINDINGS

Venezuelan students were found to have a higher need for achievement (HA1), aggression (HB1), dominance(HC1), exhibitionism(HD1), social recognition(HE1), and a lower need for abasement (HF1) than Mexican students (see table One). Thus since statistically significant differences were found between the variables above the preceding sub hypotheses were rejected.

TABLE 1
MEXICAN VERSUS VENEZUELAN SCALE RESPONSES

Hypotheses/ Variables	**Mexican Subjects**		**Venezuelan Subjects**			
	Mean	(S. D.)	Mean	(S. D.)	t-score	Significance
H1A Achievement	9.76	(2.24)	10.85	(2.55)	-2.33	.022
H1B Aggression	8.32	(3.13)	9.69	(2.68)	-2.42	.017
H1C Dominance	8.08	(2.86)	10.86	(3.02)	-4.66	.000
H1D Exhibition	7.18	(3.42)	9.33	(2.87)	-3.50	.001
H1E Soc. Recog.	7.56	(1.75)	8.49	(2.62)	-2.12	.037
H1F Abasement	7.12	1.87	6.07	(2.40)	2.48	.015

Implications of Need for Achievement HA1, Aggression HB1, Dominance HC1

A high score on achievement implies high standards, positive competition, desire for excellence, challenging tasks, enterprising, driving self-improving behaviors (Jackson, 1987). Aggression as a personality trait or value encompasses characteristics such as - combative, quarrelsome, pushy, easily angered, revengeful, retaliatory and hostile behaviors. Dominance implies need to control and can be consistent with need for power such as is found in high PDI scoring countries (Hofestede, 1983).

Need for Achievement (or efficiency) is correlated with entrepreneurial activity (Fry 1993) and economic development. This finding is consistent with earlier work comparing Bulgaria and Russia (Jackson, et. al., 2003). Need for Dominance, including dominance over the environment, is related to entrepreneurship (Jackson, et. al., 2003). This seems evident in Venezuela given that country's heavy dependence on extractive industries. Need for Dominance is consistent with a more flexible approach to negotiations, to political compromise and a lack of appreciation of equalitarian notions. Entrepreneurial activity and economic development if not concentrated in the hands of a small group and open to large segments of society is highly disruptive of the established order. In a high dominance society (high PDI score), such entrepreneurial disruption is likely to be resisted or repressed thus limiting marketing opportunities and economic development.

With diverse work forces, the challenge is to create effective reward systems that motivate the disparate values of the workers (Wheeler, 2002). Reward systems that included bonuses, commissions, piecework and recognition may be quite useful. Workers may focus more on promotion and their ability to achieve upward mobility within the corporate structure (Morris, Davis & Allen, 1994). Merit based promotions may be viewed favorably except when it clashes the collectivist based nepotism found in both countries. Monetary rewards may be very important as a way of determining relative worth and keeping score. Skill, ability and performance may be more important than seniority except when it is offset by respect for elders and a generally strong extended family structure that is supported by a society wide collectivist orientation. Employees may expect vertical job involvement and demand some input to how the work is done. A high status and high prestige firm should boost or at least support the perceived power of employees and their families. A high status firm should find recruiting easier in a high PDI country.

Marketing implications suggest that ads should reflect the values of the primary target market. In some masculine markets, traits such as of aggression, achievement and dominance must be reflected in the ads (Roberts & Hart, 1997). In many instances, ads to meet the orientation of the target market must emphasis the product being used and its status, prestige, quality and performance. A modification of the product line may even be necessary as a higher standard of quality and performance may be desired over products that are targeted to a globally adequate level of quality.

Implications of Exhibition HD1, and Social Recognition HE1

Exhibition indicates the need to be the center of attention, consumption, pretentious and showy. Social recognition implies being well respected and concern about what others think, and works for conspicuous approval. Social recognition and exhibition needs imply that non-monetary rewards may be important job motivators. Achievement awards, recognition in a corporate newsletter, public praise may be important reward mechanisms. Employee of the month programs may be quite useful. Use of teams with team leaders may be important status rewards for good performance. Reprimands and negative feedback should be private. Company sponsored social functions would be important. Hiring ads should emphasis affiliation and focus on social settings. Conspicuous consumption might be a very lightly touched underlying theme.

Implications of Abasement (HF1)

A high score on abasement captures deference, self-subordinating, humility, obedient, traits. Individuals who are high in this trait tend to accept blame and criticism when not deserved and are willing to accept an inferior position (Jackson, 1987). Infrequency implies questionable or inappropriate behavior patterns due to poor comprehension, carelessness, confusion or deviance (Jackson, 1987). This implies the need for different human resource management approaches. Leadership training may be more necessary with Mexican nationals. It also implies that the reward system may need to be altered; communications may need to be simple and direct. Managers may utilize less of a participatory management style and involve employees less in decision-making. Infrequency suggests that firms may have to provide company transportation to discourage truancy and may require closer management of tasks to insure quality and performance. Primary communications should utilize the hierarchical nature of the organization and be primarily top down. Meetings are for dissemination of orders as opposed to a forum for discussion and debate. A more paternalistic approach to labor management may be appropriate with more centralization needed.

Marketing strategy may need to be developed for each country, as standardized advertising strategies seem inappropriate in view of their value themes. Poorly chosen value themes can waste coverage and may even offend potential customers (Roberts & Hart, 1997). Further, Mexican subjects would probably be less complaint oriented, achieve consumer satisfaction easier and be at a disadvantage in dealing with high dominance, aggressive groups.

It may be that Mexican nationals listen better to articulate with their groups of identification. Any of the preceding would affect the marketing skills needed to be successful with such groups, which correlates with their greater speed of global economic integration in the sense that they are willing to adjust to the requirements of markets and investors from other cultures. Higher humility, somewhat counter intuitively, may lead to faster economic development and more entrepreneurial activity (Zahra, S. & Hansen, C. D., 2000). Such values should yield a high touch, marketing consumer orientation with strengths in relationship marketing. Some countries/cultures with higher scores on abasement are actually known for their customer orientation and success in marketing especially in the tourist trade.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of the study are listed below.

1. This research is exploratory in nature and as such additional, provides a baseline of information rather than conclusive evidence.
2. The findings are constrained geographically.
3. The findings are constrained temporally.
4. The relatively small sample sizes limit the extent to which these findings can be generalized.
5. Further research is needed to allow a broader understanding of the findings reported here.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Venezuelans' relatively higher scores on Need for Achievement compared to Mexicans' subjects' scores implies marginally higher internal performance standards, desires for excellence, and a stronger enterprising nature.
2. Higher Achievement Need scores are correlated in the literature with more rapid economic development, which implies Venezuela, will experience more rapid growth all things being equal.
3. Need for Achievement is associated with entrepreneurial activity in several cultures.
4. Dominance generally leads to an inflexible approach in negotiations and politics.
5. Dominance does not generally lead to a respect or implementation of equalitarian approaches to solving problems. The present dictatorship in Venezuela lends some support to this conclusion.
6. High dominance and high PDI scores do not fit well with upward economic and social mobility via entrepreneurship.
7. Venezuela with higher levels of aggression, achievement and dominance than Mexico should have these values given more emphasis in Venezuela.
8. Social recognition given the moderately higher level in Venezuelan than Mexico should be reflected in a reward system that gives public praise for strong performance.

9. Achievement awards such as employee of the month, recognition in the organizations newsletter or a trade publication and various status boosting reinforcing methods would be called for.
10. Higher need for exhibition could be handled at company banquets with awards such as plaques or rewards such as free tips or internal speaking or teaching opportunities.
11. Abasement can be a virtue in a situation with a more paternalistic management system, which demands closer supervision.
12. Higher levels of abasement should lead to a greater service orientation, better listening skills and a sincere interest in succeeding in relationship marketing.
13. Having a higher level of abasement should leave the marketer with a focus on what the customer wants and needs instead of what do I want.

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Redress for Customer Dissatisfaction and Its Impact on Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty

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This study aims to explore the concept of customer complaint behaviour with a view to establishing relationship between handling customer complaints, customer satisfaction and loyalty. Quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed to investigate customer complaint behaviour among retailers in four supermarkets in Kampala, Uganda. Findings show that there is a need for customer complaints to be handled by competent and service-minded staff. Issues such as lack of courtesy and professionalism characterize the retail sector in Uganda. Concluded that complaints should be handled quickly, and feedback on complaint handling process should be encouraged by management in order to use the feedback as starting point for improving future complaint management. A major managerial implication is that organizations should pay attention to failure attribution, and that providing detailed explanation may be an effective organizational response that will have an impact on behavioural aspects of brand loyalty.

INTRODUCTION

Complaints handling is not a substitute for abdicating the responsibility for managing quality and achieving customer satisfaction. Indeed, the former and the latter are nothing but synonymous expressions and quite compatible concepts (Zairi, 2000). For example, our pilot study shows that Metro and Half Price super markets failed in Uganda because they could not cope with the prevailing competitive pressure from new actors in food retailing sector – for example, new super markets of Shoprite, Game (from South Africa) and UCUMI from Kenya. Metro and Half Price had staff that lacked customer care skills. The staff talked rudely to customers. They were slow, and were not polite. On complaining, they would not even be apologetic but would comment that it was a case for their suppliers to handle, not their problem. Consequently, supermarkets like Metro and Half Price in Uganda closed their operations in 1995 and 2010 respectively.

A number of works in customer service quality assessment in Africa has been produced since the beginning of the past decade (Woldie, 2003; Bick et al., 2004; Narteh & Owusu-Frimpong, 2011). A common denominator in these studies is that customer satisfaction has become a major concern of retailers in many business sectors, and therefore calls for more research attention. The present study is a response to this call. This study contributes to existing knowledge by investigating the effects of customer complaints on customer loyalty using attribution theory. It is commonly known that there is a positive relationship between customer loyalty and profitability. Reichheld and Sasser (1990) found that when a company retains just 5 percent more of its customers, profits increase by 25 percent. Their study caught the attention of both practitioners and researchers, arousing a great interest in customer loyalty. Gould (1995) helped to consolidate the interest in loyalty through research that supported Reichheld and Sasser's work. In following, marketers are today seeking information on how to build customer loyalty.

Customer complaints are a natural consequence of any service activity (Michel et al., 2009) because mistakes are an unavoidable feature of all human endeavour and thus also of service delivery" (del Rio-Lanza et al 2009). They are indispensable indicators of unsatisfactory performance and may result in customer dissatisfaction. Customer dissatisfaction can be a combination of the discrepancy between expectations and performance, and the importance of this discrepancy to the customer. Consumer complaint behaviour (CCB) refers to the responses triggered by perceived dissatisfaction that is neither psychologically accepted nor quickly forgotten in consumption of a product or service (Homburg & Fürst, 2005). According to Gruber et al (2006), some customers who buy products from retailers complain about poor product quality, slowness of service providers, lack of staff competence, and unreliable services with hardly any apology, and go through the bureaucracy. Others perceive the causes to their disappointment as relatively permanent and unchanging (stability attribution) and opt to quietly walk away (del Rio-Lanza et al 2009). Still others may complain but regret the time spent complaining when their expectations are not met. Consequently, supermarkets like Metro and Half Price in Uganda closed their businesses, in 1995 and 2010, respectively.

Michel et al. (2009) asserts that disappointed customers may not complain because they wish to avoid confrontation with the person responsible for the failure, because they may be uncertain about their rights and the obligations of the organization, or because of concerns about the cost and time associated with complaining (Bamford & Xystouri, 2005). Against this background, does supermarket management in Uganda create a conducive atmosphere for customers to air their grievances over service failure? Without consumer feedback, firms will be unaware of their problems, and may not improve their performance (Heung and Lam, 2003). It may also be difficult to know what customers expect if they don't provide feedback on their opinions to the managers. The way in which complaints are addressed will lead to satisfaction or dissatisfaction. If customer complaints are not handled properly, the negative consequences may be far-reaching (Maxham and Netemeyer, 2003). Dissatisfied customers will not only discontinue their patronage, but are also likely to spread a negative message, jeopardizing the company image (Gruber et al, 2007; 2010; Svari et al 2010).

Only 5 out of 10 dissatisfied customers complain about their experiences, and these customers are more demanding and less loyal than ever before (Nakibin et al, 2011) because they believe the organization may not respond. They may wish to avoid confrontation with the person responsible for the failure; they may be uncertain about their rights and obligations; and some may have concerns about the cost and time associated with complaining (Bamford, 2006). Some dissatisfied consumers seek redress, while others do not approach the seller with their complaints (Gruber et al, 2009) but may engage in negative word-of-mouth (WOM) behaviours because many companies do not pay sufficient attention to handling complaints effectively (Stauss and Schoeler, 2004; Homburg and Fürst, 2007). Negative WOM may be damaging to firms because such messages are more likely to be believed (Gruber et al 2009). Larger numbers of unknown dissatisfied consumers respond in covert ways that never come to the retailer's attention (Halstead, 1997); to family, the media or to friends. Staff who do not provide a logical explanation to the customer are unable to recover failures (Karatepe and Ekiz, 2004). Apart from dissatisfaction due to product failure, consumers experience further dissatisfaction due to poor handling of complaints and, in sufficient numbers, this can damage the company's reputation, leading to loss of potential and existing customers and poor customer loyalty.

This study aims to explore the concept of customer complaint behaviour with a view to establishing relationship between handling customer complaints and customer satisfaction and loyalty. Thus, customer complaint behaviour among retailers in four supermarkets located in Kampala, Uganda was investigated. We build on extant knowledge by illuminating customer complaint behaviour (CCB) in a developing country in an African context – Uganda – examining the conditions under which consumers may or may not voice complaints. This study contributes to existing knowledge by investigating the effects of customer complaints on customer loyalty using attribution theory. Accordingly, the following research questions were used to guide our exploratory effort:

RQ1) What is the relationship between demographic factors and customer satisfaction?
RQ2) What is the relationship between CCB and customer loyalty?
RQ3) What is the relationship between CCB and customer satisfaction?
RQ4) What is the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty?

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Service quality is a concept that has generated considerable interest and debate in the research literature due to the difficulty of both defining it and measuring it, with no overall consensus emerging regarding either aspect (Wisniewski, 2001). According to the disconfirmation paradigm, satisfaction/ dissatisfaction is a direct consequence of the disconfirmation process. Disconfirmation of an expectation acts as an important causal agent for generating attribution processing. This means that events that do not conform to expectations may trigger the search for an explanation or reason for the event. In a complaint behaviour context, product failure is the kind of negative and unexpected event that has been shown to bring about causal search (Weiner, 2000). Consumers may attribute product failure to themselves (internal focus), or to the retailer or some outside agent in the environment (external locus). The main themes in extant literature on customer complaint behaviour encompass issues such as complaint handling in the affective nature of satisfaction (Söderlund and Rosengren, 2004; Dube and Menon, 2000), recovery-related emotions (Schoefer & Ennew, 2005), and negative WOM (Shu-Chuan and Sejung, 2011). A retailer's resistance to listening and responding to consumer complaints increases the likelihood that consumers will complain in private – in the form of negative WOM to family, friends and third parties (Shu-Chuan and Sejung, 2011; Zhang and Daugherty, 2009; Wang, 2011; Lang, 2011). Ways of seeking redress include refunds, exchanges, repairs, discounts on future purchases, or some combination of these (Blodgett et al., 1995).

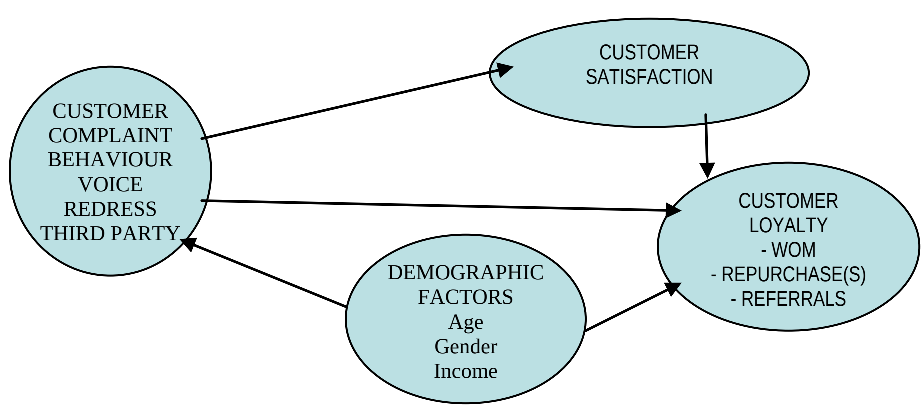
A service failure perceived as insignificant from the organization's perspective can be of great importance to the customer. For example, as McDougall and Levesques (1999) demonstrated, a customer's reason for buying a meal affects his or her perception of the seriousness of a service failure: a meal that is intended as a celebration is much more important to the customer than a casual meal, and a policy of fixed compensation from the provider will not always appease the dissatisfied customer. A provider's failure to eradicate disappointment can lead to customers making strong negative judgments of the organization (Marmorstein et al., 2001; Boshoff, 1997 & 2005), and such dissatisfied clients will seek every opportunity to criticize the offending companies, thus becoming what Heskett et al. (2003) characterize as "terrorist" customers. There are investigations on the cognitive and affective antecedents of satisfaction with complaint handling (Söderlund and Rosengren, 2004). Stauss and Schoeler (2004) define complaint satisfaction as "the satisfaction of a complainant with a company's response to her/his complaint" (p. 174). A meta-analysis by Gruber et al (2008) and Svari et al (2010) looks at satisfaction and complaint handling (SATCOM) in relation to return intent, WOM behaviour and SATCOM outcomes. In other words, outcome of a purchase situation could be attributed to something temporary (unstable), or something likely to occur each time the product is purchased or used (stable) – customers expect the product to fail if they purchase it again in the future; if unstable, customers will purchase it again (Weiner, 2000). A consumer's perception of attribution, in terms of locus, stability and controllability dimensions, is explained by Weiner (2000), who investigated different affective reactions. For example, when retailers are thought to have control over the cause of product failure and it is stable (re-occurs), consumers feel angry and desire revenge more than when the retailers are believed to lack control over the failure. And it is not until retailers comprehend the customers' complaint behaviour, their reasons for engaging in specific complaint behaviour, and reasoning behind their behaviour (cognitive processes), that they will recognize the link between complaint handling and customer loyalty.

Customer loyalty could be described as a "customer's commitment to do business with a particular organization, purchasing their goods and services repeatedly, and recommending the services and products to friends and associates" (McIlroy and Barnett, 2000, p. 348). Customer loyalty is neither easy to gain nor maintain, rather it is vulnerable, where "even if (a company's) customers are satisfied with the service they will continue to defect if they believe they can get better value, convenience or quality elsewhere" (McIlroy and Barnett, 2000, p. 349). Oliver (1999, pp.34, cited in Chumpitaz and Paparoidamis, 2007) defines loyalty as: "a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour." According to Klabi and Debabi (2011), the brand personality concept is studied in the sphere of the relationship marketing, which explores the shape and the evolution of relationships between brands and consumers. However, brand loyalty consists of behavioural aspects and attitudinal aspects (Pinar et al, 2011; Oliver, 1999). Behavioural loyalty refers to repeated purchases of a brand, whereas attitudinal loyalty refers to a degree of dispositional commitment (Anisimova, 2007; Javis et al, 2006). In other words, behavioural loyalty is partly determined by situational factors, and attitudinal loyalty is more enduring. Loyal customers are the backbone of any business because it is less expensive to keep customers than to recruit new ones (Gee et al, 2008).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In conceptualizing Customer complaint behaviour (CCB), customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, customer complaint behaviour focuses on satisfaction or dissatisfaction through voicing a complaint, private action or public action. Demographic factors may have a relationship with both CCB and customer loyalty. Figure 1 illustrates the constructs that extant literature consider relevant when conceptualizing satisfaction and complaint handling. We investigate the relationship between the dependent variable (customer loyalty) and the independent variables (CCB and customer satisfaction), with the moderating variable of demographic factors.

FIGURE 1
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION, CUSTOMER LOYALTY AND CUSTOMER COMPLAINT BEHAVIOUR



METHODOLOGY

The study aims to expand the understanding of how people who buy from super markets interpret the concepts of Customer complaint behaviour (CCB), customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. A phenomenological method was used as a technique for gathering and analyzing data (Goulding, 1999) and this allows the presentation of the people's own interpretation of concepts of disappointed customers who seek redress, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. This method allows the people's views to be presented, and to find what is hidden in the ordinary experiences (Gibb, 1998). The study aims to expand our understanding of how people who buy from supermarkets interpret the concepts of CCB, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

The population of interest was defined as people who shop from the supermarkets regularly. The study was carried out in retail stores in Uganda with visits to selected large retail stores in Kampala City. The unit of analysis was the customers who were in direct contact with employees of the selected large retail stores. Respondents who shop at the sampled Super markets were sampled since they buy from various super markets. The sample size was based on Krijcie and Morgan (1970) and it was 140. The systematic sampling procedure was employed to ensure that the sample included different demographic and socio economic groups. Participation of the respondents was voluntary. The different categories of people were interviewed individually. The customers were encouraged to speak freely about the research topic, in order to obtain the fullest descriptions of their experiences.

The people surveyed were customers of Shoprite supermarket, Game, Capital Shoppers and UCUMI. The specific retail stores dealt in household items. Both the qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were used to capture the views and opinions of respondents. A five-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly agrees* to *strongly disagree* was adopted for questions regarding customer complaints, customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction and customer loyalty. The questionnaire consisted of three sections on the dependent variable (customer loyalty), customer satisfaction, customer complaint behaviour and demographic factors. The questionnaire was designed to capture the items necessary to address the research questions, thus the customers' feelings, beliefs and attitudes about how the service failures they encountered were handled by the super market staff. The first section were on demographic characteristics of the respondents such as gender, age, education and gross income per month The other questions focused on issues like: the supermarket staff responding to complaints promptly and complaining customers being taken care of quickly; the super market showing interest and ability to solve the problem encountered by customers in service delivery system, and trying to put right what had gone wrong while providing a service; getting an appology from the staff; getting a clear explanation about why the problem occurred; customers getting a clear explanation why the problem occured; getting satisfied with the way staff handled their complaints; customers recommending the supermarket to their friends and family and customers willingness to continue to buy from the supermarket.

The respondents were mainly covered using questionnaires and interview guides to enable them to describe their feelings, beliefs and attitudes regarding the services in retail stores. The instrument was first designed, pilot tested to check for ambiguities and incomprehensiveness. Changes were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire. Potential respondents were approached and requested to participate in the study. Those that agreed were given the questionnaire. Interviews lasting about ten minutes were conducted with the respondents as well. The aim of the interviews was to give them the opportunity to express their feelings, beliefs and attitudes regarding the research questions. The interviews were taped and the interviewer took notes as well. Questionnaires were filled by respondents that were selected to participate in the study. Questionnaires were used because they cover a large number of respondents in a relatively short time and reliable data can be generated since the questions asked can be responded to at the respondents appropriate time. The sample was selected through convenience sampling due to the nature of the respondents. The response rate for supermarket customers was 68%.

After collecting data, it was edited and the researchers made sure that every questionnaire was filled. The raw data was coded and entered into the computer. Then the frequencies and percentages were used to make comparisons of the responses. The relationships were tested using Pearson Correlation

Coefficient. Validity and reliability tests were carried out. Reliability analysis is established by testing whether the items grouped under a factor are internally consistent and stable. Cronbach's α was used to analyze the reliability of the instruments. Reliability over 0.80 is good; reliability in the range of 0.70 is acceptable; and reliability less than 0.60 is considered poor (Sekaran, 2003). The instrument was reliable since the variables were higher than 0.60. Then the data from the reliable instruments was entered in the SPSS packages.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Q1: What is the Relationship Between Demographic Factors and Customer Satisfaction?

Regarding gender, the majority of shopping at the supermarkets is done by males (47%), while females represent 38% of shoppers. It is mainly men who do most shopping because they are the ones who are employed and therefore earn, while majority of women either manage their homes (housewives) or earn little income. From the interaction with Kato, *men want to be felt as the heads of the home (male chauvinism) and they express this by doing the family shopping*. Kahunda added: '*A man must be a major provider of his family – that is what makes you a real man and not a woman. On the other hand, men want to control the expenditure of the family income and feel unsafe when the women go shopping. They say that women sometimes buy even what is not budgeted for and hence overspend. It therefore becomes a control method of the family finances when the men do most of the shopping for the family*'.

With regard to age, the group doing most of the shopping at the supermarkets is the 20-29 years age group (38%). This is a category of people who spend most of the income in shopping. Most of the people in this category do not have big expenditure like paying school fees for children. The money earned is mainly spent on shopping in the super markets as they are starting off their new homes like buying radio, television, home equipment, etc. And the age group with the least amount of shoppers is >60 years (1.2%). The people who are more than 60 years of age do the least shopping mainly because they are out of formal employment and are retired; usually the income at that age has reduced. And at retirement, majority of the people go back to their country homes and produce their own food for home consumption and do minimum shopping. And the people who do most of the shopping in the supermarkets fall in the income bracket 100,000-399,000 UGX (34%). The people who fall in that income bracket are mainly those who have just started employment and are doing a lot of shopping to start up a home with kitchen equipment, electronics for entertainment, etc. And from the survey, 35% of the sample responded that supermarkets meet their expectations. This is in terms of handling customer complaints and they are mainly the simple cases like of exchange of good products for faulty ones, simple repairs, etc.

38% of the respondents felt supermarket staff do not respond adequately to customer complaints. This is unfortunate when staff do not respond well to complaints because handling customer complaints well enables one to get feedback on how the business is performing and in case of complaints, there is an opportunity for redress. Unfortunately, many companies do not pay sufficient attention to handling complaints effectively (Homburg and Furst, 2007; Stauss and Schoeler, 2004) and that is partly the reason why disappointed customers exit the service (Bodey and Grace, 2006). This is because they already have a set mind and do not expect to have their complaints handled to their expectation. Failure to meet the customer's complaints will lead to double deviation which some customers call 'double portion of disappointment'. Some staff just performs duty because they are employed to work but do not handle customer complaints well. They do not listen to the customers attentively and consequently they waste customer's time and many times do not address the disappointments to customer's expectations. Customer complaints are made in person with very few expressed on the telephone, and this increases the congestion at the customer care desk.

Correlations

The correlations were performed to test associations between the dependent variable (customer loyalty) and the independent variables (CCB and customer satisfaction). The findings are shown in the table below.

TABLE 1
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEPENDENT VARIABLE AND INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

	1	2	3
Customer loyalty	1		
Customer complaint behaviour	0.621** 0.000	1	
Customer satisfaction	0.595** 0.000	0.801** 0.000	1
Significance at 0.01 level (2-tailed)			

Table 1 shows the correlations between stable variables. The results revealed that customer loyalty is positively related to the variables in the study, i.e. to customer complaint behaviour (=0.621**, P=0.000), and to customer satisfaction (0.595**, P=0.000). CCB is also positively related to the customer satisfaction variable (0.801**, P=0.000).

Research Q2: What is the Relationship Between CCB and Customer Loyalty?

The findings showed there was a significant relationship between CCB and customer loyalty at 0.621** with a significance level of 0.000. This means that when returns and exchanges are handled well and meet the expectations of the customer, customers feel well taken care of and appreciated, and are more inclined to become loyal to the supermarket. Customers expect supermarket service providers to show courtesy and a sincere interest when handling their queries, by keeping the customers' best interests at heart. When the staff discuss and try to resolve the complaints, the customers are more inclined to become loyal to them. According to this survey, some employees do not listen attentively to the cause of the dissatisfaction, resulting in further customer disappointment. Yet, in attribution theory, the handling of complaints with an external locus (where the cause of service failure stems from the organization) has been recognized as a critical task for service managers (Hess et al., 2003).

Research Q3: What is the Relationship Between CCB and Customer Satisfaction?

There was a significant relationship between CCB and customer satisfaction, at 0.801**, with a significance level of 0.000. Handling customer complaints requires a willingness on the part of the employees and management of the supermarkets to handle the queries. Of the customers surveyed, 47% were satisfied with the services of the supermarkets; According to the respondents, 34% of staff were willing to handle customer complaints, while a larger percentage (over 50%) were not willing. Customers expected staff to be courteous, attentive, and competent in handling their complaints. These qualities were at times lacking. Unfortunately, supermarket staff did not show much effort in making the filing of complaints accessible for customers; other staff lacked competence in handling customer complaints, with slow responsiveness and failing to calm down angry customers. Kakuru, a customer of Game Supermarket, said "*that customers who sought redress expected employees to courteously provide accurate information and show a sincere interest in solving their problems, yet the staff lacked professionalism in handling customer complaints, sending the customers around from one staff to another, which irritated the customers*". There was lack of courtesy where the staff asked questions like 'Yes, what is the problem ... maybe you are the one who does not know how to use the product or you spoilt the product yourself. They push the blame onto the customer. That was very annoying to the customers. There were some incompetent staff that lacked professionalism when handling customer complaints through use of guess work where the staff could not handle technical faulty products and yet they could keep sending the disappointed customers from one manager to another. That was very irritating to the customers. It was further confirmed by Hansen, Wilke and Zaichkowsky (2010) that non-active complaint handlers do not perceive complaint management as a strategic tool. In the current survey, 49% of customers felt committed to the store, 38% were uncertain, and 18% were not committed. This may have a negative impact on sustainability of the business. A regression analysis was also carried out and the results are shown in the table below.

TABLE 2
REGRESSION MODEL SUMMARY - DEPENDENT VARIABLE (CUSTOMER LOYALTY)

Model	B	Standard error	Beta	t	Sig.
1 (constant)	1.786	0.243		7.358	0.000
CCB	0.487	0.074	0.621	6.586	0.000
2 (constant)	1.443	0.305		4.729	0.000
CCB	0.315	0.120	0.402	2.631	0.011
Cust satisf	0.265	0.147	0.276	1.806	0.075

R = 0.578   R-square= 0.335   Adjusted R-square = 0.331   Standard error of estimate = 65.991

The results in the prediction model (Table 2 above) were generated to explore the extent to which the predictors, i.e. CCB and Customer Satisfaction, can explain the dependent variable, i.e. Customer Loyalty. The results indicated that the predictors together have the potential of explaining up to 39.2% of the observed changes in customer loyalty of an institution (Adjusted R-Square = 0.331). Among these predictors, CCB (t = 7.358) and Customer Satisfaction (t = 4.729) were observed to be best at predicting Customer Loyalty. These results imply that, for instance, for every 1000 increment increase in loyal customers a supermarket attains, 331 of these customers will be loyal as a result of the way staff manage the predictors.

Research Q4: What is the Relationship Between Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty?

There was a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, at 0.595**, with a significance level of 0.000. This means that when the supermarket meets the expectations of the customer, the customer may be loyal. Ideally, customers expect that their complaints will receive a quick response, and that mistakes will be quickly noticed and acknowledged by supermarket staff. That is, when a mistake has been made, employees will respond to the complaint as expected by the customers, such as apologizing or providing some form of compensation, and when compensation is promised, they don’t go back on their word. When the service is rated as extremely satisfying, in terms of overall quality, this may lead customers to recommend the supermarket’s products and services to others (positive WOM). Evidence of the moderating role of failure attributions has been shown in previous studies in the service failure context (Grewal et al., 2008; Tsiros et al., 2004). Grewal et al. (2008) added that compensation is necessary only when the company is responsible for the failure and the failure occurs frequently. Tsiros et al. (2004) found customer satisfaction to be stronger when the client’s perception of the dimensions of causal attribution is low; in other words, when service failure is attributed to unstable (may not continue to re-occur) or uncontrollable causes.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Complaints handling is not a substitute for abdicating the responsibility for managing quality and achieving customer satisfaction. Indeed, the former and the latter are nothing but synonymous expressions and quite compatible concepts. This paper treats the issue of complaints handling and management as essential for achieving customer retention and loyalty. We contribute to extant literature by exploring the concept of Customer Complaint Behaviour (CCB) with a view to establishing the relationship between handling customer complaints, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. A lot is required to turn disappointed customers into loyal customers for improved business performance in Africa. Disappointed customers are hardly encouraged to forward their complaints to the staff of supermarkets, so retailers miss out on the strategic asset of customer's complaints that could provide important knowledge concerning the performance of the business. Some customers who complain receive little attention, exhibited through a lack of active listening, and a lack of competence and professionalism in handling complaints. The levels of significance of CCB and customer loyalty were very high for those respondents who were satisfied with the handling of customer complaints.

In order to improve customer satisfaction, supermarket owners should strive to consider the following items, which deserve priority, so as to improve customer loyalty: i) Staff should respond quickly in handling customer complaints; ii) Ugandan supermarkets should have staff who give customers personal attention; iii) Staff should be trained to give them the skills and knowledge to handle customers' complaints; iv) Supermarket staff should listen attentively to understand the specific complaints of customers; v) Supermarket staff should do more than just smile to address the needs of customers. No matter how excellent service the company delivers, mistakes will still be made in meeting customer expectations and customers will become more demanding and less loyal (Nakibin et al., 2011). When complaints are handled well, this may lead to customer loyalty (34% according to the responses), where customers can be retained through more future purchases.

Post-purchase dissatisfaction is very important because it may be closely linked to negative outcomes such as less favourable purchase attitudes, lower or non-existent purchase intentions, negative WOM, complaining, and changes in shopping behaviour (Omachonu et al, 2008). Based on the study, negative WOM communications to friends, relatives and the media is generally considered detrimental to retailers and this was confirmed by Nakibin et al, 2011). The dissatisfied customers were not happy with the process complaints by the supermarket staff. In some cases, staff did not have the authority to handle some cases raised by disappointed customers and would therefore refer the customers to the managers, who would sometimes handle or not handle the problems. This was annoying to the customers as it would waste their time. Customers noted that it was not enough to say "yes, how may I help you", but what happened from the point of receiving the complaint up to the time of getting a solution, which was the process of handling complaints. And for the cases where the staff neither apologised nor compensated the disappointed customers, it angered the customers leading them to negative word of mouth to the families, friends, etc. this was also confirmed in the literature (Tax et al, 1998; Tax and Brown, 1998 and Gruber et al 2009; Shu-Chuan and Sejung, 2011; Zhang and Daugherty, 2009; Wang, 2011; Lang, 2011). Companies discourage complaints by not providing convenient opportunities for customers to lodge complaints, and when staff display negative attitudes towards disappointed customers they miss out on valuable information for improvement (Sheth et al., 1999).

In addition to the dissatisfaction that results from product failure, consumers experience further dissatisfaction due to the disappointment caused by retailers who turn a deaf ear to their complaints. This is mainly because complaint management is left to front-line staff that lack adequate skills and authority. It is also confirmed that some customers who do not perceive any avenues to complain simply exit with their dissatisfaction (Hansen et al, 2010). In Ugandan supermarkets, overall customer satisfaction after a failure has not improved in the last decade (since we did our last study), and many managers claim their organizations cannot respond to and fix recurring problems quickly enough. Supermarkets ought to be aware of the problems that lead to customer complaints. Efficient management of customer complaints efficiently also provides feedback that can be used in managing, and ultimately resolving, future complaints. This is also confirmed by Boshoff (1997) and Crie (2003). Employees' efforts to handle customer complaints – providing prompt attention to complainants and detailed explanations constitute the most effective organizational responses, which in turn can have an impact on behavioural aspects of the loyalty constructs of WOM communications, recommendations and repurchase intention (e.g. see findings in conjunction with Question 4 presented above).

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An Investigation of Factors Affecting Marketing Information Systems' Use

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Using an exploratory case study approach, this article examines factors that contribute to effective use of marketing information systems. Research results indicate that system integration, flexibility, and ease of learning are important measures of system quality that affect the use of marketing information systems and user satisfaction. Availability of customer information and use of appropriate formats for presenting information significantly impact user satisfaction. For marketing information systems to be effective, they should meet the information processing requirements of the organization and be aligned with broader organizational systems and strategies.

INTRODUCTION

The rapidly changing business environment and increasing availability of information have brought new challenges as well as unique marketing opportunities that did not exist even a few years ago. As Mullins, Walker, and Boyd (2011, p.283) state, "Marketing is rapidly becoming a game where information, rather than raw marketing muscle, wins the race for competitive advantage." As a result, Marketing Information Systems (MkIS) have become a vital element for effective marketing. These tools are designed to support marketing processes including marketing research and analysis, planning, budgeting, and controlling (Saaksjarvi & Talvinen, 1993).

Many organizations are investing in sophisticated marketing information systems, but the effectiveness of these systems within organizational contexts is a major managerial concern. In fact, some studies show that marketing information systems often fail to improve organizational performance and to address users' expectations. Take for example, global expenditure on Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, which exceeded $8 billion in 2008 and was expected to be approximately $13 billion in 2012 (Gartner, 2011). Research shows that "one in every three CRM deployments fails and fewer than 50 percent of CRM projects fully meet expectation" (Frow, Payne, Wilkinson, & Young, 2011, p.79). Thus, it is important to identify the factors that contribute to effective use of marketing information systems. This paper investigates some of these factors using an exploratory case study approach. It is organized as follows: First, the theoretical background and research model for the study are presented. This is followed by a discussion of the research method. Then the empirical findings are outlined and discussed. Finally, the study's conclusions are presented.

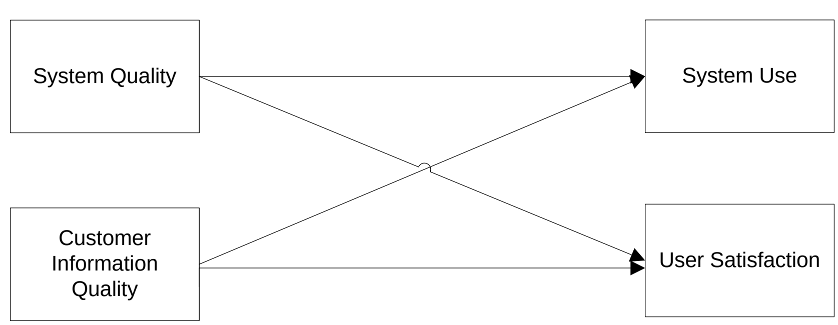
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

To facilitate marketing decision making and information processing, more and more organizations are deploying marketing information systems (MkIS). In an early definition, Cox and Good (1967) described MkIS as a set of procedures and methods for planning, analyzing, and presenting the information required for marketing decisions. Kotler (1991) offered a model of MkIS that includes four major subsystems: an internal record system, a marketing intelligence system, a marketing research system, and a marketing decision support system.

In order for an MkIS to provide the expected results, it needs to be used effectively. Users must be able to use the system and should anticipate that the system is capable of producing the results they are aiming for. Despite the importance of this, there are few studies that investigate the factors that affect the use of marketing information systems (Gounaris, Panigyrakis, & Chatzipanagiotou, 2007). Within the Information Systems (IS) literature, the most widely cited model for the evaluation of information systems is DeLone and McLean’s (1992) IS success model. Briefly, in this model, two main factors, system quality and information quality, influence system usage and user satisfaction, which in turn lead to individual and organizational impacts. System quality refers to the “desirable characteristics of an information system,” (Petter, DeLone, & McLean, 2008, p.238) such as system flexibility and ease of learning. Information quality refers to the “desirable characteristics of the system outputs,” (Petter, DeLone, & McLean, 2008, p.239) namely, the quality of information that the system produces in the form of reports, analyses, and web pages, for example. System use can have different meanings. It can refer to the amount of use, frequency of use, and extent of use, as well as the nature and purpose of use. User satisfaction measures users’ positive attitudes toward system capabilities and outcomes. System impacts reflect “the extent to which IS are contributing to the success of individuals, groups and organizations” (DeLone & McLean, 2003; Petter, DeLone, & McLean, 2008, p.239).

The focus of our study is the use of marketing information systems. We are interested in exploring the factors that limit the use of these systems and lead to user dissatisfaction. Given the exploratory nature of our study, we used the IS success model as a general framework to guide our MkIS interview questions. We examined how system quality and information quality explain some of the challenges that lead to limited use of MkIS systems and user dissatisfaction. Figure 1 represents the general framework of study.

FIGURE 1
RESEARCH FRAMEWORK



RESEARCH METHOD

To explore how marketing information systems are used in their organizational settings, we used a qualitative case approach. Multiple organizations were studied to have a more robust design. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with managers, users of marketing information systems, and system developers in three Canadian organizations in different industries. These organizations vary in size, level of system development, and competitiveness. A variety of systems were considered in this study. The systems range from internal record systems (e.g., databases) and transactional systems (e.g., point of sales systems) to more analytical and decision support systems (e.g., data mining applications) as well as marketing communication systems (e.g., a "voice of customers" portal). A list of key systems examined is presented in Table 1. Although we examined only three organizations in detail, the diversity of their systems and organizational settings allowed us to thoroughly investigate the factors that affect systems' usage.

TABLE 1
MARKETING INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Example Systems
Customer service and support (e.g., call centers)
Sales force automation (e.g., Point of Sales (POS) systems)
Marketing automation (e.g., e-mail campaigns)
Database management systems
Data analysis systems (e.g., data mining, spreadsheets)
Marketing communication systems (e.g., internal portals, social media)

The three organizations are kept anonymous and are referred to as the Electronic organization, the Health organization, and the Education organization. The Electronic organization is a large nationwide seller of digital and electronic appliances. The company uses advanced marketing information systems that facilitate marketing communications and customer information analysis. The Health organization is a nationwide organization that offers individually designed dietary plans and one-on-one nutrition and health consulting as well as nutrition and health supplement products. The company has strong communication systems (e.g., a call center and customer portal); however, it uses a simple software tool—Excel—for much of its customer information analysis. The third organization studied is a university department. This business school uses a CRM system for managing relationships with its customers (i.e., potential, current, and past students, and potential recruiting organizations). The CRM system offers sophisticated data mining capabilities; however, as in the case of the Health organization, employees prefer Excel for information analysis and marketing decision making. In addition, the school has several portals that facilitate information sharing internally (across departments) and externally (between the school and its clients).

Twelve in-depth interviews were conducted with managers and employees who represented marketing, customer interaction centers, regional sales offices, and IT in the three organizations. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded using the NVivo program. The results of the study are discussed in the next section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The qualitative results of the study are presented below, using the proposed research framework to guide our discussion (see Figure 1). As argued by DeLone and McLean (1992, 2003), the quality of systems, and the quality of information produced by systems, are the main factors that affect their use and the level of user satisfaction. However, in order to effectively use information systems to facilitate business processes, certain contextual organizational factors are required. For example, the case studies revealed that a high quality and sophisticated marketing information system might not produce satisfactory results unless it is properly integrated with business and organizational processes. These organizational requirements are discussed separately.

System Quality

Various measures of system quality are described in the literature (e.g., DeLone & McLean, 1992, 2003). These measures explain why some marketing information systems are not used to their full potential and why some users are dissatisfied with systems. In our study, the interviewees highlighted measures of system integration, system flexibility, and ease of learning. These are expanded on below.

One important aspect for MkIS quality is system integration, which can be defined as "the realized possibility of getting separate components or parts of a system to work effectively together" (Talvinen, 1995, p.15). Integrated systems facilitate the flow of information through the organization and allow users and managers to get access to the right information in a timely manner. Integration can be considered as vertical (i.e., connected systems in which data can easily be transferred from operational systems into management decision-making systems) and horizontal (i.e., operational subsystems are integrated, and individuals can use and transfer data from one subsystem into another one without difficulty) (Sääksjärvi & Talvinen, 1993). Lack of integration among marketing information systems can negatively affect system use and user satisfaction. For instance, in the Health organization, MkIS lacks vertical integration. Consultants at regional offices gain rich customer information through direct interaction with customers. However, this information is not accessible by managers and therefore is not incorporated into marketing decision making. In the case of the Education organization, a lack of horizontal integration of subsystems across departments has led to unnecessary work and/or work overload on many occasions. Potential and current students can be regarded as customers who receive services from several departments at different stages of their interactions with the organization. However, lack of system integration causes potential dissatisfaction among customers and employees since in some cases, employees have to spend time manually gathering and combining all the information they need to serve customers or to perform analyses, leading to delays and potential inaccuracies.

System flexibility is another aspect that affects the use of MkIS. It is generally assumed that more flexible systems are preferred since they facilitate the flow of information and system customization. However, we observed that under certain conditions, a high level of flexibility in fact restricts system use. For instance, the customer database in the Education organization is highly flexible; it allows employees to easily create new custom-made fields based on individuals' preferences. As a result, paradoxically, employees cannot easily retrieve the information they need from other employees' databases and integrate it with their own databases. This restricts the flow of information and leads to dissatisfaction.

Ease of learning is another factor that reflects users' evaluation of system quality and that influences system use and satisfaction (Petter et al., 2008; Ravichandran & Rai, 2000). Some organizations neglect to provide the required training to enable users to work with somewhat sophisticated systems, although the need for training may seem obvious. Employees are therefore less willing to use the systems. Interviews at the Education organization revealed that the MkIS has powerful analytical capabilities; however, most employees do not have the required IT skills to deploy these capabilities. Employees are "scared" to use the system, and the hardcopy system manual has not helped them to overcome this fear. As a result, employees prefer to avoid the system, relying instead on Excel spreadsheets to do basic analyses and reporting.

Customer Information Quality

Our analysis showed that customer information quality is associated more strongly with user satisfaction than system use. Specifically, the availability of information (i.e., access to the right information in a timely manner) in a desirable format strongly influences users' satisfaction; if the information is not readily available or is not properly organized, it will take a long time for employees to pull out the information they need. This process is not only inefficient but tedious and time consuming, and is likely to lead to user dissatisfaction.

Organizational Requirements

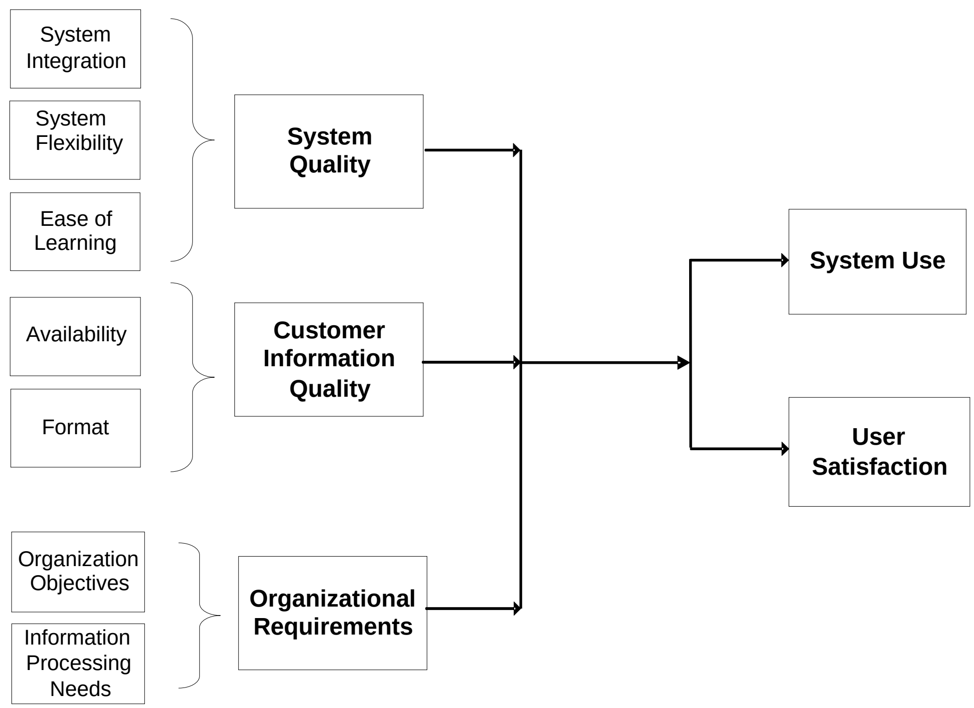
While many information systems studies ignore the role of organizational factors on the success of organizational systems (e.g., DeLone & McLean, 1992, 2003; Petter et al., 2008; Sedera & Gable, 2004), our research highlighted that the success of MkIS can be affected significantly by factors such as organizational objectives and information-processing requirements. In fact, it became clear that marketing information systems should be aligned with broader organizational systems and strategies to serve as effective tools to accomplish organizational objectives. For instance, in the case of the Educational organization, the use of a CRM system seems inappropriate; systems like these are mainly designed to serve the requirements of sales-oriented organizations, and many of their features appear unnecessary in an educational context. Let us take another example. The Health organization relies primarily on using Excel spreadsheets to analyze customer information. Excel applications might have sufficient capabilities to serve the analytical needs of one department or a small company; however, in the case of a nationwide customer-centric organization, with a growing base of customers, Excel does not seem sufficient to effectively analyze and manage high-volume customer information.

CONCLUSION

Through a series of case studies, marketing information systems were investigated. System integration, flexibility, and ease of learning were identified as particularly important measures of system quality that affect the use of systems and user satisfaction. In addition, the availability of customer information and use of appropriate formats for presenting information significantly impact user satisfaction. Finally, the case studies emphasized that for marketing information systems to be effective, they should meet the information-processing requirements of the organization and be aligned with broader organizational systems and strategies. Figure 2 presents the final framework that summarizes the findings of this study.

Organizations are interested in improving the performance of often costly marketing information systems. This study investigates factors that can negatively affect the use of these systems as well as users' satisfaction with them. Our analysis is based on three Canadian case studies. We recommend that other researchers triangulate our qualitative findings with the results of larger-scale quantitative studies. This will increase the generalizability of the findings and further the investigation of the use and usefulness of marketing information systems.

FIGURE 2
SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS



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Crowdsourcing in the Social Media Era: A Case Study of Industrial Marketers

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In recent years crowdsourcing has increased in popularity as a method of gathering new ideas and innovations outside the organization. To make crowdsourcing work, there is a basic requirement to make external parties aware of the challenges or problems that need to be solved. Various digital marketing tools, especially social media platforms, provide new ways to foster the interaction between the parties. With the use of a case study, the study develops a framework to assess how social media and crowdsourcing can be integrated in an industrial context. The results reveal significant practical challenges to overcome before social media can be effectively utilized as a fully functioning crowdsourcing enabler.

INTRODUCTION

No business today can neglect the impact of social media (SM). SM is big and getting bigger, and it has changed the way firms communicate with both existing and prospective customers and other stakeholders (Parent, Plangger and Bal 2011). According to eMarketer (2011), business is expected to invest $6 billion in social media in 2011. It is being argued that we are in the middle of a new communication landscape (e.g. Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre 2011) as the roles of customer interaction and user-generated content (UGC) are emphasized in marketing communications (Dennis, Merrilees, Jayawardhena, and Wright 2009; Liu, Karahanna and Watson 2011). According to Smith (2009) various social platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, Twitter, and YouTube, which allow users to publish opinions, connect, build community, and produce and share content are creating the so-called social media revolution. However, in order for firms to fully leverage SM there are new skills and strategies marketers are required to learn (Scott 2010; Thomas and Barlow 2011).

There is also a strong shift in power emerging due to SM. There are several discussion threads and social media sites where customers express their experiences and opinions about a firm and its offerings. People not only want to share their ideas and opinions with a large audience, but also want firms to listen to them and be responsive (Kietzmann et al. 2011). According to Mangold & Faulds (2009) social media has challenged the traditional way of companies talking to their customers, as now SM enables customers to talk directly to one another and without firm's control. This actually makes the act of listening essential for firms (Smith, 2009). Similarly, Gillin and Schwartzman (2011: 219) state that "the most essential skill of the B2B marketer has become the ability to listen." Most likely this holds true in consumer businesses, but less is known about whether this is also valid in industrial B2B context where buyers and users are often different types of entity.

According to Hoyer et al. (2010) consumers' active participation in product development is still in its infancy. The same holds true also in industrial B2B settings if 'consumer' is replaced with 'end-user'. In addition there is limited knowledge of how digital marketing communications and SM could be used in combination to facilitate innovation processes and value co-creation by activating customers and end-users to provide feedback, suggestions for improvement and even new ideas and innovation to product manufacturers and service providers. One way to organize idea collection is by applying crowdsourcing (CS). The ideology behind CS is to use the wisdom of many individuals rather than relying on only a few experts (Surowiecki 2005). While the exact origin of the term crowdsourcing is debatable (Biewald 2009), an article by Howe (2006) is often mentioned as the first reference to CS. According to Howe (2008: 280), "crowdsourcing isn't a single strategy. It's an umbrella term for a highly varied group of approaches that share one obvious attribute in common: they all depend on some contribution from the crowd." CS is related to another relatively new business concept: open innovation (Chesbrough 2003). According to Hopkins (2011), user-driven innovation, co-creation and CS are all ways to make open innovation happen. The idea that the customer becomes co-creator of value has been widely recognized in recent marketing literature (Payne, Storbacka and Frow, 2008; Edvardsson, Tronvoll, Bård and Thorsten, 2011; Vargo & Lusch 2004, 2008)..

There are several success stories in business-to-consumer (B2C) industry on the power of CS, such as Lego´s Lego Factory, Nike´s Nikeidea, Nokia´s Betalabs and Starbucks' My Starbucks Idea. In the B2B sector Dell's Ideastorm, GE's solar power community, HP communities and Salesforce's Idea Exchange are well-known examples of online crowdsourcing, but their real value to business is not that clear. In general the role of CS in co-creation is still unclear. There are some studies that doubt the value of CS (e.g. Cooper and Edgett 2008) while there is evidence supporting it too (e.g. Brabham 2008; Howe 2008). We feel that more research in this area is needed to clarify the situation

Against this background this study attempts to provide answer to the research question how end-users could be engaged to innovate new products and services in B2B via social media and digital marketing? The focus here is on discussing the potential benefits of integrating SM and CS. The concepts of SM and CS are reinforced throughout this paper and the model presented at the end of this paper ties them together.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL MARKETING

As a theoretical approach we consider internet marketing as a part of digital marketing. Furthermore, we consider social media as a sub-element of internet marketing, others including for instance online advertising (banners and search engine marketing), direct marketing (e-mail and SMS) and online directories. Internet is not a media, but it is collection of sub-medias. It is also difficult to draw a clear line between digital and social media concepts, as the social elements are increasingly integrated into the established interactive digital media environment in the forms of discussion forums, sharing buttons, and blogs embedded on websites. Therefore, we consider social media to represent an enhancement to, rather than a replacement for other digital media, and accordingly, we regard social media as integrated elements, platforms, and tools of digital marketing that facilitate social interaction between businesses and customer networks.

Generally speaking digital marketing and its related terms, such as Internet/online marketing, are commonly used to describe the use of technologies in marketing efforts. However, there is no agreement on what is encapsulated in each term, and in practice the terms are often used interchangeably. For example, Farrah (2010) discusses Internet marketing under the topic "Understanding digital marketing," whereas Melewar and Smith (2003) present the barriers of Internet usage under the topic "The contentious issues with online marketing." On the other hand, Simmons, Thomas, and Truong (2010) list applications such as e-mail, web sites, digital advertising, web analytics, viral marketing, and brand communities as Internet marketing applications. In this study, digital marketing is used as an umbrella term referring to all previously listed instruments, while admitting that the concepts are tightly related and intertwined.

Social media provides a way to share ideas, content, thoughts and relationships online (Scott 2010: 38). Halligan and Shah (2010: 85) state that in SM people are connecting, interacting and sharing online with each other. SM differs from Web 1.0 applications by offering everyone a platform for content creation, content upload, networking, conversing, media sharing, and bookmarking (Parent et al. 2011).

Interactive digital channels enable more flexible customer-seller discussions, which challenges the idea of one-way marketing communications (Ozuem et al. 2008). Customers can be cultivated, so that they develop from passive receivers into active influencers – which actually is the power behind social networks. It has been stated that social networks have economic impact to online sellers as they enhanced accessibility and make connectivity easier (Stephen and Toubia (2010). They also increase learning and knowledge sharing (Walters 2008). Palmer and Koeneg-Lewis (2009) propose that user generated content (UGC) enables a new kind of marketing communication, but it also challenges companies to give power to customers and loosen their own control over the discussion. In the same vein, Hening-Trurau et al. (2010) argue that traditional media companies may formulate and control their marketing communication messages in the way they want, but in social media they are only participants in the conversation. Weinberg and Pehlivan (2011) state that social media has properties that empower consumers and give them influence, enabling relationship building between organizations and customers.

The Interactivness of Social Media

During the last ten years we have seen a shift from what was called the Web 1.0 era to Web 2.0 era. The 'old' Web has been replaced by an interactive and multidimensional Web. Social media has transformed the Web from a platform for information to a platform for influence (Hanna et al. 2011). Social media users seek opportunities to influence and engage more with their preferred brands (Parent et al. 2011). The two key characteristics of social media are UGC and customer interaction (van Zyl 2009; Riegner 2007; Muñiz and Schau, 2011)

Social media is often used as a synonym for the term Web 2.0 (Weinberg and Pehlivan 2011; Palmer and Koeneg-Lewis 2009; Levy 2009; Riegner 2007). According to Constantidines and Fountain (2008), Web 2.0 refers to digital communication platforms, while the term "social media" refers to the social characteristics (participation, openness, conversation, seamless, communal) of those platforms. Kaplan and Haenlain (2009) even suggest that the term 'Web 2.0' was not originally meant to describe a new technical era of the Internet, but acquired such a meaning later, which is why the term 'social media' should be preferred. As Weinberg and Pehlivan (2011) state, "simply, and in a broad sense, Web 2.0 is comprised of computer network-based platforms upon which social media applications/tools (referred to social media, for short) run or function."

Social Media in B2B Industries

The term social media is not strictly defined and is often understood too narrowly. In B2B context, social media is much more than mainstream applications such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or discussion forums. Kho (2008) proposes that SM tools enable fast and personalized communication with customers, and that SM can enhance corporate credibility and deepen the customer relationship. Michaelidou et al. (2011) state that B2B companies can use SM to both attract new customers and cultivate existing relationships. SM provides a new tool for an organization to create a unique brand identity and to differentiate itself from its competitors. SM tools make it easy for a B2B company to stay connected with its partners, distributors and manufacturers (Weber 2009 26). However, B2B companies have been quite slow to adopt SM in their marketing communications (Michaelidou et al. 2011), and according to Jussila et al. (2011) there is a significant gap between the potential and the actual use of social media in B2B business. These authors also discovered that academic research is very limited in the field of social media use in the B2B sector. This is surprising given that B2B companies' investment in SM continues to grow incrementally (Forrester Research 2010), and that according to Ramos and Young (2009), 91% of business buyers read blogs, watch user-generated videos or participate in other social media. Additional studies of how social media can be used in business include Benson, Filippaios and Morgan (2010) who studied SM on career planning and Cooke & Buckley (2008) who state that social networking can also provide new avenues for market research. Thus there is perhaps a potential to engage B2B firms to apply crowdsourcing in their business too.

It seems likely that digital environments can be used to achieve many kind of goals in the B2B sector such as decreasing communications costs (Sharma, 2002; Walters, 2008), provide information about a B2B firms and its brand, products and services (Berthon, Lane, Pitt, & Watson, 1998; Welling & White, 2006), and by doing so create awareness, improve brand attitude, and increase purchase intentions (Drèze & Hussherr, 2003; Manchanda, Dubé, Goh, & Chintagunta, 2006). In addition, increasing sales is another possible goal of the digital marketing for B2B firms. Sales to existing customers can be increased by facilitating the transaction process (Sharma, 2002) and sales to new customers can be boosted by gathering leads (Welling & White, 2006). Finally, the digital channels are ways to interact with customers and develop customer relationships (Bauer, Grether, & Leach, 2002; Hennig-Thurau et al. 2010).

Even though it is stated that SM is adopted slowly by B2B industrial companies, there are many good examples of different kind of SM invocation in B2B sector. There are several popular B2B focused social media marketing blogs as well as few well-known case stories. A good example of B2B Facebook usage is an industrial company called SteelMaster Buildings (Steelmaster, 2012). On their Facebook page they have an active fan base, as well as lot of both customer generated content and company generated content. Another good example is Salesforce.com´s Facebook page where thousands customers and fans are active.

B2B companies are using YouTube as a platform for webpage video integration and as a channel to boost viral marketing effect. One a good example of platform usage of YouTube is Finnish stock listed industrial company called Rautaruukki Ltd., which has embedded most of their YouTube videos to their webpage´s product demonstrations. An example of viral-oriented usage in B2B is from company called Corning Incorporated. Their video series called "a Day made of glass… made possible by Corning" has gained around 20 million views (by 31st of October 2012) on YouTube. Many early adopters from B2B industry, such as Oracle, Intel and Avaya are using Twitter too. These companies are not just followed by many, but they are also actively tweeting. B2B companies from different industries have also adopted blogs for marketing purposes. Bodnar and Cohen (2012) praise a company called Indium Corporation, whose blog (Indium, 2012) is a good example of customer oriented and active industrial B2B blog with an active reader base and many call-to-action elements aiming to bigger sales and better conversions. Additional example of B2B blog usage is from a company called Cree, whose main product is industrial lighting solutions. Their blog is also famous, interactive and full of balanced content in different formats (Cree, 2012).

As the examples show, B2B firms from various industries are able to exploit SM as part of their digital marketing mix. However, it is not known how important their role in the B2B sector is perceived to be, but based on these examples and the growing interest towards using SM also in B2B setting, it is clear that there is a hidden potential for broader CS oriented SM usage.

CROWDSOURCING

"Crowdsourcing is thus a powerful resource for innovators. … A world of people and organizations is available to assist you, if you have the commitment and care to engage them properly." (Chesbrough 2011)

As mentioned in the introduction, CS is relatively new concept in management literature. While the actual idea of approaching anonymous sources for solving wicked problems can be traced long back to history (cf. Spencer, 2012) there is still no consensus of the contemporary definition of CS. For more details about terminology and typology see for instance Estellés-Arolas and González-Ladrón-de-Guevara

(2012), and Piller, Ihl and Vossen (2010). In addition, a recent literature review is conducted by Zhao and Zhu (2012).

CS can be applied to various business sectors. One approach is microtasking, referring to a method of dividing a workload into pieces which are then distributed en masse. An example of this is Amazon's Mechanical Turk. There are also several websites that aim to engage freelance designers such as 99design.com, Mycroburst.com and Crowdspring.com. One of the most famous examples is Threadless.com, which not only seeks out product design ideas for new T-shirts, but also uses an online community to vote for the best ones, which are then sent for manufacturing (Howe 2008). Other examples of crowdsourcing initiatives are various question-and-answer sites such as Quora.com and many more, ranging in subject matter from cooking to software development, that can be found listed at Stackexchange.com/sites. Microfunding is also new phenomenon where intermediaries such as Kickstarter.com help inventors to raise funding for their project. While those CS initiatives may not be particularly attractive to a B2B firm, that is not to say that B2B could not benefit from CS and the power of communities. Li and Bernhoff (2008) state that B2B customers typically have more in common as they have similar goals, whereas consumers may or may not feel any affinity with each other.

Crowdsourcing Initiatives and Applications

Idea competitions have been found to provide new concepts for a firm's innovation process (Piller and Walcher 2006). According to Poetz and Schreier (2012) ideas generated by users score higher in terms of novelty and customer benefit in comparison with those created by professionals. These competitions can range from relatively easy, conceptual ideas to extremely difficult challenges. As an example, the North European construction company Lemminkäinen organized an idea competition to celebrate their 100th anniversary, and awarded prizes worth €50,000 for new living concepts. Cisco has run an i-Prize competition where prizes worth $250,000 were awarded to ideas that could lead to major new business for them.

For CS to work there is a need to set up a system or a tool to manage the process. Doan, Ramakrishnan and Halevy (2011) state that a crowdsourcing system is one that enlists a crowd of people to help solve a problem defined by the system owners. Companies can set up these idea competitions themselves or they can use intermediaries which bring companies faced with a challenge in touch with potential innovators wanting to provide answers to that challenge. Typically this is a private firm that runs a website where companies can set up a challenge and individuals can act as problem-solvers. An example of this is Innocentive.com, which has built an online network of more than 200,000 people, and thus can be seen as distributed R&D (Chesbrough 2011). The challenges in Innocentive are technical in nature and often demanding. On the other hand, the rewards for solvers can also be lucrative; Innocentive typically offers prizes that start at $5,000 and go up to $1 million, and the company has awarded prizes totaling more than $28 million since 2001 (Claburn 2011).

But what are the motivations and reasons for individuals to participate in various CS efforts? Competitive prizes provide an obvious incentive to spend time solving a problem or thinking of ways to improve an existing product, but there are other motivations too.

The wider community is present in many open source initiatives but can be leveraged in other product development too. For example Quirky.com combines product development and crowdsourcing. As Parent et al. (2011) point out, there is a growing number of customers who are willing to engage and participate with certain brands outside of just buying the products. LEGO enthusiasts have created a community around the product where the most influential members are included in product development and design (Li and Bernoff 2008). In many cases recognition among the peers is the key motivation to participate. Recognition can be received within a community, but also beyond it if one manages to contribute towards the common good. The X PRIZE Foundation is a nonprofit organization which aims to bring about radical breakthroughs for the benefit of humanity via large-scale and high profile challenges. Another example is Planet Hunter, where people help astronomers locate potential planets by examining data from the Kepler space mission. These examples reflects the customer-oriented crowdsourcing – naturally the situation is a bit different with B2B firms.

CS seems to be becoming mainstream for innovation processes and value co-creation. While many of the CS sites (especially in consumer business) only depend on the users having general knowledge as a basis for their contribution, some of them require certain level of expertise. An example of the latter is GrabCad.com for people with engineering skills. Thus it seems likely that there is increasing potential for B2B to apply CS too. As an example, DARPA (the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) has created a program called Fang, which aims to use crowdsourcing to design a new infantry fighting vehicle. One of the objectives is to compare how a crowdsourced model performs against the Army's conventionally sourced Ground Combat Vehicle. This initiative clearly has a B2B dimension, as the project's spokesperson assumes that small businesses lacking the critical mass to build a complete vehicle themselves can now get together without traditional subcontracting. The prize offered for that project is up to $1 million for the winning design, which should make it inviting for businesses to enter.

METHODOLOGY

Our approach is an interpretive sense-making form of research (Welch et al. 2011), where we want to understand and explore the possibility of integrating social media and crowdsourcing. Current knowledge does not provide clear answers as to how industrial B2B firms could use social media and crowdsourcing in their operations. The research applies abductive reasoning (Dubois and Gadde 2002; Yin 1994), which means that reasoning during the creation of the theoretical framework, empirical fieldwork, and case analysis evolve simultaneously. This approach makes it particularly useful for the development of new theories (Dubois and Gadde 2002; Miles and Huberman 1994).

Several sources of empirical data have been collected for this paper. We have collected notes during cross-industry research project's workshops and steering group meetings and had general discussions with the firms in a two-year time span (2010-2012). The researchers also participated in seminars where this topic was discussed by industry experts and consultants. For the purposes of the case study we also collected survey data from industrial firms (N=145), and interviewed three managers from large Finnish industrial B2B firms. The interviewees were selected to represent global manufacturers with products that are visible and observable to potential end-users. The number of employees in their businesses varied from 10,000 to 30,000, and annual revenue from €1.5 billion to €5 billion.

The survey was conducted in October 2011 in Finland. Respondents were sourced via a database of Finnish industrial companies. The survey was administered in Finnish, and contained questions concerning digital marketing usage, social media tools and crowdsourcing activities. Around two thirds of the respondents worked in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and one third in large industrial corporations. Most respondents were either the CEO or held some other managerial position.

RESULTS

Survey

Results from the survey indicate that customer-oriented open crowdsourcing is rare among Finnish industrial SMEs. Close to 90% of the respondents reported never having organized an open innovation contest, and likewise the usage of digital communication channels for innovation purposes is at a low level. Half (52%) of the respondents claimed that they have never received R&D ideas from their customers through any digital channel, and around 70% said they have never tried to use digital channels to collect R&D information from their products´ end-users. If, however, we look at these numbers from the other direction, one third have contacted end-users through digital channels at least sometimes, and half have received R&D ideas from customers through digital channels at least once. Based on this analysis, only a small minority of respondents uses digital channels constantly for crowdsourcing purposes, whether we look at communication with customers, end-users or subcontractors.

In the survey we also asked an open question: "What are the biggest challenges faced in exploiting digital communication channels for R&D?" Almost unanimously respondents stated that the most important obstacle was resources, referring to time, money and know-how. Other challenges included highly customized products, conservative decision-makers, confidential information and legal matters.

Analysis Based on Three Industrial Case Examples - Current Challenges

Social media tools were used, but not to their full potential, in the interviewed firms. SM was also seen mainly as being for marketing purposes, rather than for evoking ideas or for innovation co-creation among people outside the organization. Companies had published YouTube videos for marketing purposes, some firms participated in LinkedIn group discussions and some level of Facebook and Twitter presence had been established. However, no external CS was established in practice in these firms. Thus it was not meaningful to investigate whether SM played any role in helping the firms to better utilize CS. We therefore concentrated on understanding the potential of CS and its role in these firms.

While all the firms had internal idea-management tools in place, and some had opened or were planning to open up these tools to certain trusted partners, there were no publicly open platforms to collect ideas or new initiatives. In other words, external innovation work was done in meetings with some partners but not with a large audience. According to one informant, if some individual had a good idea he or she should then just call, send an email or fill out a form on the company website. One of the interviewees admitted that the people working on the customer interface sometimes came up with great ideas, but there had been no methods to harness that power systematically. One of the firms had organized a special campaign where employees had spent one day out in the field observing their products' users and providing feedback on what they had learned. One of the case firms had collected video material of how their products were used in the field by harnessing service personnel to do this.

The case firms agreed that input from end-users is important. One of the interviewees admitted that verbal feedback from service reps and sales managers was the main return channel. However, with the current method the message could get distorted as it travelled through. In addition, a good salesman is typically good at promoting his customers' ideas within a manufacturer, which sometimes makes it difficult for R&D departments to prioritize between presented ideas.

Industrial purchasing processes (IPPs) were mentioned as creating some problems. The purchasing department may want components to be designed as generically as possible for tendering purposes, and therefore they may dislike a co-created component if there is only one supplier capable of delivering it. Also the role of ownership of Intellectual property rights (IPRs) in general created some worries. In particular IPR questions were considered problematic if customers' employees were harnessed to CS. On the other hand, if the idea collection campaign were not targeted directly towards the employees of the customer, then that would circumvent the problem.

One main issue hindering CS was the opinion that products are complex and require technical know-how. One firm stated that their products are governed by several strict standards and legislation. They claimed that a typical end-user, not to mention a layman, does not have a sufficiently deep knowledge of that product. In that sense, a CS campaign would only provide random ideas without providing any significant benefits for the firm. According to one statement, the core product was quite mature and it would be hard to come up with novel ideas. On the other hand, it was still agreed that there can be certain parts which could benefit from more ideation power in general.

One of the obstacles identified was that people in organizations are already busy and there are no resources to conduct CS. One of the interviewed firms expressed the worry that if they ran a global idea competition it would provide too many ideas. At the moment there were just not enough resources to go through them.

Leveraging user communities created some variety of opinions. One firm considered that often the challenges their customers faced were quite different depending on where they were, even if the basic product was the same. One of the interviewees agreed with the idea that ultimate end-users could form a user group or community, but he saw some potential risk in it too. For example, the manufacturer wanted to receive information about product flaws and failures, but did not necessarily want to share it openly in a community. It was not considered that a community could be used to provide solutions to technical problems, as IPR ownership would be difficult to resolve. Communities were also seen as problematic since the ideas created there could be also visible to competitors.

Analysis Based on Three Industrial Case Examples - Future potential

The managers interviewed viewed their industries quite traditional and the innovation culture was seen immature. It was stated that whether crowdsourcing could come into use was more a question of company culture than of technical implementation. Similarly, industrial customers were considered quite conservative. On the other hand, it was also anticipated that actual end-users would become more 'computer savvy' in the future, and perhaps the field workforce would be using more social media when the next generation enters the workplace.

While the one-to-one ideation sessions with some key partners were considered to provide more quality ideas than the general ones generated with CS, it was also seen that combining these approaches would be useful. In other words, CS could provide ideas related to trends and visions, which could work as a basis for workshops with key partners. One of the interviewees also acknowledged the role of CS as it could provide a way to bypass rigid processes from the problem-solving point of view.

There were also questions about the right incentives for customers to participate in innovation creation. Related to that, one interviewee stated that while monetary incentives are good, there are others too. For example, the opportunity for an individual to really see his or her idea being implemented was often rewarding in itself. In addition, internal kudos is an incentive to participate in internal CS. One of the firms had actually implemented 'Supplier Innovation Awards', which did not provide monetary awards but kudos.

Idea competitions organized via subcontractors were also seen as a good potential option, but none of the case firms had implemented any yet. It was stated that in order for CS to work it should be easy both ways; a manufacturer should be able to communicate what the problem is and a solver should be able to provide the idea easily.

A FRAMEWORK FOR COMBINING SOCIAL MEDIA AND CROWDSOURCING

It seems plausible that the usage of social media is still in its infancy in many industrial B2B firms. The empirical study reveals that the studied firms do not have a CS strategy either. It seems that organization culture has been seen as preventing taking SM and CS into use. Similarly, resource constraints such as time, money and know-how were mentioned as obstacles. However, most probable resource constraints can be addressed if top management takes a step towards prioritizing value co-creation via SM and CS. It is likely that the issues of IPRs are also possible to resolve. For instance, the key point in idea competitions is that rules and intellectual property ownership are clear and disclosed to the public (Claburn 2011). In general it is likely that both social media use and crowdsourcing in the B2B sector will grow in the future.

There are many examples, which have demonstrated the power of social media and crowdsourcing separately (e.g. Li and Bernhoff 2008; Parent et al. 2011; Howe 2008). Even though our limited empirical data does not fully support the idea that SM and CS could be used to facilitate innovation processes and value co-creation in industrial markets today, based on some well-known cases and previous research we propose a framework that could potentially be utilized by industrial B2B firms in the future. We also propose that SM has a major role in feeding CS initiatives in future. While the respondents assumed that the sectors where CS could be used were narrow, and that many CS projects are perhaps more about driving the brand than actually getting reasonable ideas back, it was still acknowledged that the end-users could provide input for product development purposes in some areas.

The figure 1 illustrates the current situation of interaction with the customer and end-user. In that setting a customer receives information via traditional marketing channels, but there is no direct interaction. Separate training session may be in place to educate customer's employees i.e. the actual end users. The feedback from users to manufacturer is typically channeled through service and maintenance department. The proposed new model presented in figure 2 takes more holistic approach and encourages firms to fully leverage social media not only as a marketing and marketing communications tool, but also as a trigger for CS initiatives. Various social media channels and tools can be used to be in contact with customers and end users. However, as the actual end user may have the most knowledge about the products of a manufacturer, their input is valuable. And this is where crowdsourcing can add value. In other words by combining social media and crowdsourcing a manufacturer is able to generate new ideas and solutions from the right target group. While firms naturally collaborate with their direct customers and their input (dotted line) is available via traditional interaction, we propose that B2B firms could reach out more towards the end-users of their products via SM and CS.

FIGURE 1
TRADITIONAL INFORMATION FLOWS BETWEEN PARTIES IN THE INDUSTRIAL B2B NETWORK

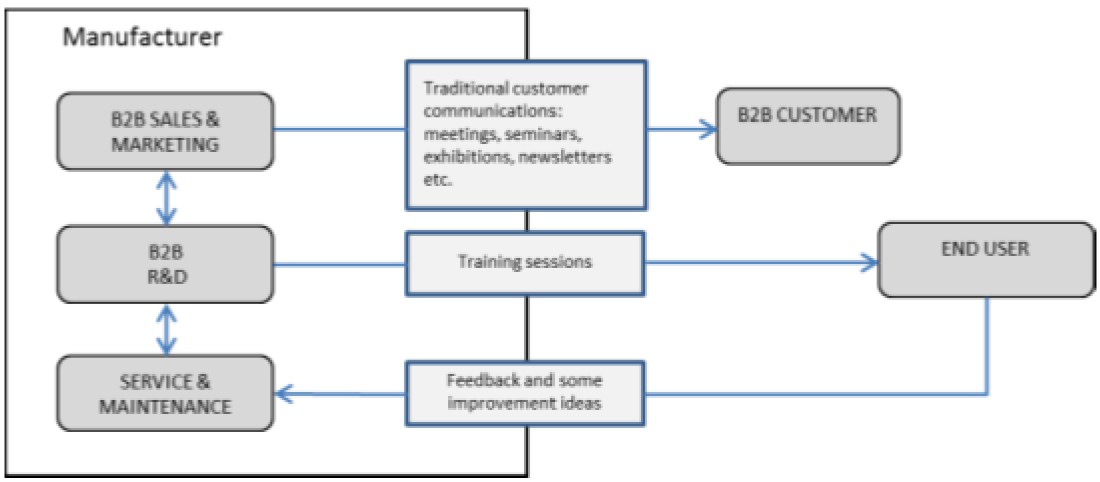
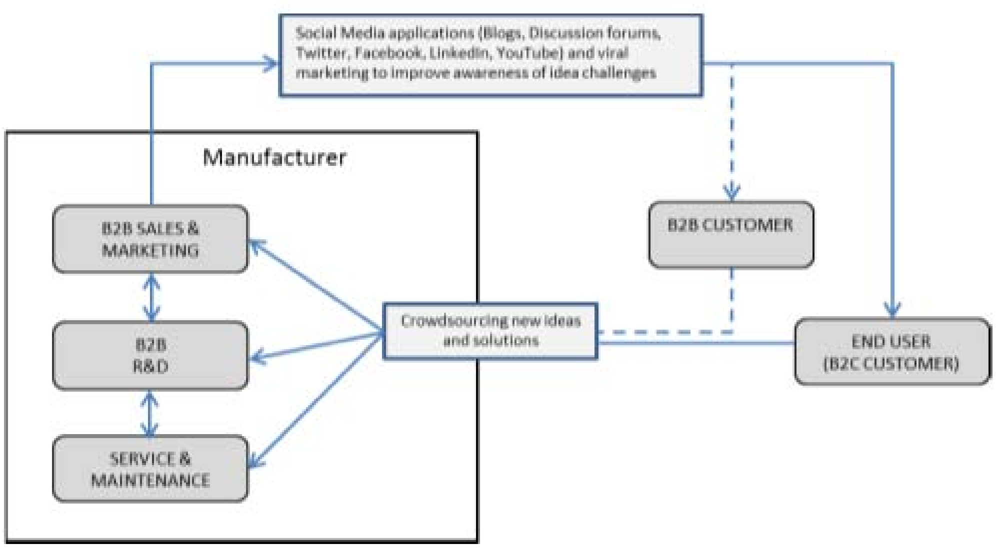


FIGURE 2
THE PROPOSED MODEL THAT COMBINES SOCIAL MEDIA AND CROWDSOURCING WITH AN AIM TO IMPROVE B2B MANUFACTURER'S INNOVATION CAPABILITY IN THE INDUSTRIAL NETWORK



DISCUSSION AND LIMITATIONS

This study contributes to the discussion of digital and social media marketing by taking the industrial B2B point of view. While taking a broad approach in digital marketing, the study is primarily focused on interactive digital channels, which are here concerned as social media applications and digital channels with interactive social features. In this paper we considered social media as integrated elements, platforms, and tools of digital marketing that facilitate social interaction between businesses and customer networks. Accordingly, digital marketing refers to the use of all kinds of digital and social media tools that allow companies to foster interactions with customers. Ideally the digital marketing is two-way, personalized dialogue with each customer (Wertime & Fenwick, 2008, 30) which can potentially be a source for innovations too.

Marketing practices of firms have become more and more relationship-oriented and traditional transaction-oriented marketing is standing aside (Eyuboglu & Buja, 2007; Vargo & Lusch 2004; 2008). According to social network and exchange theories (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Siguaw, Simpson, & Baker, 1998) the value of the relationships between firms originates from topics such as trust, commitment, norms but recently also the number and density of interfirm contacts (Palmatier, 2008) has been shown to have an important role. There are also studies related to monitoring of these relationships (e.g. Heide, Wathne & Rokkan, 2007). There are however, less studies of how social media could be best utilized in idea and innovation generation especially in industrial business to business context. According to Kärkkäinen et al (2010) there is a gap between perceived potential of social media and its usage in innovation activity in B2B companies. In any event social media has provided new tools and strategies for firms to communicating and interact with their customers (Mangold & Faulds, 2009) and assume crowdsourcing to become more important and valuable tool in B2B context in future.

To summarize, digital channels and crowdsourcing platforms enable flexible customer-seller interaction, which challenges the idea of one-way marketing communications (Ozuem et al. 2008), so the marketing communication should be integrated, targeted and measurable through digital technologies, which helps to acquire, retain and engage with customers as well as building deeper relationships and innovating with them.

The implementation and putting SM in use is still lacking behind and firms hesitate due to potential risk of backfiring and harming brand. Industrial B2B firms seem to be hesitant to start applying SM tools. The risks firms fear are for instance, required time resources, personnel and security risk as well as information's obsolescence and misinterpretation possibilities (Chiş & Talpoş, 2011). In other words, social media can improve internal communications (Brennan, 2010) but there are many potential pitfalls of SM in external communications. For example employees needs to be careful for not intentionally disclose confidential information. That issues seems to play a role with crowdsourcing initiatives and limit the potential of employees to participate public crowdsourcing initiatives if they are too close to their employees business domain.

According to Sosnow (2011) there are pragmatic questions of what kind of content a firm should provide to their customers and which channels should be used to convoy the message; and should the message be differentiated by channels. This is related to the proposed model. It is left for future studies to investigate what kind of messages works best for firms to be able to invite users to their CS initiatives.

As with any research project, it is important to consider the study limitations and potential improvements. First, the survey was only a snapshot and there were no specific models or hypotheses tested. Second, the number of interviewees was small and there is a potential of bias in using only one informant per firm (Ernst and Teichert 1998). Naturally more interviews should be conducted to make the analysis more rigorous. Third, we focused on the industrial end-users only. Of course this represents only one potential stakeholder group playing a role in value co-creation. There are other relevant stakeholders, such as suppliers, partners and students, who could be invited to participate in CS campaigns. We suggest that the role of the other stakeholders should be investigated in future too.

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Understanding Negative Visitor Experiences at Indigenous Cultural Tourism Venues: Marketing and Operational Implications

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There is a tendency for indigenous tourism destinations to focus their marketing on the international markets. In Australia, in addition to the many high profile indigenous sites there are a number of smaller sites which present indigenous culture and heritage for tourists. This study examines the level of market awareness of and satisfaction with the offerings at the Brambuk Cultural Centre located at the Grampians National Park, in the west of Victoria. The Grampians is a premier tourism destination for international and domestic tourists. The study, which included a satisfaction survey of visitors to the indigenous cultural centre, found that the centre is perceived as not well promoted and in need of repositioning as a tourist destination. Visitors were often surprised at the historical and heritage value of the site and its educational potential. This paper suggests that the difference between the expected time and actual time spent on the visit should be an indicator for managers on the packaging of offerings, and reports on the degree to which satisfactory performance was achieved. The findings suggest that greater attention be placed on the dissatisfaction expressed as signals about offerings that may need improvement.

BACKGROUND

Many indigenous tourism venues and destinations fall under the banner of "cultural tourism" because they involve Aboriginal art, craft and cultural displays. Indigenous cultural tourists also include those who visit indigenous performances, Aboriginal sites of historical significance and indigenous communities (Fairweather, 2008). Indigenous tourism comprises tourism activity in which indigenous people have some direct control and management over the tourism enterprise and/or by having their culture serve as the essence of the attraction (Hinch& Butler, 1996).

In Australia some indigenous tourism enterprises have focused on international markets, which account for only 11% of cultural visitors, as a whole. The remaining are domestic "day" and domestic "overnight" visitors. Indigenous tourism visitors from international markets have been declining and in the 2005-2009 period, the annual average decline was 6%, with 2009 registering 709,000 visitors. Europe was the major source of the international indigenous visitors (47%). Indigenous tourism visitors were more likely to travel on a packaged tour than other visitors, and 40% of all those on packaged tours were from Asian countries. While most international indigenous tourists reported having an indigenous learning experience, 16% reported that this was not experienced (Fairweather, 2008). The most popular indigenous activities are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
MOST POPULAR INDIGENOUS TOURISM ACTIVITIES

Most popular indigenous activities	International indigenous tourists	Domestic indigenous tourists
Seeing Aboriginal art, craft and cultural displays	45%	54%
Visiting an Aboriginal gallery	32%	24%
Visiting an Aboriginal cultural centre	28%	22%
Seeing Aboriginal dance or theatre performance	27%	10%

(Source: Fairweather, 2008)

Domestic overnight indigenous tourists tended to be parents (35%), older and not working (24%) and were generally over the age of 40 years (74%). For this group, the experiencing of Aboriginal art, craft and cultural displays were the most popular, as shown in Table 1.

Tourists visiting Aboriginal cultural centers such as Brambuk do so with limited, if any, contextual knowledge of Aboriginal cultural heritage (Sparks, 2002). Ryan and Huyton (2002) suggest that it would be more appropriate to contextualize Aboriginal tourism with its connection to landscape, placing greater emphasis on engagement and participation rather than observation. How places, cultures and values are portrayed to the tourists as being of indigenous significance tends to inhibit engagement of domestic travelers with Aboriginal tourism products and destinations (Beck & Somerville, 2002). International tourists especially value meeting indigenous people and 'living the experience' which is critical to developing knowledge that Aboriginality is a 'living' entity (Spark, 2002).

This study relates to and was conducted at the indigenous cultural centre (Brambuk), located in Western Victoria, about 4 hours travel from Melbourne. It is situated at the Grampians National Park, a site of indigenous significance and a primer tourist destination for both domestic and international visitors. The Grampians or Gariwerd contains many "sacred places" and is a culturally significant landscape, especially for the Aboriginal (Koori) communities of the region. The proper experience of indigenous connections to the landscape requires interpretation, which Brambuk attempts to provide. The authentic interpretation provides visitors with the cross-cultural understanding and enhances the quality of the experience and the levels of satisfaction (Ryan &Huyton, 2000; Timothy & Boyd, 2003).

INDIGENOUS CULTURE AND TOURISM

Over the last decade or two there has been an increasing level of involvement of indigenous communities in the identification, development and operation of tourism enterprises (Anderson, 1991; Altman & Finlayson, 1993; Ryan &Huyton, 2000; 2002). The involvement of indigenous people and communities in tourism within Australia is relatively new when compared with New Zealand and Canada. For the future growth of visitor demand and in the interest of continual renewal of offerings, visitor satisfaction and expectation studies provide a critical basis for future developments, marketing and targeting of new audiences (McIntosh, 2004).

Research into Aboriginal tourism in the Northern Territory (Ryan &Huyton, 2000) found that generally there was greater interest in nature rather than culturally based tourism, with the greatest interest or demand for Aboriginal cultural products coming from only a third of all visitors. Generally, respondents rated Aboriginal tourism products highly. Their study found that the respondents identified the key cultural products (in NT) to be ‘authentic Aboriginal souvenirs, Aboriginal music, dance performances, and rock art’. The authors also report that with respect to overseas visitors, the tourist from North America and Northern Europe were most interested in Aboriginal tourism rather than those from the fast growing Asian tourist markets. Mohsin and Ryan (1999) and Blamey (1998) confirm the lower interest levels of Asian tourists in Aboriginal culture and heritage. Findings of studies on major motivation for visitors to New Zealand also do not flag Maori culture as being rated highly and classified it as a secondary influence on their decision to visit the country. However, the experiencing of Maori culture was mostly classified as an important and integral part of the total tourism experience (McIntosh, 2004).

THE STUDY

The study used multiple-items to measure and evaluate visitor experiences of the visit as a whole, but particularly concentrating on the various products and services on offer. These products generally are in the form of displays of artifacts and as well as story telling videos. Therefore, the focus is on information provision. The study focuses on what visitors liked and disliked about their visit and what improvements would enhance their experience. The data was collected by scaled responses to a series of statements relating to their experiences and comments and suggestions were invited on future improvements. The study attempts to evaluate expectations prior to the visit, especially in relation to the time taken for the visit. One of the key parameters in service enhancement in a tourism enterprise is the expected time an average visitor would spend at such a destination. Managers can use this information to cater for the diversity of visitor needs and provide adequate products of interest to fill a given amount of time.

METHODOLOGY

The Leisure Motivation Scale has been used to identify variables that should be measured to determine visitor satisfaction. The LMS identifies four motives that determine satisfaction derived from leisure pursuits. The first involves the intellectual motive involving activities such as learning, exploring, discovering and may involve thoughtfulness and imagination. The second is the social motive, which relate to and involves the need for friendship and interpersonal relations. The third is the competence-mastery motive which relates to the need to “achieve, master, challenge, and compete”. The fourth is the stimulus avoidance motive seeking relaxation, calmness, solitude and the breaking away from routine. (Beard &Ragheb, 1983, p.225).

Churchill and Surprenant (1982) argue that the type of product category under consideration would have an effect on how performance expectation influences satisfaction. If actual performance is close to expectation, then the level of satisfaction experienced will positively influenced by those expectations. However, if actual performance is sufficiently different from pre-purchase expectations, then this expectation will have either no effect or a negative effect on subsequent judgment (Sherif&Hovland, 1961). Therefore, visitor satisfaction data collection should be based on at least two dimensions.

Survey Instrument Design Considerations

The purpose of this study was to seek information, opinions and attitudes on “performance”, as suggested by the literature discussed in the previous section. In order to collect relevant information on “performance” one needs to understand the nature and characteristics of the industry (if relevant) and more specially, the missions and objectives of the enterprise. This will identify the issues that the research must address if visitor satisfaction is to be meaningfully measured.

Consequently, the visitors were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement to twenty items (statements) using a 5-point Likert scale (5 = Agree Strongly to 1 = Disagree Strongly). These items were selected based on the typical objectives that the organization was deemed to be pursuing, using the literature and publicly available information. The data collection, using the self administered survey forms was conducted over 17 days, incorporating three weekends. There were 522 usable forms returned, out of which 230 included comments with ideas and suggestions to improve the Centre.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Respondent Profiles

The study sample include a good mix of ages, however, 65% of the respondents were female. As expected for a premier tourist destination during the school holiday period, when the study was conducted, 84% of the respondents were domestic visitors, comprising approximately a third from interstate, and 16% were overseas visitors. First time visitors comprised 62% of the respondents, 38% were repeat visitors and 17% had visited in the previous two years.

TABLE 2
RESPONDENT PROFILES

	Brambuk
Sample size	522
Domestic visitors	84%
Overseas visitors	16%
Gender: Females	65%
Males	35%
Age: Under 30 years	36.8%
30 – 49 years	39.5%
50+ years	23.7%
First- time visitors	62%
Repeat visitors	38%

Time Spent at the Centre

A very high proportion of respondents spent one hour or less at the Centre in total (50%), and an additional 31% spent between one and two hours , as shown in Table 3. Only 10.1% spent between two and three hours and 8.7% spent more than 4 hours.

There was a statistically significant difference in the time spent between domestic and overseas visitors, $t = 2.683$, $df = 503$, $p = .008$. The time spent at the Centre by overseas visitors tended to be generally shorter, compared with domestic visitors, with 67.5% of the overseas visitors spending one hour or less compared to 47.1% of domestic visitors. It should be noted that some respondents from overseas may have been on packaged tours which generally allow only a fixed amount of time at each location. However, only 37 respondents were part of a packaged tour.

TABLE 3
TOTAL TIME SPENT AT THE CENTRE

Time	Number	%
One hour or less	255	50.4
Between 1 and 2 hours	157	31.0
Between 2 and 3 hours	51	10.1
Between 3 and 4 hours	22	4.3
More than 4 hours	20	4.2
Total	**507**	**100.0**

The average time spent at the Centre was one hour and forty minutes (with a standard deviation of 1 hour and 15 minutes). The analysis was controlled for time visits to determine if first visits were indeed longer. This was not the case. For first visits, the average time spent was 90 minutes (with sd = 68 minutes, indicating that most people fell into a range between approximately 20 minutes and two hours and 40 minutes.

Studies show that in cultural and heritage museums, exhibitions or events satisfaction levels can be enhanced through a greater level of involvement and engagement of visitors (de Rogas&Camarero, 2006). This can, to a large extent, be achieved in the design stages of a centre as has been done at Brambuk through information panels, walkways, lighting and audio, which stimulate as well as create interest in the visitor. However, the emotional engagement of the visitor could be enhanced through a greater degree of personalization through interaction and dialogue with visitors and hence a greater degree of emotional involvement. This could come in the form of cultural interpretations, descriptions and insights that cannot be gleaned from tangible displays. The time spent at the Centre can be an indicator of the Center's ability to both cognitively and emotionally involve the visitor. A number of visitors commented on the need for interaction with indigenous staff, with comments such as: "More indigenous staff roaming ready to explain things with their stories and experiences (bit like Australia zoo)." Emotional involvement can lead to longer visits, with more time spent at the site, the shop and the café.

Understanding Negative Experiences

Tourism literature and experience of customer relations managers indicates that visitor satisfaction levels in leisure activities is generally skewed towards satisfaction and that people are relaxed and perhaps less critical. As the satisfaction scale relating to statements about the experiences shown in Table 4 demonstrates, based on mean scores and their standard deviation, the satisfaction levels of visitors to the indigenous Centre were very high. The obvious managerial conclusion from the investigation of averages is that visitors are very satisfied and therefore, plans and programs are deemed to be performing to managerial expectations. A second level of analysis is required to uncover any gaps that may exist between visitor expectations and managerial expectations.

In order to evaluate performance it is important to undertake a measurement of satisfaction generally as well as with specific objective related indicators of "performance". These indicators should be based on the dimensions that may constitute satisfaction. Firstly, we need to assume that there will be a high level of satisfaction and turn our attention to understanding the non-positive end of the scale that can provide some operational guidance. (See Table 4)

Generalized satisfaction scales are not sufficient in themselves to determine how visitors may actually feel about a product, service or issue. The choice of the twenty items was also guided by what management of such a tourism focused enterprise may be interested in from an operational point of view. The analysis below is organized around organizational goals and mission. For example, one of the goals is to provide visitors with an understanding of indigenous culture and history. This would be regarded as Brambuk's "core competency" (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990). To address this, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement for two statements: "I gained a better insight into indigenous culture" and "I gained a better understanding of indigenous history." The combined score was 3.95 with a standard deviation of 0.851. There were 21 respondents who either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this item (4.2%) and 113 (22.8%) were neutral. Therefore, one could conclude that 27% were not willing to give a positive score. From the point of view of visitor satisfaction and as explained in the literature section of this report, the visitor responses are generally skewed towards satisfaction. The purpose of studies of this type is to identify underlying discontent and address any hidden issues with respect to satisfaction and expectation.

TABLE 4
MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF MEASURES

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q11_1 Overall, this visit was very enjoyable	4.51	.595
Q11_2 The Centre is well maintained and well organized	4.60	.579
Q11_3 The displays and stands were informative	4.51	.640
Q11_4 The staff were knowledgeable and friendly	4.40	.726
Q11_5 I have learnt a lot on this visit	4.09	.870
Q11_6 There should be more educational emphasis in displays	3.28	1.041
Q11_7 I took particular notice of plants along walkways	3.78	.979
Q11_8 The shop should provide a wider range of indigenous items and crafts for sale	3.32	1.051
Q11_9 I expected a greater variety of displays & information	2.82	1.044
Q11_10 I expected that the visit would take longer than it did	2.82	.986
Q11_11 I would feel comfortable in recommending this Centre to others	4.48	.706
Q11_12 I gained a better insight into indigenous culture	4.23	.818
Q11_13 The service overall was of a high standard	4.34	.703
Q11_14 I had no difficulty with access to the various parts of the Centre	4.43	.745
Q11_15 The Centre was easy to find	4.54	.700
Q11_16 This is one of the best Cultural Centers I have visited	4.00	.923
Q11_17 I expected to see more than I did at this Centre	2.90	1.093
Q11_18I gained a better understanding of indigenous history	3.95	.851
Q11_19 I was able to get enough printed information to take home	3.62	.966
Q11_20 The displays adequately met my needs	4.07	.799

TABLE 5
INDIGENOUS CULTURE AND HISTORY

Items	Mean Score	No. (%) with Negative Score (DS/D)	No. (%) with Neutral Score
I gained a better insight into indigenous culture	4.23	12 (2.4%)	75 (15%)
I gained a better understanding of indigenous history	3.95	21 (4.2%)	113 (22.8%)

CONCLUSIONS

These conclusions are based on the matching of two broad sources of information comprising feedback from visitors to Brambuk and the understanding of operational goals and competencies of the organization. In order to bring about meaningful change and improvement to tourism offerings tourist expectations and dislikes or dissatisfactions must form the grounding for future changes. Too often emphasis is placed on what visitors are satisfied about and on how satisfied they are. Therefore correct signals for discontent get overlooked in the change process. This study looked at the "bundle of benefits or offerings" and attempts to tease out those elements of programs or services need to be addressed. Consequently, this conclusion will highlight specific indicators that all may not be as it appears.

For example, in response to the statement, "I expected that the visit would take longer than it did", 134 (25.7%) of visitors indicated that their expectation was not met and a further 173 (35%) were neutral. More than a third of all respondents (37.5%) either agreed or agreed strongly that there should be more educational emphasis in displays. Nearly a quarter (22.5%) of visitors were expecting a greater variety of displays and information and generally expected to see more at the Centre. Nevertheless, they were almost always satisfied with the visit and the level of enjoyment experienced from the visit was very high, in aggregate terms. An example of a comment reflecting that the Centre exceeded a visitor's expectations is "I expected much less things then there is. I walked in and I was amazed."

Brambuk's core competencies are the provision of insights into indigenous culture and the provision of an understanding of indigenous history for the visiting public. It is expected that visitors would gain a better insight into indigenous culture. This was generally the case, as indicated by the mean score of 4.23 (5 maximum), with a large standard deviation of 0.818. It is important to note that 75 respondents were neutral (15%) and 12 were either in disagreement or strong disagreement (2.4%). Given that this item reflects the main purpose of the Centre, it may be important strategically to address why 17.4% of the respondents did not give a positive score. The answer may lie in the analysis of other service or product offerings, displays, activities, information, customer service and the like. This would also include individual characteristics, backgrounds and experiences, which influence their expectations.

Similarly, with the item "I gained a better understanding of indigenous history" the mean score was 3.95 with a standard deviation of 0.851. There were 21 respondents who either disagreed or strong disagreed with this item (4.2%) and 113 (22.8%) were neutral. Therefore, one could conclude that 27% were not willing to give a positive score. From the point of view of visitor satisfaction and as explained in the literature section of this report, the visitor responses are generally skewed towards satisfaction. The purpose of studies of this type is to identify underlying discontent and address any hidden issues with respect to satisfaction and expectation.

There were a large number of comments received about the need for more displays, activities and information, indicating that expectations were relatively high creating a wider expectation-satisfaction gap. International tourists expected to meet and communicate with Aboriginal people and there was some discontent expressed about the lack to engagement and participation. However, satisfaction levels with the visit were very positive in aggregate terms. How the programs, activities and displays address the key functional objectives and core competencies should be subjected to regular reviews and modernization so that they remain effective in meeting changing visitor needs and expectations. It is important for Brambuk to reposition itself as a truly 'living' cultural centre, as is indicated in the promotional material, with a greater focus on engagement through active participation rather than being a centre which displays Aboriginal artifacts.

Furthermore, in order to encourage repeat visits the programs and displays require continuous renewal. This could be achieved by staging of historical and cultural events targeting particular segments of the tourist market. Event programming should include collaboration with regional indigenous groups such as artists, historians, writers, storytellers and various community based organizations. In the tourism sector, continuous improvement strategies are critical to addressing the ever-changing needs of disparate segments which are seeking to be engaged by the indigenous experience.

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