Expert Journal of Marketing

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Expert Journal of Marketing

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Editor's Introduction to Volume 2, Issue 1 of Expert Journal of Marketing

Simona VINEREAN[*]

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The first issue of the second volume of *Expert Journal of Marketing* encompasses various interesting articles that explore marketing issues in terms of analyzing loyalty through mind share, discovering best social media practices of airline companies, exploring marketing techniques in under-developed countries, and examining mediators for the satisfaction – loyalty relationship in the online shopping framework. Thus, the topics and research methods presented in this issue make meaningful contributions to marketing knowledge. Further, I present a short description of each article that is published in *Expert Journal of Marketing*, vol. 2, issue 1.

Huang's (2014) article entitled *Explorative Study on the Concept of Mind Shares: Confidence, Resistance and Loyalty* explores the concept of "Mind Share" which analyzes the brand value by qualitative methods and investigates consumer trust from a practical standpoint. Customer trust and confidence is the basis for customer loyalty, namely the one of the most essential sources of company competitiveness and profitability. The author thoroughly examines the concepts of loyalty, confidence, and resistance and the relationships that exist between them in other research studies. This paper establishes Confidence Scales and Resistance Scales from the perspective of loyalty to propose a new way to measure Mind Share. Also, Huang focuses on the mobile telecommunications market in Taiwan as a case study to examine the theoretic contents of Mind Shares and the proposed quantified measurement of it.

Avram's (2014) research aims to investigate the different social media strategies adopted by the airline companies from two European regions. His paper, *A Comparative Facebook Content Analysis between Romanian and Western European Airline Carriers*, paper examines the social media content (number of fans, posts, number of likes, the dynamics of comments, response rate) on the Facebook pages of various airline companies, such as Tarom, Blue Air, Wizz Air, Lufthansa, Austrian Airlines, KLM International and Air Europa over a period of one week period to offer insights on successful practices on social media. As valuable contributions, this paper also provides solutions for airlines on how to develop a meaningful long-term connection with their passengers and effectively use the social media environment to increase sales and customer satisfaction both in online and offline environments.

Vinerean (2014) examines tourists' predisposition to buy a certain tourism package in relation to the determinant factors that are decisive in in the decision making process regarding tourism services, in a published article entitled *Buying Intentions Influenced by Various Determinants in Tourism*. Her analysis offers valuable implications for managers in the tourism industry in terms of pursuing loyalty strategies for gaining a competitive advantage on a market that implies emotional purchases.

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Oko and Nnanna (2014), in their article *Sales Promotion in the Marketing of Telecommunication Services in Nigeria: Impact Analysis,* discuss the adoption of sales promotion in the marketing of telecommunication services in Nigeria is common among the front line GSM service providers, even though this marketing medium does not provide high returns on investment. The authors study the impact of sales promotion on patronage based on collected data sourced and examined using the analysis of variance (ANOVA). Their results show that there are high levels of illiteracy, poverty, rural dwelling that represent challenges to increasing the consumption of telecommunication services even if companies highly invest in sales promotions. The authors also offer recommendations on how to tackle the problems highlighted by their research.

With my Co-Editor-in-Chief, Alin Opreana, we wrote a paper in which we analyzed the mediators of the customer satisfaction - loyalty relationship in Internet retailing (Vinerean and Opreana, 2014). This study explores this well-known relation in the context of online shopping by introducing various mediators, such as trust, attitude, hedonic value, and utilitarian value. In terms of data analysis techniques, the article encompasses exploratory factor analysis and regression analysis with mediation, particularly the Sobel test. The findings of this study have consequences for customer relationship management, particularly in terms of retention, of the satisfied consumers in an e-shopping environment.

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Analyzing Mediators of the Customer Satisfaction - Loyalty Relation in Internet Retailing

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This study explores the customer satisfaction – loyalty relation in the context of online shopping by introducing various mediators, such as trust, attitude, hedonic value, and utilitarian value. For data collection, we used an online consumer survey in relation to Internet retailing. In this paper we found empirical evidence that loyalty and satisfaction have a reciprocal relationship, but that mediators exist between satisfaction and loyalty. The findings of this study have consequences for customer relationship management, particularly in terms of retention, of the satisfied consumers in an e-shopping environment.

Keywords*: Attitude, Hedonic Value, Utilitarian Value, Trust, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty, Mediation.*

JEL Classification*: M31*

1. Introduction

The rapid growth of online transactions in service industries raises important research questions about the levels of satisfaction and loyalty in the online environment, and this relationship with regard to other possible mediators that consumers might experience when they engage in e-shopping.

Online, a competing offer is just a few clicks away. Because of these properties of the Web, many managers fear that the online medium may induce lower customer satisfaction and loyalty compared to the offline medium, and that increased satisfaction with a service may not lead to higher loyalty when that service is chosen online compared to the offline environment, the online environment offers more opportunities for interactive and personalized marketing (Wind and Rangaswamy, 2001). These opportunities have direct influence customer satisfaction and loyalty and should be studied especially in conjunction with other factors that have an impact on a company's bottom line. Managers are concerned about how the online medium influences satisfaction and loyalty and the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty.

Typically, online customers can more easily compare alternatives than offline customers, especially for functional products and services, when utilitarian value can be emphasized. A new exciting offer can be presented on the Internet, and as consumers become fascinated in their buying experience, they experience hedonic value. Nowadays, consumers are bombarded with paid or organic marketing information about brands and companies especially in the online environment, and thus they can have their attitudes shaped in

new and more diverse ways. Nonetheless, in this digital world, trust is a major aspect that needs consideration from marketers to explore the premises of this concept in e-shopping.

These issues lead to the development of the three research questions to be examined here: (1) Is customer satisfaction the only predictor of loyalty? (2) Is there a possible mediator between customer satisfaction and loyalty? (3) What is the effect of each possible mediator on the customer satisfaction–loyalty relation? (Chen, 2012, p. 202) (4) Does trust matter when considering an e-tailer or are consumers interested in various online retailers? (5) Is attitude a good mediator for customer satisfaction–loyalty relation? How do the hedonic and utilitarian values influence this relationship? Significantly, the consistent concluding remarks in the relevant studies state that these variables remain to be studied as mediators in terms of the customer satisfaction–loyalty relation. To answer these questions, we develop a set of hypotheses based on conceptual frameworks. To test the hypotheses, we use regression analysis with mediation in the e-shopping context, considering the satisfaction – loyalty relation.

Satisfaction and loyalty are not surrogates for each other (Bloemer and Kasper 1995; Oliver 1999). It is possible for a customer to be loyal without being highly satisfied (e.g., when there are few other choices) and to be highly satisfied and yet not be loyal (e.g., when many alternatives are available). Firms need to gain a better understanding of the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty in the online environment to allocate their online marketing efforts between satisfaction initiatives and loyalty programs (Shankar, et al., 2003).

2. Theoretical Development of Concepts and Hypotheses

2.1. Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty

Customer satisfaction refers to 'the summary psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with the consumer's prior feelings about the consumption experience' (Oliver, 1980). Bloemer and de Ruyter (1998) consider customer satisfaction to a particular brand as the experience consumers feel after the consumption of a brand and a subjective assessment of the clients, regarding the extent to which brand performance fulfilled their initial expectations (Vinerean, 2013, p.82-83). Oliver (1997) argued that even a loyal consumer is vulnerable to situational factors (e.g., competitors' coupons or price cuts), and so satisfaction is not likely to be the sole (reliable) predictor of loyalty (Reichheld, 1996).

In the e-commerce context, satisfaction is defined as the contentment of the consumer with deference to his/her previous purchase experiences with an e-commerce firm (Anderson and Srinivasan, 2003). By satisfying customer needs and wants, a company creates the most prominent condition in gaining customer loyalty. Moreover, satisfaction can improve customer loyalty in both the online and offline contexts, and the positive relation between satisfaction and loyalty can be stronger online than it is offline (e.g., Shankar et al., 2003), due to the highly customizable ways of interacting with customers.

Customer loyalty to a particular company is the result of the satisfaction felt after the act of consumption of a particular marketing offer. Thus, customer loyalty is considered by some authors to be a higher state than customer fidelity to a company, namely it reflects a state that can be obtained by exceeding customers' initial expectations through superior company performance. Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) investigate the psychological sense of loyalty, considering the three elements of the human psyche (affective, conative, and cognitive) as the factors that influence directly (however with different intensity levels) customer loyalty to a particular brand. The authors introduced a second dimension for explaining and understanding loyalty (in addition to the behavioral dimension), namely attitude (Vinerean, 2013, p.82-83).

Oliver and Swan (1989) define customer loyalty as a deeply held commitment to re-patronize or re-purchase a preferred product, service or brand consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts of competitors having the potential to cause switching behavior and influence the buying decision.

In the online context, Srinivasan et al. (2002) defined loyalty online as e-loyalty with a particular emphasis on the behavioral dimension of this construct as a favorable attitude of a customer for a web retailer that results in repeat buying behavior. Chen (2012, p. 203) considered that customer loyalty refers to how customers have favorable attitudes toward target e-retailers, shown through repeat purchase intentions and behaviors.

Thus, the following hypothesis is derived:

H1: Satisfaction directly and positively influences behavioral loyalty of consumers to purchase using services online.

2.2. Mediators

Various empirical studies have shown a direct link between customer satisfaction and loyalty (e.g., Chen, 2012, p. 205). In addition, Chen (2012) examined how four mediating variables (commitment, trust, involvement and perceived value) have an impact in the customer satisfaction–loyalty relation, in an e-setting. Chen's study suggests that perceived value proves to be a complete mediator of satisfaction and loyalty, while commitment, trust and involvement each prove to be partial mediators of satisfaction and loyalty (Chen, 2012, p. 208).

2.2.1. Trust

Trust has been defined as 'the expectations held by the consumer that the service provider is dependable and can be relied on to deliver on its promises' (Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002, p. 17). Trust is considered one of the most important factors that can determine the success of a business relationship (Hunt, 2006) and McKnight et al. (2002) show that trust is the foundation of e-commerce and is the most important factor in the success of online vendors. Based on previous research, this study defines trust as being a belief in the e-retailer's ability (including e-retailer dependability, competence, integrity and benevolence) to fulfil its obligations in a commercial relationship with its customers (Chen, 2012, p. 204). Past studies have shown that there is a greater willingness to buy from an online retailer if trust is present (e.g., Luarn and Lin, 2003) and Pavlou (2003) empirically proved that trust and satisfaction are positively related. Trust is also a fundamental factor influencing online purchase intentions (Schlosser et al., 2006) and in this study we aim to explore the mediating role of trust in relation to satisfaction and loyalty.

Therefore:

H2. Trust acts as a mediator variable between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in an e-shopping context.

Figure 1. Conceptual model 1: Trust as a mediator in the satisfaction-loyalty relation

2.2.2. Attitude

Attitude refers to a person's favorable or unfavorable evaluation regarding a specific target behavior (Davis et al., 1989, p.985; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Brand attitudes and satisfaction are regarded as distinct concepts in the customer satisfaction literature (e.g., Oliver, 1980, 1997; Yi, 1990). According to Oliver (1981), customer satisfaction is relatively transient and is consumption specific, whereas attitudes are relatively enduring. Westbrook and Oliver (1981) argued that satisfaction is an evaluation of the totality of the purchase situation relative to expectation, whereas brand attitude is a liking for the product that lacks this element of comparison (Suh and Youjae, 2006, p. 147).

Various empirical research have examined the relation between attitude and behavioral intentions and according to the theory of reasoned action, brand attitudes are a function of beliefs that a brand has desirable or undesirable attributes and evaluations of these attributes (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980). Nonetheless, Suh and Youjae (2006, p.145) examined how involvement moderates the effect of brand attitudes in the customer satisfaction-loyalty relation. Past studies suggest the possible mediating role of attitude in the customer satisfaction–loyalty relation.

Hence:

H3. Attitude acts as a mediator variable between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in an e-shopping context.
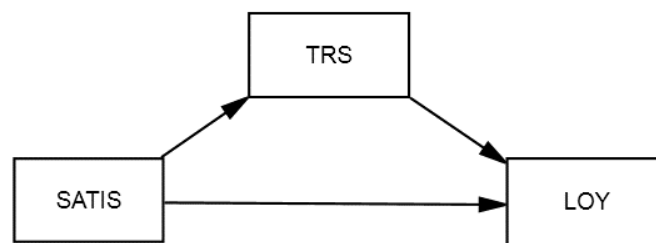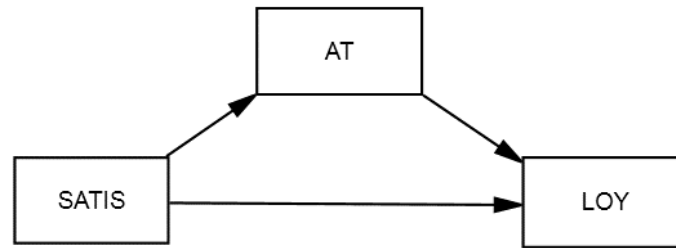
Figure 2. Conceptual model 2: Attitude as a mediator in the satisfaction-loyalty relation

2.2.3. Hedonic Value

Hedonic value associated with online purchases may include involvement, fantasy, escapism, experiences, fun, pleasure pursued for such transactions (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). According to Arnold and Reynolds (2003), who examined shopping in physical stores, there are six dimensions of hedonic shopping: (1) Adventure (shopping for stimulation, adventure, and the feeling of being in another world); (2) Social (socializing with friends and family); (3) Gratification (stress relief, alleviating negative mood, treating oneself); (4) Idea (keeping up with trends, seeing new products and innovations); (5) Role (enjoyment derived from shopping for others); and (6) Value (seeking sales, discounts, bargains).

Research shows that when the focus is on joy in the online shopping process, it grows the likelihood of acquiring experiential goods, suggesting that the hedonic performance increases the intensity of online shopping (Liu and Forsythe, 2011). In addition, hedonic value can be identified as being positively associated with customer satisfaction. Most satisfied customers have a certain level of immersion especially when they are having a pleasant shopping experience. As such, we can assume that as customers experience hedonic motivations in Internet retailing, they may exhibit a certain level of loyalty toward the brand that provides them with such an experience in an online setting. The mediating role of hedonic value in the customer satisfaction–loyalty relation in an e-shopping context remains to be explored.

Therefore, we propose:

H4. Hedonic value acts as a mediator variable between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in an e-shopping context.

Figure 3. Conceptual model 3: Hedonic value as a mediator in the satisfaction-loyalty relation

2.2.4. Utilitarian Value

With regard to utilitarian motivations, Babin et al. (1994) note that people are concerned with efficiency and achieving a specific end when they shop. Performance factors and functional utility were often associated as being paramount in consumers' purchasing process and determining a certain behavior (Liu and Forsythe, 2011). In this study, we measured how consumers appreciate the functional characteristics of online shopping services: the convenience of e-shopping; the wide range of products available in the electronic environment; and how easily they can compare prices of different products online and obtain information about the available alternatives (Vinerean, 2013, p. 79).

Considering the fact that online purchasing services offer functionalities manageable by consumers, we examine the mediating role of utilitarian value in relation to satisfaction and loyalty, because these relationships have still not been empirically studied in different research settings, such as online shopping services.

Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H5. Utilitarian value acts as a mediator variable between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in an e-shopping context.

4

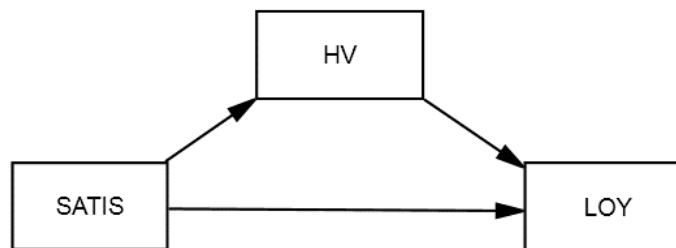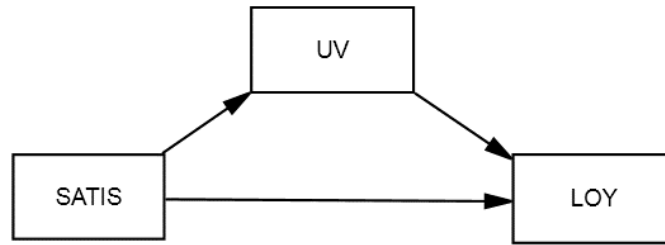*Figure 4. Conceptual model 4: Utilitarian value as a mediator in the satisfaction-loyalty relation*

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Context

The research setting for this paper refers to online shopping services because more and more consumers tend to use this new e-commerce environment due to its unique benefits for marketers and consumers. This research aims to explore the mediating effects of four variables in the relation between e-satisfaction and e-loyalty. These four mediators are: trust, attitude, hedonic value, and utilitarian value.

The four models are based on a quantitative marketing research from primary sources. One of the most important contributions of a marketing research is to define the marketing research problem that requires the provision of marketing solutions (Malhotra and Birks, 2007, p.15). The problem definition for this conducted research is in regard to the better understanding of the mediating factors of satisfaction and loyalty in relation to online shopping services.

3.2. Measurement and Research Instrument

Six constructs were measured to form these four models. Constructs were measured using multiple-item scales, drawn from pre-validated measured in marketing research and reworded to reflect the context of online shopping. All these dimensions have been previously studied, providing a large pool of existing valid items to use. The participants indicated their agreement with a set of statements using five-point Likert scales (ranging from ''strongly disagree'' to ''strongly agree'') drawn from previously validated instruments, as shown in Table 1.

The items that examined trust were adapted from Pavlou (2003) with a three-item scale. The scales for utilitarian value and hedonic value were previously used in Liu and Forsythe's (2011) study, and each construct was measured with a three-item scale. Attitude for online shopping consisted of five survey items, by extending the work of Hernández et al. (2010). Satisfaction was measured using scale items adapted from Bhattacherjee (2001, pp. 351--370), Zeithaml et al. (2002, pp. 362--375). This scale captured respondents' satisfaction levels along five-point scales anchored between three semantic differential adjective pairs: dreadful / delighted, very dissatisfied / very satisfied, frustrated / contented. Loyalty was measured through five items adapted from Dick and Basu (1994, pp. 99--113), Too et al. (2001, pp. 287--319), and Shankar et al. (2002, pp. 317--330). The psychometric properties of the measures are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Constructs used in the model

Construct	Denotation	Items	Reference
Trust	TRS	TRS1: This Web retailer is trustworthy TRS2: This Web retailer is one that keeps promises and commitments TRS3: I trust this Web retailer because they keep my best interests in mind	Pavlou (2003)
Utilitarian value	UV	UV1: I enjoy the convenience of shopping online. UV2: I like the fact that you can easily compare different prices online. UV3: I choose online shopping because of the large assortment of products available to me.	Liu, Forsythe (2011).
Hedonic value	HV	HV1: To me, Internet shopping is very pleasant and fun. HV2: I lose track of time when I shop online. HV3: I get excited when I choose from products offered on Internet shopping websites.	Liu, Forsythe (2011).
Attitude for online	AT	AT1: Shopping online saves me time AT2: The Internet is the best place to find bargains	Hernández et al. (2010)

shopping		AT3: The Internet is the best place to buy items that are hard to find AT4: My general opinion of e-commerce is positive AT5: Using the internet to make purchases is a good idea	
Satisfaction	SATIS	SATIS1: My overall satisfaction (e.g. e-store environment, product, service) to online shopping is: Dreadful ----- Delighted (5points) SATIS2: When I consider my experience of online purchasing I am: Very dissatisfied -----Very satisfied (5points) SATIS3: In general, when I think of online shopping, I am: Frustrated ----- Contented (5points)	Bhattacherjee (2001); Zeithaml et al(2002);
Loyalty	LOY	LOY1: I would recommend online shopping on social media websites (blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and others) LOY2: I am proud to tell my family and friends that I buy products online and from my usual e-store. LOY3: For me, online shopping is the best alternative in my consideration. LOY4: I buy online on a regular basis. LOY5: The internet stimulates me to buy repeatedly.	Dick and Basu, (1994) ; Shankar et al., (2002);

3.3. Sample and Data Collection

The primary scope of this study is to examine the mediators that might have the highest impact on the satisfaction-loyalty relation in consumers' online shopping behavior. A web-based consumer survey was used for the data collection. From January to June 2013, an online survey was posted on various forums devoted to online shopping, and members we invited to support this survey. The study used primary data, namely data originated specifically to address the research problem.

The online survey generated 107 usable questionnaires. Table 2 presents the profile of the respondents, as well as the screening questions which show high levels of experience regarding the use of internet in general, and online shopping in particular.

Table 2. Respondents' profile

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	38	35.5
	Female	69	64.5
	Total	**107**	**100.0**
Country	Australia	7	6.5
	Brazil	2	1.9
	Denmark	3	2.8
	France	3	2.8
	Germany	7	6.5
	Greece	1	.9
	India	5	4.7
	Poland	1	.9
	Romania	21	19.6
	Spain	7	6.5
	UK	14	13.1
	USA	36	33.6
	Total	**107**	**100.0**
Age	18-25	74	69.2
	26-30	21	19.6
	30-40	6	5.6
	Over 40s	6	5.6
	Total	**107**	**100.0**
Experience with Internet	2 - 3 years	5	4.7
	3 - 4 years	1	.9

	4 - 5 years	4	3.7	
	5 - 6 years	11	10.3	
	Over 6 years	86	80.4	
	Total	**107**	**100.0**	
Experience with online shopping	I usually just search for information on e-commerce sites, but I never bought anything	2	1.9	
	I purchased just once from an web retailer	11	10.3	
	I purchased more than once from web retailers	94	87.9	
	Total	**107**	**100.0**	
Frequency of online shopping in the last year	Once	16	15.0	
	2 or 3 times	17	15.9	
	4 or 5 times	31	29.0	
	6 or 7 times	16	15.0	
	7 or 8 times	8	7.5	
	More than 8 times	19	17.8	
	Total	**107**	**100.0**	

4. Empirical Analysis and Results

4.1. Exploratory Factor Analysis

The empirical analysis for this study started with exploratory factor analysis (EFA), which was used to reduce the number of scales assigned to each elaborated online behavior dimension. EFA was conducted in SPSS, using the Principal Components method, in order to extract the factors and the Schwartz's Bayesian Criterion (BIC) clustering criterion.

To establish the adequacy of the EFA, we used the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and we obtained high values (between 0.684 and 0.855) that indicate that the factor analysis is relevant for this data analysis. The psychometric properties of the measures developed in the questionnaire are presented in Table 2, and the results for the exploratory factor analysis are shown in Table 3.

Additionally, all the scales of the analysis were checked for internal consistency and reliability through Cronbach's alpha. Reliability is identified by Cronbach's alpha with a minimum of 0.70 (Cronbach, 1970). As shown in Table 3 all values were above the recommended level of 0.7, with values that vary from 0.774 to 0.862.

Table 3. *Descriptive Statistics and EFA Results*

Dimension	Items	Average	Standard deviation	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	KMO	Cronbach's alpha
Trust (TRS)	TRS1	3.94	0.970	0.889	2.252	75.077	0.698	0.832
	TRS2	3.99	0.863	0.895				
	TRS3	3.65	0.881	0.813				
Utilitarian value (UV)	UV1	4.02	0.961	0.792	2.109	78.593	0.684	0.774
	UV2	4.58	0.673	0.847				
	UV3	4.26	0.935	0.875				
Hedonic value (HV)	HV1	3.77	0.957	0.883	2.344	78.147	0.710	0.852
	HV2	3.30	1.253	0.851				
	HV3	3.50	1.200	0.917				
Attitude (AT)	AT1	4.14	0.995	0.823	3.881	77.621	0.824	0.856
	AT2	3.62	1.121	0.879				
	AT3	4.07	0.993	0.806				
	AT4	4.12	0.855	0.812				
	AT5	4	1.037	0.783				
Satisfaction (SATIS)	SATIS1	3.97	0.444	0.832	2.680	89.302	0.794	0.814
	SATIS2	3.98	0.713	0.910				
	SATIS3	3.97	0.806	0.887				
Loyalty (LOY)	LOY1	3.36	1.261	0.878	3.832	76.643	0.855	0.862
	LOY2	3.45	1.215	0.889				
	LOY3	3.71	1.037	0.763				

	LOY4	3.65	1.029	0.846				
	LOY5	3.21	1.227	0.890				

For this newly proposed model, one factor was extracted for all the dimensions studied. The criteria used to identify and interpret the factors was that each element should have a factor loading greater than 0.7 and Eigenvalues greater than 1 (Field, 2005, p.389-395). Also, the eligibility of the factors can also be observed in terms of the variance explained by each resulted factor, as the variation exceeds 70%. Therefore, all the factors are eligible and can be used in further analysis, namely regression analysis with mediators.

4.2. Regression Analysis with Mediation

In order to study the interrelationships between three variables, we use mediation; this involves a set of causal hypotheses regarding e-satisfaction and e-loyalty in an Internet retailing environment, while observing the mediating effect of various variables. In other words, mediation implies that an initial causal variable *X (satisfaction)* may influence an outcome variable *Y (loyalty)* through a mediating variable *M*. Mediation occurs if the effect of *X (satisfaction)* on *Y (loyalty)* is partly or entirely "transmitted" by *M*. A mediated causal model involves a causal sequence; first, *X (satisfaction)* causes or influences *M*; then, *M* causes or influences *Y (loyalty)*. *X (satisfaction)* may have additional direct effects on *Y (loyalty)* that are not transmitted by *M*. A mediation hypothesis can be represented by a diagram of a causal model (Warner, 2013, p. 645). Figure 5 displays the general mediation regression analysis used for the four conceptual proposed models.

To address the research questions of this paper, we examine the level of the mediating effect of each proposed mediator and whether it is a partial, or a complete, mediator. Several methods to test statistical significance of mediated models have been proposed. In this sense, Sobel test is such an example of method used in this analysis. The Sobel (1982, pp. 290-312) procedure was then used to statistically investigate the effect of the proposed mediator on the predictor–outcome relationship. The following *z* ratio for the Sobel (1982) test can be set up as follows:

$$z = ab/\sqrt{b^2 s_a^2 + a^2 s_b^2}$$

where
a and *b* are the raw (unstandardized) regression coefficients that represent the effect of *X* on *M* and the effect of *M* on *Y*, respectively;
s_a is the standard error of the *a* regression coefficient;
s_b is the standard error of the *b* regression coefficient.
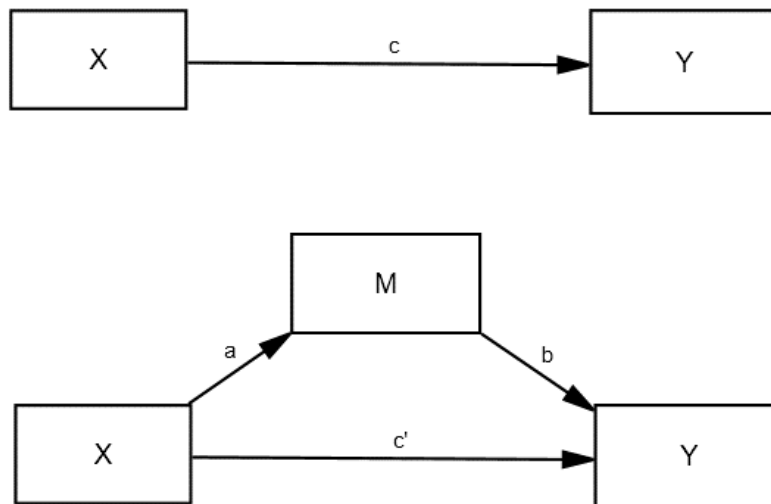
Figure 5. General model for regression analysis with mediator (Adapted from Warner, 2013, p. 647)
Note: Top panel: The total effect of satisfaction (X) on loyalty (Y) is denoted by c. Bottom panel: The path coefficients (a, b, c') that estimate the strength of hypothesized causal associations are estimated by unstandardized regression coefficients.

The coefficients in Figure 5 decompose the total effect *(c)* into a direct effect *(c')* and an indirect effect *(a × b)*. When ordinary least squares regression is used to estimate unstandardized path coefficients, *c = (a × b) + c'* (Warner, 2013, p. 647); the total relationship between satisfaction (X) and loyalty (Y) is the

sum of the direct relationship between satisfaction and loyalty and the indirect or mediated effect of satisfaction on loyalty through each of the four mediators: trust, attitude, hedonic value, utilitarian value.

A procedure to test mediators that was suggested in past studies (Barron and Kenny, 1986; Caruana, 2002; Chen, 2012, p.206) was adopted. Following Barron and Kenny (1986), this study presents four regression models (Models 1, 2, 3 and 4), as shown in Table 2-5, to provide evidence from testing the mediation strength of the four mediator variables (i.e., trust, attitude, hedonic value, and utilitarian value) between satisfaction (independent variable) and loyalty (dependent variable) in an Internet retailing environment.

First, a regression is run to predict *Y (loyalty)* from *X (satisfaction)* and this step provides information that can help evaluate how much controlling for the *M* mediating variable reduces the strength of association between *X* and *Y* (Warner, 2013, p. 651). Table 4 shows the regression coefficients part of the output in SPSS. The unstandardized regression coefficient for the prediction of *Y (loyalty)* from *X* (*satisfaction*) is $c = 0.622$; this is statistically significant, $t(105) = 8.146$, $p < .001$. Thus, the overall effect of *satisfaction* on *loyalty* in Internet retailing is statistically significant.

Table 4. Regression analysis for the satisfaction-loyalty relation on e-shopping

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.587	.736		.220	.740
	SATIS	.622	.076	.622	8.146	.000

a. Dependent Variable: LOY

Next, a regression is performed to predict the mediating variable *(M, trust)* from the causal variable *(X, satisfaction)*. The first column of Table 5 provides all the information regarding this regression. For the data, the unstandardized path coefficient was 0.497 with $p = 0.001$. In Model1, Regression Equation1 (E11) shows that satisfaction (independent variable) has a significant influence on trust.

Finally, a regression is performed to predict the outcome variable *Y (loyalty)* from both *X (satisfaction)* and *M (trust)* (Warner, 2013, p. 652; Table 5). This regression provides estimates of the unstandardized coefficients for path *M (trust) → Y (loyalty)* and also path *c'* that shows the direct or remaining effect of *X* on *Y* when the mediating variable has been included in the analysis. The last column of Table 5 displays the path between trust and loyalty (path b from Figure 5), which is 0.245, $p = 0.345$ and path $c' = 0.621$, $p < .001$ (following the relationships presented in Figure 5 and adapted for each model). These unstandardized path coefficients are used to label the paths in a diagram of the causal model. Regression Equation 2 (E12), showing satisfaction plus trust (independent variables), indicates that trust does not have a significant impact on loyalty.

Table 5. Regression model 1 for the mediating effect test of trust

Variable	Model 1: Trust	
	E11: TRS →SATIS	E12: TRS + SATIS → LOY
Independent variable (Satisfaction)		0.621 ($p < 0.001$)
Mediator variable (Trust)	0.497 ($p < 0.001$)	0.245 ($p = 0.345$)
R^2	0.247	0.387
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.085	0.088
F	34.451	32.862
Sobel test for mediating effect	Test statistic	Std. Error
	2.5136 ($p = 0.011$)	0.048

For the mediating effect of trust on the satisfaction – loyalty relationship, the test statistic for the Sobel test is 2.51, with an associated *p*-value of 0.011. The fact that the observed *p*-value does fall below the established alpha level of .05 indicates that the association between the independent value (satisfaction in e-commerce environment) and the dependent value (in this case, the loyalty of e-customers) is increased significantly by the inclusion of the mediator (in this case, trust in Internet retailing) in the model; in other words, there is evidence of mediation, and thus hypothesis 2 is not supported. In this case, trust does not do a very good job in predicting loyalty in e-commerce setting.

The same line of analysis is accomplished for all other mediation variables considered: attitude (Table 6), hedonic value (Table 7), and utilitarian value (Table 8).

The results of the interrelationships when considering hedonic value as a mediator are presented in Table 6. The R^2 of both equations are statistically significant, though their values are rather moderate (particularly in in the attitude - satisfaction equation).

Table 6. *Regression model 2 for the mediating effect test of attitude*

Variable	Model 2: Attitude	
	E21: AT →SATIS	E22: AT + SATIS → LOY
Independent variable (Satisfaction)		0.548 ($p < 0.001$)
Mediator variable (Attitude)	0.480 ($p < 0.001$)	0.155 ($p = 0.005$)
R^2	0.231	0.406
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.086	0.086
F	31.474	35.489
Sobel test for mediating effect	Test statistic	Std. Error
	1.715 ($p=0.068$)	0.043

The Sobel test performs a statistical test to see if the indirect path from the independent value to the dependent value is statistically significantly different from zero. This is the same idea as the test providing support for partial mediation. The test statistic is equal to 1.715, with standard error 0.043 (Table 6). The statistical significance is equal to 0.068. Assuming we had set our alpha at 0.05, technically, we would not reject the null hypothesis of no mediation. However, the 0.05 level is an arbitrary cut-off value, and 0.068 is very close to it, therefore in this case there is some evidence for partial mediation of attitude on the satisfaction – loyalty relationship in an e-setting. The product 0.480×0.155 is 0.074 and this value estimates the strength of the mediated or indirect effect of satisfaction on loyalty, that is, how much of the increase in customer loyalty occurs as satisfied people have a positive attitude towards online shopping. The 0.548 value estimates the strength of the direct (also called partial) effect of satisfaction on customer loyalty in Internet retailing, that is, any effect of satisfaction on loyalty that is not mediated by attitude. Further, the sum between 0.074 and 0.548 provide the total relationship between satisfaction and loyalty, considering the mediated effect of attitude.

The results of the interrelationships when considering hedonic value as a mediator are presented in Table 7. The R^2 of both equations studied in these models are strong and statistically significant, denoting that these two variables (hedonic value and satisfaction) do a good job of predicting variance in customer loyalty in an e-setting.

Table 7. *Regression model 3 for the mediating effect test of hedonic value*

Variable	Model 3: Hedonic Value	
	E31: HV →SATIS	E32: HV + SATIS → LOY
Independent variable (Satisfaction)		0.156 ($p < 0.001$)
Mediator variable (Hedonic Value)	0.675 ($p < 0.001$)	0.691 ($p < 0.001$)
R^2	0.455	0.647
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.072	0.079
F	67.769	95.477
Sig.	0.000	0.000
Sobel test for mediating effect	Test statistic	Std. Error
	6.395 ($p = 0.001$)	0.072

For the mediating effect of hedonic value on the satisfaction – loyalty relationship, the test statistic for the Sobel test is 6.395, with an associated *p*-value of 0.001. These results indicate that the interrelationships are significant in the model and there is a relevant evidence of mediation. Hypothesis 4 is supported at a 0.005 level and hedonic value is a mediator worth considering when trying to influence the satisfaction and loyalty in Internet retailing.

The results of the interrelationships when considering utilitarian value as a mediator are presented in Table 8. The R^2 of the utilitarian value – satisfaction relation is rather small, and this coefficient increases when both variables display their impact on loyalty.

Table 8. Regression model 4 for the mediating effect test of utilitarian value

Variable	Model 4: Utilitarian Value	
	E41: UV →SATIS	E42: UV + SATIS → LOY
Independent variable (Satisfaction)		0.536 ($p < 0.001$)
Mediator variable (Utilitarian Value)	0.515 ($p < 0.001$)	0.167 ($p = 0.006$)
R^2	0.265	0.408
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.084	0.088
F	37.914	35.787
Sobel test for mediating effect	**Test statistic**	**Std. Error**
	1.812 ($p = 0.070$)	0.047

Regarding the mediating effect of utilitarian value on satisfaction and loyalty, the test statistic for the Sobel test is 1.812, with an associated *p*-value of 0.070 (Table 8). In this case, utilitarian value is not a strong mediator for this proposed model and thus hypothesis 5 is not supported.

Nonetheless, the ANOVA values for each model report a significant F statistic, indicating that using the models is better than guessing the mean.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Theoretical Contributions

In this paper, we asked: how is the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty in the online environment different in relation to different mediators? This study contributes to the existing knowledge of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty by providing insight into online satisfied consumers' loyalty behavior through an examination of the four influential variables of attitude, trust, hedonic value and utilitarian value, and their mediating effects on the formation of the customer satisfaction–loyalty relation.

Through this study we aimed to address the identified gaps in the existing knowledge of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in the e-shopping context and outline the results of the proposed research questions. The findings indicate that customer satisfaction leads to loyalty. Additionally, there are mediators that have an impact on the main relationship explored in this paper.

These results indicate another role of attitude and hedonic value in the formation of customer loyalty. Moreover, the factors of commitment, trust, involvement and perceived value are each found to have a different degree of mediation on the customer satisfaction–loyalty relation.

As discovered in this paper, customer satisfaction is not the only predictor of loyalty and there are other possible mediators that should be considered by online marketers. As Chen (2012) discovered that perceived value is a complete mediator of satisfaction and loyalty, while commitment, trust and involvement each prove to be partial mediators of satisfaction and loyalty, this study explored other mediators: attitude, hedonic value, utilitarian value and trust.

In the introduction section of this paper, we asked if trust matters when considering an e-tailer, and the answer of the empirical analysis showed that it did not; consumers seem interested in various online retailers, and thus the idea of customer loyalty is not easy to achieve in an ever-changing environment. We also asked whether attitude is an important mediator in this relationship and the result supported hypothesis 3, particularly because consumers can form their attitudes from various online sources, such as corporate or paid, organic and those based on friends' recommendations.

Additionally, it is important for managers to understand how customers perceive hedonic value, and then adopt their perspectives and insights in creating and delivering online services that reflect fun and exciting shopping experiences. In this study, customers determine utilitarian value by product and service pricing, the time and effort they put into online shopping, and the rating of their overall on-line shopping experience. However, utilitarian value did not prove to be an important mediator in this research.

Moreover, this paper echoes Chen's (2012, p.208) call for a further study of constructs related to satisfaction and loyalty in order to improve the knowledge of motivation in the loyalty formation process,

particularly in the online environment. This study contributes in this research direction and brings new insights by identifying the variables of hedonic value and attitude as mediators of the customer satisfaction–loyalty relation in the Internet retailing context, which also leads to a more comprehensive understanding of online consumer behavior.

5.2. Managerial Implications

This study not only confirms the causal sequence between customer satisfaction and loyalty in the online context, but also clarifies the essentiality of customer satisfaction in the formation of e-loyalty and ways to approach it in terms of enhancing online marketing programs. Based on our study, we recommend the following strategies and tactics for online service providers of e-commerce:

Use the online medium to reinforce loyalty. Satisfaction builds loyalty, which further reinforces e-satisfaction. E-shopping marketers should consider promoting special loyalty-enhancing initiatives tailored developed for particular and targeted online customers to reinforce their overall satisfaction. Managers should be aware of the importance of on-line shopping in targeting satisfied customers and taking initiatives to recognize and high-light customer interests (Chen, 2012).

Enhance the interactivity and fun elements of the website. Our results show that a higher level of elements associated with hedonic value increased online service satisfaction, which, in turn, has a mutually reinforcing relationship with loyalty. Managers need to maintain advanced online technologies to ensure user-friendly searching, requiring less time and effort by customers (Chen, 2012).

Make the website as easy to use as possible. This tactics is necessary for online marketers because it improves customer attitude and satisfaction. The design of the website should encompass easy access to all the relevant information about the products and should be searchable and usable from every user-interface and device (particularly mobile devices) available in order to provide the convenience that online shopping has over traditional purchasing. In this sense, managers should consider the impact of these mediators when managing customer satisfaction for customer loyalty in order to improve the performance of their online shopping sites.

5.3. Limitations and Extensions

Our research has some limitations that should be addressed by future research. A major limitation is that we had a general approach in our survey and the study should be extended to provide a more focused view in relation to a particular e-tailer.

Considering the fact that this study implied an international sample, the size of the sample is relatively small, and thus could have impacted the results and the unsupported hypotheses, particularly the one that examined trust as a mediator of the customer satisfaction-loyalty relation. As with most online consumer surveys, the sample was skewed toward younger, more educated demographics. Nonetheless, such consumers are the main target audience for online marketers (Opreana, 2013 (a), p.; Opreana, 2013(b), p. 26), however, a larger sample size might have resulted in stronger results for these models.

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Explorative Study on the Concept of Mind Shares: Confidence, Resistance and Loyalty

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In practices and academics, the growth/decline of a brand or product sales is often measured with market shares. However, this method does not really gain insight into loyalty and perception of consumers toward brands and products. This paper proposes a concept of Mind Shares which combines confidence and resistance as the main contents of loyalty to establish a new theoretic foundation and develop the calculation method for the quantification of this model. The data from questionnaire survey showed that confidence and resistance are both positively correlated with loyalty, and these two variables are capable of predictability on loyalty. It is considered that this paper lays down the theoretic foundation of Mind Shares and contributes applications.

Keywords: *loyalty, confidence, Mind Share, resistance*

JEL Classification: *M31*

1. Introduction

In present rapidly changing marketing environment, consumers are faced with a variety of product choices. How can a brand employ all kinds of marketing strategies to influence cognitions and attitudes of customers so that they are prompted to make purchases? How can a product with a certain market share manage to maintain customers' loyalty amid an array of the same products, in order to secure its competitive position in the market? These are important issues in marketing.

In the past, most brands resort to the concept of market shares to measure the increase/decrease of their sales, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of their own promotion efforts against competitors. They seek to identify relative positions for themselves and map out their positioning strategies. However, when it comes to comparisons with competitors, the marketing effects are not only reflected in the final purchase behavior (sales). But also something else, Market shares based on sales cannot completely reveal the consumers' loyalty and their attitudes to certain brands or product. Accordingly, it is important to construct a research on the so-called Mind Share which differs from that of the concept of market shares.

Some previous studies on marketing though also mention similar concepts such as Mind Shares versus brands; however these are not the main role of their studies. There has been no basic research of Mind Share so far. Up to now, few literature but Keegan (2002) defines Mind Shares (MS) in his book. But still, there is not more concrete on deep discussion about it. Thus, this paper sets out its research purposes as follows:

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(1) To extend the concept of Mind Share proposed by Keegan and to create of new contents and put more insight in order to establish a foundation of new theories;

(2) To develop some method of measure of formulae Mind Shares which is computable so as to ensure applicability of the theory to facilitate subsequent empirical researches.

In terms of theoretic foundation, this paper extends on the Mind Share concept of Keegan (2002) by incorporating with the concept of loyalty. This paper proposes new perspectives and theoretic architectures by linking the loyalty concept with confidence and resistance to compose the theoretic contents of Mind Shares. Loyalty has been an important issue in the marketing studies of today, with varying interpretations, viewpoints and empirical studies by different scholars over the years. This paper sets its examinations on the basis of loyalty and integrates it with consumers' confidence of the brand and resistance against other brands in order to deduct the formula of Mind Shares.

To sum up, this paper is based on the following framework:

(1) Mind Shares as the indicator to the quality of customers' loyalty

As for the planning of corporate marketing strategies, companies not only can compare their Mind Shares with those of competitors, but also be able to understand customers' confidence with their brands and resistance against other brands in the competitive landscape.

(2) A new decomposition of loyalty into two phases which are main factors of Mind Shares

Loyalty consists of confidence and resistance. The higher the Mind Shares that consumer have possessed for a brand commands, the higher the faith of the consumers' loyalty. In other words, these consumers have stronger confidence toward this brand and are more able to resist the persuasion from other brands (including advertising, promotions).

2. Literature Review

The term "Mind Share" does not appear much in marketing literature. Madden (1991, pp.8-10) mentions "Mind Share" but it refers to short-term memory, such as the impact of personal experience to brand marketing. It does not belong to the scope of this paper. The Mind Share of similar concepts tackles the issue in practices. It analyzes the brand value by qualitative method and investigates consumer trust from a practical viewpoint, but it lacks of systematic theoretical foundation. However, Keegan (2002) elaborates on the concept of Mind Shares and provides a complete structural links and explanations. This paper starts with the original definition of Keegan (2002) on Mind Shares through a proper interpretation on the contents and then extends this concept and connects with the theory of "loyalty".

Keegan's Original Concept

Keegan's (2002) argument on Mind Shares appeared in his book "18 Guiding Principles of the Marketing Company". In Keegan's structure, the concept of loyalty is the topping principle of guidance. Subsequent marketing steps (including Mind Shares and market shares) must be based on this core concept. This is the original structural design according to the definition by Keegan (2002). It can also be used as the theoretic foundation of Mind Shares.

Under this structure, this paper starts at loyalty and gives new meanings to Mind Shares. According to Keegan, the establishment of credibility and trustworthiness of the company to consumers will make consumers have confidence and have credibility in the mind of customers. In this way, they will be willing to follow the company and the result is the Mind Shares claimed by the company. The concepts of confidence and trust can be linked to the orientation of loyalty (Costabile et al., 2002, pp.66-67 ; Dick and Basu, 1994, pp.99-114). To make consumers loyal to a certain brand, it is necessary to establish their trust and confidence. Similarly, it is possible to discuss the levels of customer loyalty with brand trust and confidence. Loyalty is the topping guidance principle in Mind Shares. Based on the concept of loyalty, this paper develops the constructs of Mind Shares from the perspectives of loyalty.

2.1. The Concept of Loyalty

Customers' loyalty is one of the important sources of company competitiveness. It also helps in the devise of the marketing strategies and plans (Lam et al, 2004, pp.293-311. The concept of customer loyalty plays an important role in marketing studies. Over the years, many scholars have come up with different viewpoints and definitions. The studies of loyalty can be roughly divided into three phases (Fournier and Yao, 1997, pp.415-437; Garland and Gendall, 2004, pp.81-87):

(1) Consumers' behavior:

This approach adopts some quantitative model of repeat purchases to calculate and examine loyalty. One example is to apply Dirichlet Model (Uncles et al., 1994, pp.375-385; Danaher et al., 2003, pp.461-476;

Bhattacharya, 1997, pp.421-436; Fader and Schmittlein, 1993, pp.478-494) to discuss relationships among market shares, penetration and re-purchases.

(2)   Cognitive process

Loyalty is considered as a correlation between attitudes and behavior (Disk and Basu, 1994, pp.99-114), and is moderated by variables such as an individual's current circumstance or the particular situation or both. This concept is also based on biased perspectives and argues that loyalty is a specific, non-random expression.

(3)   Favorable attitudes or beliefs

This approach tackles the issue from the psychological points of view. Loyalty is defined as the connection between favorable attitudes and beliefs (Selin et al, 1988, pp.210-223).

However, loyalty is not a single dimension, it may be two-dimensional, i.e. it consists of attitude and behavior (Costabile et al., 2002, pp.66-67; Garland and Gendall, 2004, 81-87).

2.2. Loyalty and Confidence

Day et al. (1969, pp.29-39) integrate two elements of attitude and behavior. The consideration of loyalty cannot stand alone by simply dealing with attitudes or behavioral concepts. Rather, these two elements and the relationship between them should be included. For example, Dick and Basu (1994, pp.99-114) propose the customer loyalty model and discuss the loyalty matrix that consists of repeat patronage and relative attitude. Loyalty is deemed as a process; hence, the sequential relationship between antecedents and consequences should be dealt with.

Part of the examinations on the relationship between attitude and behaviors appear in the studies of attitudes (Berger and Mitchell, 1989, pp.269-279). To be more specific, the discussion of attitude confidence or attitude accessibility places its focus on the moderating variables that link attitude and behavior. This point of view suggests that attitudes can directly predict behavior. Rather, this standpoint argues that the consumers' direct experience, motivations, exposure to repeated information all affect their attitudes and confidence, such as factors of behavior. In the concept of loyalty if attitude to behavior is a continuous process, confidence will play a pivotal role (Loaroche and Howard, 1980, pp.377-389; Howard et al., 1988, pp.5-14). In the process from attitude to behavior, confidence represents an individual's certainty of assessment of his/her attitude. The greater the confidence, the more the attitude is related to behavior (Fazio and Zanna, 1978, pp.228-244). Beside the perspective of attitude-behavior, confidence is also an important issue in the study of loyalty. When consumers have confidence and trust in a product or brand, they are likely to have brand loyalty (Keegan, 2002; Lam et al., 2004, pp.293-311. Focusing on confidence perspectives, this paper discusses the link of the loyalty of consumers in attitude and behavior (such as repeated purchases). The more certain the consumers' attitude of loyalty to a brand or product, the stronger their confidence is in this brand or product. Hence, it can be inferred that the link to their behavioral loyalty is stronger. However, it is necessary to first clarify that confidence as a moderating variable between attitude and behavior and the confidence in a brand as part of loyalty are somewhat different. The former refers to cognitive certainty an individual holds and it is included in the implication and also is a concept of meta-cognition. The latter refers to trust and confidence in a broad sense. The differences between the former and the latter will be explained later and the quantitative measurement of the latter will be provided in the following sections.

In the study of loyalty, confidence is one of the variables to explain loyalty in a broad sense. It is also one of the moderating variables of loyal attitude and behavior inclination (the link between attitude and behavior). Therefore, this paper incorporates confidence into the concept of Mind Shares that carry the implications of loyalty. The higher the certainty of a positive attitude toward a brand, the higher the scales relevant to Mind Shares it possess. This reflects the importance of the links between loyalty implications and loyal attitude to loyal behavior.

2.3. Loyalty and Resistance

Pritchard et al. (1999, pp.333-349) find that the most important moderating variable between commitment and loyalty is a concept of resistance to change. Loyalty exists because people refuse to change and want to maintain their existing choices. This is because consumers need to bear the risks of changes for switching the brands. As a result, consumers are afraid of bearing the risks associated with changes in their behavioral pattern and tend to keep their original preferences. The resistance to changes is to maintain the consistency in cognition. Consumers tend to establish a harmonious and consistent relationship between their belief, attitude and behavior. Under this cognition system, inconsistency will create psychological pressures. To remove such pressures, consumers try to avoid inconsistency from their existing perceptions, imbalanced information or proposals (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995, pp.255-272). Hence, resistance is a response of loyalty.

A loyal consumer holds a positive attitude and ignores or event resists the persuasive communications from the competitors. They have immunity against competitors (Stum and Thiry, 1991, pp.34-37; Caruana, 2004, pp.256-269). When saying consumers demonstrate persistent support and loyalty to a certain brand, the other side of the coin is that it is hoped that they exhibit a certain degree of resistance to the persuasive and marketing strategies of competitors.

The Mind Share concept starts with the basis of loyalty. In the attitude theory, confidence links attitude and behavior. It is also an important concept that links the two dimensions of loyalty. In the attitude theory, resistance is discussed heavily in the change dimension, which strengthens the resistance of consumers against competitors of their loyal brand. Starting with attitude loyalty, this paper attempts to reduce the discrepancy between "confidence" concept and loyal behavior, and supplement the "resistance" concept as an alternative interpretation of "loyalty". "Loyalty" refers to the quality connotation of Mind Share, and is differentiated from the concept of loyalty in a broad sense generally used.

2.4. Confidence: Attitude Orientation and Loyalty Orientation

As previously mentioned, the confidence in the attitude implications refers to belief confidence. Belief confidence is the level of certainty level of one's subjective perception toward the product attributes (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Smith and Swinyard, 1988, pp.3-14; Yi, 1990, pp.47-63). Thus, it is a meta-cognition concept, which is defined as thinking about one's thoughts. (Brinol et al, 2004, pp.559-573).

Confidence can be distinguished from belief strength (Spreng and Page, 2001, pp.1187-1204). It stems from expectancy value theory (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) and the subsequent modifications (Bennett and Harrell, 1975, pp.110-117; Smith and Swinyard, 1988, pp.3-14). Belief strength is a subjective perception which consumers possess toward the product attributes. It represents subjective probabilities of association between the product and its perceived attribution. Different degrees of belief strength are the probabilities with which consumers perceive certain attributes of a product. Confidence is the certainty with which consumers can make their own judgments. Two persons who assign the same subjective probability to a given position on the content dimension may vary in their confidence associated with this probability estimate. Disk and Basu (1994, pp.99-114) suggest that attitude, like probably distributions, is the mean of the distribution of a certain subject or attitude. Confidence or certainty is like the variance of the distribution. Different individuals may have similar probability distributions when it comes to attitudes toward something, but their confidence may vary. This is because confidence reflects the level of certainty of one's attitude. The measurement method is to inquire consumers how certain they are in their beliefs, ranging from very certain to very uncertain.

In the literature on loyalty, confidence refers to the sense of trust that consumers possess toward a certain brand and the confidence they derive. Compared to less loyal consumers, highly loyal consumers pose more positive attitude toward the brand and are more certain in the confidence of their attitude judgment. Therefore, the strength of the positive attitude consumers have toward a certain brand and the assurance of their judgment certainty can boost loyalty.

This study establishes the indicators to Mind Shares from the loyalty perspectives. Hence, the confidence mentioned in this paper also starts from loyalty. The confidence defined in this paper consists of attitude side and it's certainty of judgment, rather than pure confidence.

2.4.1. Confidence Research and its Antecedents

The previous studies of confidence mostly focus on the role of confidence as a predicator of attitude and behavior (Fazio and Zanna, 1978, pp.228-244). In the studies of consumer persuasion (Brinol et al, 2004, pp.559-573; Petty et al, 2002, pp.722-741), confidence is examined in expectations as a moderating variable that influences the relationships established in the disconfirmation-of-expectations model (Spreng and Page, 2001, pp.1187-1204). These studies all mention information as an antecedent that affects confidence. These include information volume, information consistency and information credibility (Smith and Swinyard, 1988, pp.3-14). Berger and Mitchell (1989, pp.269-279) (Dick & Basu, 1994, pp.99-114) find that the repeated exposures to consistent information and the decision processes associated with perception of the brand can enhance consumers' confidence.

To examine the role of confidence in attitude and its relationship with behavior from the information perspective, it is found that when there is sufficient information to assist consumers to evaluate product attributes so as to reduce their uncertainty in purchase decision making, their confidence will increase and as a result, the link between attitude to behavior intention will be strengthened (Fazio and Zanna,1978, pp.228-244; Laroche et al., 1996, pp.115-121 ; Bennett and Harrell, 1975, pp.110-117; Zuwerink and Devine, 1996, pp.931-933; Pomerantz et al., 1995, pp.408-419). In other words, if the risks associated with uncertainties borne by consumers in their purchase decisions can be reduced, consumers will increase their confidence

(Bennett and Harrell, 1975, pp.110-117). For example, if the sources of product information come respectively from advertisements and direct experience of consumers, the former will create a lower acceptance and higher cognitive resistance for consumers. This higher cognitive resistance will result in a potential reduction of belief strength, which links with the perceived product attributes (Smith and Swinyard, 1988, pp.3-14). Also, direct experience will enhance the acceptance of information and make consumers' beliefs firmer, and thus it, affects their purchase decisions.

2.5. Resistance

The term "resistance" first appears in persuasive communications mentioned by Hovland et al. (1953). Resistance occurs in the face of persuasion that aims to change attitudes. Resistance usually occurs when individuals experience unfavorable thoughts through distorting the original information or downgrading the reliability of information sources. Research on resistance is also a regular topic in psychology and it includes the effects of personal motivations, self-involvements, importance of attitudes, and the impacts of personal emotions toward resistance against information (Zuwerink and Devine, 1996, pp.931-933).

In the marketing studies of the persuasive effects of advertising messages, resistance is one of the variables. It is used to discuss what kind of the design of informational structure can be accepted by consumers more easily without experiencing resistance. Besides consumers have a positive attitude toward advertising (Zuwerink and Devine, 1996, pp.931-933). Beclch (1981, pp.333-349) finds that comparative advertising messages and repeated showings enhance consumers' resistance to competing brands. Selin (1988, pp.210-223) also finds that loyalty is a moderating variable in the effects of repeated advertisements (Dick & Basu, 1994, pp.99-114). In other word, clear resistance to counter persuasion is related to loyalty.

In the literature regarding loyalty, resistance is the factor that shapes loyalty, and meanwhile the resistance against the persuasion from competitors is also an expression of loyalty. According to the past studies, as long as consumers can successfully resist powerful persuasion, they become more certain of their original belief (Tormala and Petty, 2002, pp.1298-1313). Resistance deepens loyalty and assures loyalty. It is a process to defend a personal attitude. By supporting this original attitude, an individual can selectively avoid the information inconsistent with his original attitude or avoid negative emotions. By slandering the message of persuader or contributing the persuasive message to negative emotions, an individual becomes more certain of his attitude. Thus the process in which an individual resists the attacks of persuasions in fact further confirms his original attitude (Tormala and Petty, 2004, pp.427-442). In other words, the previous exposure to the attacks of persuasions enhances the immunity to future attacks. This process can also be explained with meta-cognition. The cognition of an individual is subject to the influence of his own perceptions. When people resist persuasions, they sense their own resistance and infer it to the relevant attitude. This is why the resistance augments their attitude. In the study of Mind Shares in this paper, the process in which loyal consumers resist the persuasive messages of other brands in effect further deepens their loyalty and generates immunity for them to fight persuasive marketing strategy of other brands.

Tormala and Petty (2004, pp.427-442) also mention that this resistance process varies in accordance with the strength of persuasive messages. When an individual resists a strong persuasive message, his original attitude becomes more established. However, if an individual senses that the persuasive message is weak, the successful resistance does not affect his confirmation of the original attitude. Therefore, this paper infers that loyal consumers of a certain brand, in face of extremely tempting persuasive messages from competing and being able to successfully resist such messages, will be more certain of their brand loyalty. This confirmed loyalty will also boost future resistance.

2.5.1. Antecedent of Resistance

Similar to confidence, knowledge is also an important factor in the path that links attitude with resistance. When an individual has more information connections, he becomes more empowered to resist persuasion (Pomerantz et al, 1995, pp.408-419). The literature regarding confidence mentions that the more information an individual collects, the more confident their attitude becomes. In a similar vein, information is also an important variable in the literature dealing with resistance. Thus, both confidence and resistance work side by side. The confidence boosted by information enhances resistance against persuasion from the opposition. Similarly, on the basis of loyalty, this paper incorporates resistance into the meaning of Mind Shares. In other words, Mind Shares represent consumers' resistance against the persuasion of other brands and gauges the level of resistance to changes (brand switching). The method of some quantification of resistance will be provided in the deduction and formula section.

2.6. Relationships between Confidence and Resistance and Mind Shares

In the literature regarding loyalty, confidence is a cognitive antecedent and resistance is a consequence of customer loyalty in the structure (Dick & Basu, 1994, pp.99-114). In other words, when consumers have confidence in a brand, the link between their loyal attitude and behavior gets stronger. Loyalty is expressed in the form of resistance against persuasive messages from competing brands. Accordingly, confidence is the internal antecedent of loyalty and resistance is the external sequence of loyalty.

In the studies on persuasion, confidence and resistance are both in the domain of meta-cognition. Confidence is the judgment on the certainty of one's belief (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Simth and Swinyard, 1988, pp.3-14). On the other hand, resistance is formed, in part, due to the experience of being persuaded. It becomes a part of belief knowledge (Friestad and Wright, 1994, pp.1-31; Petty and Tormala, 2004, pp.427-442), and then affects the subsequent resistance and consumer behavior. From the perspectives of information, confidence and resistance are positively correlated. The more information collected as regards to products, the stronger the confidence and also the stronger the resistance (Pomerantz et al., 1995, pp.408-419). When there are two sources of information, such as advertising and direct experience, advertising generates lower acceptance and higher cognitive resistance, which in turn, decreases confidence strength.

From the perspectives of loyalty, confidence and resistance are like two sides of the same coin. In the mind of consumers, confidence is internal and it deals with the brand in question; on the other hand, resistance deals with competitors. As far as loyalty is concerned, confidence in the brand in question is not sufficient. Despite strong loyalty consumers may have, they may still be lured over to other brands under the attraction of tempting persuasive messages or marketing techniques from other brands. Also, consumers may have certain levels of confidence in several brands at the same time. Thus, the immunity against other brands is a prerequisite. In other words, consumers should have confidence in the brand in question and resistance in other brands.

To sum up the previous discussion on confidence and resistance, this paper defines Mind Shares as the confidence (belief certainty) consumers have in a certain brand and the level of their resistance to switching to other brands. And this reveals the loyalty. The higher Mind Shares a brand commands, the stronger consumers' loyalty is. The following chart shows the content of the mind-share concept is as:
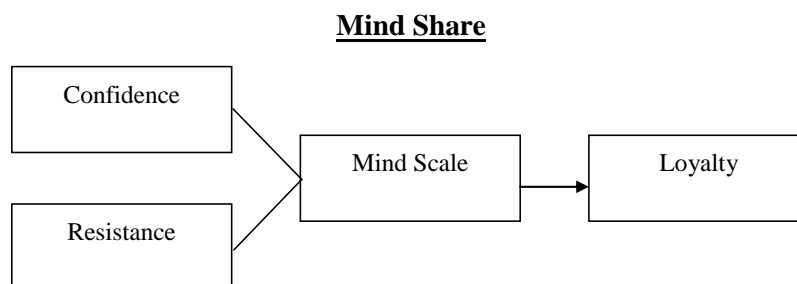
Mind Share

Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework of Mind Share

According to the above diagram, Mind Scale consists of confidence and resistance compose of Mind Scale for a brand or product and so contents of loyalty are incorporated.

3. Derivation Of Some Related Quantities

In the following, we define some quantities which reflect the degree of confidence that a customer has in his mind for a certain brand or product and also the degree of resistance of a persuasions to other brands of a customer. Finally, we conclude a percentage in terms of those previously defined quantities which can be considered as an index of Mind Share for a customer toward a certain brand.

3.1. Confidence Scale

This paper establishes Confidence Scales from the perspective of loyalty. In other words, the contents of loyalty of confidence consist of attitude toward the brand and the judgment certainty. The measurement of attitude toward the brand is five points from positive (very satisfy) to negative (very dissatisfy). The certainty of attitude judgment is the level of certainty consumers' posse regarding their judgment of the connection with product attributes attitude. It ranges from very certain to very uncertain. Attitude certainty can be measured with five points or seven points scale. If consumers are very sure of their judgment regarding product attributes attitude, it means they have high belief certainty. On the contrary, if they are not too sure of their own judgment

of product attributes, they have low belief certainty. Confidence Scale C_x for x brand consists of elements of perceived product attitudes and level of judgment certainty of these attribute from customers. Now, we define C_x as follows:

$$C_x = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \sum_{j=1}^{m} (bs_{xji} \times ac_{xji}) \tag{1}$$

When bs_{xij} and ac_{xij} denotes respectively the attitude side bs and attitude judgment certainty ac from customer i ($i=1...m$) to attribute j ($j=1...n$) of brand Confidence Scale of the i-th consumer in the brand.

It is our main concern to explore the construct of confidence in Mind Shares from the perspective of loyalty. Therefore, the confidence in a certain brand consists of attitude level and judgment certainty. This concept is similar to the ECV model, thus, this method is used to calculate Confidence Scale in Mind Shares.

3.2. Resistance Scale

The previous studies on resistance resort to self-reports of the respondents, who are asked to write down counter-arguments (Tormala, Clarkson and Petty, 2006, pp.423-435; Tormala and Petty, 2004, pp.427-442, 2002, pp.1298-1313). However, this paper tackles the issue from the perspective of loyalty. Resistance refers to consumers' refusal of changes. It is a commitment in the form of resistance against brand switching. Resistance to switching is a personal mechanism to maintain perceived stability and internal consistency. In literature discussions, scholars from different fields have come up with various ideas and viewpoints. However, in marketing and loyalty maneuvers, resistance refers to the loyalty of consumers who can resist the vast array of marketing messages from competitors and stay with their original brands. Hence, it deals with brand switching.

Hence we discard self-reports of respondents conventionally seen in other researches. Rather, it designs a questionnaire based on the related topics of switching to measure the resistance levels of consumers.

$$R_x = \sum_{i=1}^{n} (T_{ix}) \tag{2}$$

Hence, Resistance Scale R_x of brand x is the sum of the total resistance scores.

When T_{ix} denotes the Resistance Scale measuring the resistance of the i-th consumer switching to other brands. When T_{ix} denotes the Resistance Scale of the i-th consumer switching to other brands.

3.3. Mind Shares

Mind Share is a kind of percentage concept. In the same product category, Mind Share shows percentage of some related quantity that composes of confidence and resistance of a certain brand against that of some quantity related to all brands. To the exact, we define it as follows:

$$MS_x = \frac{R_x \times C_x}{\sum_{j=1}^{k} (R_j \times C_j)}) \tag{3}$$

Where MS_x stands for Mind Share of brand x and R_j and C_i have been defined previously and k denotes total number of brands that belong to some category of products.

Mind Shares are the product of Confidence Scale and Resistance Scale in the market corresponding to the brand in question. For its convenience, we name the product of Confidence Scale and Resistance Scale as the "Mind Scale". Mind Share of a certain brand is the Mind Scale of the brand divided by the Mind Scale of total brands.

4. Application

For a certain market, we can compute quantitative Mind Share of some brand in this market to show the attitude of consumers to this brand. The calculations are based on Confidence Scale and Resistance Scale

which have been defined before. Shortly speaking, the calculated percentage of Mind Share of certain brand is an index which shows that indicates the level of loyalty of a customer to this brand.

This paper selects a market to investigate Confidence Scale, Resistance Scale and Mind Scale of various brands and compute Mind Shares of each individual brand, in order to illustrate the formula of Mind Shares.

4.1. Hypotheses

Based on the quantified value of Mind Share percentage and focus on a specified market, we are interested in testing the following four hypotheses based on the sample that are taken from the specified market. Since the samples contain random mechanism, statistical tool for testing is appropriate and powerful.

H1: Confidence and loyalty are positively correlated.

While loyalty in a concept which has many phases to indicate its strength, Mind Share is one of them. In defining measurement of Mind Share, quantity of measuring confidence is closely related to Mind Share scale Therefore H1 is naturally an important topic to be discussed.

The following is a parallel but different statement of H1.

H2: Resistance and loyalty are positively correlated.

Confidence and resistance are different in its quality, however, both of them are positively correlated in its quantitative construction of measurement of Mind Share scale, yet H2 is still an important issue to be studied.

The main purpose of this paper is to establish theoretic contents of Mind Shares through the measurement of confidence and resistance so that Mind Share includes the implications of loyalty. As a result, this paper hopes to construct the formula of Mind Shares and establishes the meaning of loyalty through selecting one category product market and examining it's users.. The following hypotheses are proposed on the basis of the previous literature.

H3: Mind Scale and loyalty are positively correlated.

In addition to the validations of the above hypotheses on confidence, resistance and Mind Scale as individual variables and their relationship with loyalty, it is also desirable to understand the predictability of both confidence and resistance to loyalty. If there is a high level of interaction or correlation between confidence and resistance, the predictability of level of loyalty using the two variables at the same time will be redundant.

In the following it is desired to know whether it is only the level of confidence or the level of resistance is enough to explain loyalty.

H4: Confidence and resistance are able to explain loyalty independently.

4.2. Illustration of a real data set

In this paper we focus on the mobile telecommunications market in Taiwan as a case study. After fierce competition and industry consolidation, there are only three mobile service providers remaining in Taiwan. We are going to study it via calculating their Mind Shares. Since college students are one of main group s using mobile phones. We choose undergraduate students of Tamkang University for this study. The questionnaires were issued to the undergraduate students of Tamkang University. A total of 174 questionnaires were released and retrieved. In order to reduce the bias due to the number of customers with particular operators and the potential distortion of Mind Share estimates, we controls to take 42 respondents for each brand. The contents of the questionnaire include the brand of the mobile service providers, Confidence Scale in the current brand and resistance to switches to other brands. The results of the questionnaires are used to compute the related quantities' Confidence Scale, the Resistance Scale of the respondents and finally the Mind Shares toward each brand.

The questionnaire surveys brand loyalty of individual consumers. A relational analysis on brand loyalty scale, Confidence Scale and Resistance Scale is performed in order to test the correlation between loyalty and the two variables. Finally, this paper tests the correlation between Mind Shares and average loyalty scales of individual brands in order to test the Mind Share concept proposed by this paper and the relationship between confidence, resistance (as components) and loyalty.

4.3. Measurement

This paper needs to measure three items: loyalty of consumers to their own mobile service providers, confidence in their own mobile service providers and resistance against other mobile service providers. These three variables are surveyed through question sets in the questionnaire. The content of the questionnaire on loyalty covers both attitude and behavior (including reputations, preferences and behavior) and is measured

with the five points Likert scale. The standardized Cronbach α is valued at 0.898. The content on confidence measures attitude side and judgment certainty. Attitude judgment certainty refers to the level of sureness of consumers in their own judgment of the association to product attributes. It ranges from "extreme certainty" to "extreme uncertainty" and can be measured with a five-point scale. In terms of the reliability of attitude side, the standardized Cronbach α stands at 0.902; in terms of the reliability of judgment certainty, the standardized Cronbach α is 0.936. The five points Likert scale is also used to measure resistance of consumers against brand switching. The standardized Cronbach α is 0.849.

4.4. Results

4.4.1. Confidence Scales, Resistance Scales, Mind Scales and Mind Shares of Individual Brand
There are 42 samples for the subscribers of each mobile service provider and in total, there are 126 samples. Attitude side and judgment certainty are calculated through the formula of Confidence Scale (defining by (1)), that of resistance by the formula of Resistance Scale (defining by (2)). Finally, this paper derives the Mind Shares (defining by (3)) of the three mobile service providers in the market. The Loyalty Scales are shown as follows:

Table 1. Confidence Scales, Resistance Scales, Mind Scales and Mind Shares of Individual

Loyalty	Confidence	Resistance	Mind Scale	Mind Share
Chunghwa Telecom	36.667	39.574	43.644	1734.986
Taiwan Mobile	31.929	33.669	42.310	1417.279
FarEastone	30.452	30.360	40.786	1273.779

In terms of loyalty, confidence, resistance, Mind Scales and Mind Shares, Chunghwa Telecom obviously shows higher Mind Share and also loyalty than the other two, Taiwan Mobile and Fareastone. The clearly describes the structure concerning loyalty and Mind Shares in this marketing.

4.1.2. Hypothesis Validation
The first step is to validate the correlation between loyalty and each variable (H-1, H-2 and H-3). Their coefficients are as follows:

Table 2. Confidence Scales, Resistance Scales, Mind Scales and Mind Shares of Individual

Loyalty	Confidence	Resistance	Mind Scale	Mind Share
Loyalty	.434**	.395**	.515**	.434**

**p<.001

The above table shows that there is significantly positive correlation between respectively variables confidence, resistance, Mind Scale and loyalty. As a result, the hypotheses H-1, H-2 and H-3 are not rejected.

In addition to the individual correlation, author purpose of this paper is to establish that Mind Share as indicators that contain confidence and resistance is one of main components of loyalty. We consider regression model and assigns loyalty as a dependent variable and confidence and resistance as independent variables, to measure the explanatory power of confidence and resistance to loyalty.

The stepwise regression method is adopted. During the first stage, confidence as a variable is selected and included, because it explains 18.2% of variance in loyalty ($F_{(1,8)}=28.782$, $p=.00$).The second chosen variable is resistance, which explains 11.4% of variance in loyalty by itself ($F_{(1,8)}=20.019$, $p=.00$). As a result, the two models together can explain 29.1% of variance of dependence variable ($F_{(1,8)}=26.608$, $p=.00$). As Durbin-Watson is valued at 1.981, it shows that there is no interaction between confidence and resistance as variables. As the two variables demonstrate good predictability of loyalty, therefore paper contains H4 is accepted.

5. Conclusion

This paper finds that confidence and resistance are able to explain loyalty and there is no interaction between confidence and resistance. There are respectively significant correlations of confidence, resistance and Mind Share with loyalty. Hence, it is reasonable to use Mind Shares (composed of confidence and

resistance) as an indicator to represent the concept of loyalty. This paper incorporated results of the retrieved questionnaires issued to mobile subscribers in Taiwan to compute some proposed measures of confidence and resistance in order to validate the feasibility of Mind Share computations and the practicability of the relevant theory.

The main contribution of this paper is to construct some theoretic contents of Mind Shares and propose some quantified measurement of it. This gives an alternative interpretation of loyalty. Mind Shares reflect the level of confidence consumers in their mind for a certain brand and the resistance against the persuasion of competing brands. The concept of Mind Share can also serve as on alternative point of view of loyalty, newly defined by this paper, as the combination of confidence and resistance. Confidence is for some brand in mind; while resistance is against other brands. However, when it comes to connect loyalty, confidence alone is not sufficient. Immunity against other brands is also needed. Combination of these phases represents Mind Shares. The higher Mind Shares for a brand commands, the higher quality of consumers' loyalty attains. In the mind of these consumers, the higher the confidence in the brand, the stronger the resistance against the persuasion of other brands. As a result, Mind Shares reflect consumers' loyalty in the psychological sense. Therefore, it differs from that of the usual market share, which suggests only the fluctuations of sales in market.

6. Discussion

Most of the studies on confidence and resistance focus on cognition processes (Pomerantz et al,1995, pp.408-419; Berger and Mitchell,1989, pp.269-279; Smith and Swinyard, 1988, pp.3-14) and advertising persuasion process (Tormala and Petty, 2004, pp.427-442, 2002, pp.1298-1313; Pomerantz et al,1995, pp.408-419; Brinol et al, 2004, pp.559-573; Petty et al, 2002, pp.722-741). Few scholars apply these two concepts in the theoretic study of loyalty. Different from past studies, the main purpose of the variable of resistance in persuasion theory such as advertising study is to reduce consumers' resistance against advertising message, yet in the study of loyalty, resistance plays a positive role. Although there are research findings on confidence and resistance as variables (confidence and resistance as moderating variables to the effects of persuasion), the moderating effect of confidence and resistance and their impact on loyalty as antecedents may be different. The relationship between these antecedents (such as the strength of information) and confidence or resistance may be varied. Thus, the roles played by confidence and resistance in loyalty are unique and important. They are worthy of attention from subsequent researchers.

Below is the discussion on the theory of loyalty, confidence, resistance and Mind Shares.

6.1. Confidence, Resistance and Mind Shares

The relationships between confidence, loyalty and resistance are not necessarily in juxtaposition. They may have sequential or causal relationships. Mind Shares are composed of confidence and resistance. Therefore, these two concepts are referred from loyalty in this paper. According to the proceeding study, the higher Mind Shares of a brand or product commands, the higher the quality of consumers' loyalty, confidence and resistance it has compared to its peers. However, the causal relationship between confidence, resistance and loyalty is not addressed in this paper. None of the vast amount of previous literature deals with the correlation among these three. However, according to the literature and studies on loyalty, this paper finds that confidence is a cognitive antecedent of loyalty (Dick and Basu, 1994, pp.99-114). Confidence in a certain brand is likely to enhance brand loyalty (Keegan, 2002). Thus, brand loyalty may start with confidence in the brand and then be followed by resistance as the result. Because of their loyalty, consumers are able to resist the persuasion from competing brands. The repeated mental processes of confidence or resistance lead to self reinforcement in the mind of consumers (Tormala and Petty, 2004, pp.427-442, 2002, pp.1298-1313). In this paper we explain and discuss these two main factors together and through merging or fusion them to creative the concept of loyalty. However, they may not be the same in terms of their positions in the hierarchy or sequence. The psychological process of these variables may lead to interactions and self-reinforcements.

6.2. Loyalty and Mind Share

In addition, to predict loyalty in practice with Mind Shares, it is necessary to first clarify the relationship among these three and their respective roles in sequence. It is essential to confirm the dimensional meanings which relate to that loyalty represents before the actual applications is possible. This is because the measurement of loyalty by itself carries multiple dimensions. Some studies use the frequency, quantity and intervals of repeated purchases as the indicators to loyalty; while others measures the psychological loyalty of consumers (Costabile, 2000, pp.66-67). The contents of the questionnaire adopted by this paper cover both

attitude and behavior. It is suggested that for different aspects of loyalty, it can be performed in order to examine its relationship with confidence and resistance respectively. This paper discusses loyalty in terms of Mind Shares in the conceptual level. However, the follow-up researches will be focused on the measurement of loyalty in order to clarify the relationship between Mind Share and loyalty.

6.3. Resistance and Confidence

When reviewing confidence or resistance separately, it is found that the emerging of confidence and resistance is related to the information on products or brands that consumers possess in their mind. These issues can be the credibility of information sources and information volume. According to the past studies, the more credible the information or the more direct experience an individual has, the higher the association with information it becomes. Consequently, confidence and resistance also get a boost. According to the Mind Share argument in this paper, the enhancement of confidence and resistance increases Mind Shares. Hence, information characteristics are also important variables that affect Mind Shares. However, this paper does not include the study of the relationship between information and confidence, information and resistance and which is a good topic of future research.

In order to carry out a practical application, we have proposed some quantitative measurements of Resistance Scale by combing subjective and objective factors in the perception of consumers into switching cost. This does not only translate the cognition of consumers into switching cost but also decompose the switching concept into moneyed unite. For example, the Monroe (2003) formula calculates in detail the actual purchase prices and the maximum acceptable switching prices. The result is compared against the perceived gap in the subjective evaluations by consumers. In the special product market where there are specification variances and compatibility issues, the concept of network effect can be incorporated (Shankar, 2003, pp. 375-390) as a representative indicator in the calculation process.

The computation of the overall Mind Shares is most suitable for the comparisons of different products/sub-brands of the same product category. It may not be suitable to compare different products, indifferent category or different industries because consumers have varying cognition, confidence and resistance levels for products/brands of different categories. The Mind Share analysis will be distorted if it is used to compare different categories because the baselines are different for different categories. The proposed Mind Shares can be used to measure different brands of the same product category and the results may be compared with the increase/decrease of market shares so that inference concerning loyalty and sales can be obtained and which greatly assists strategic planning in marketing.

7. Acknowledgements

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A Comparative Facebook Content Analysis between Romanian and Western European Airline Carriers

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This research aims to investigate the different social media strategies adopted by the airline companies from two European regions. In the attempt to land more customers on their social media runway, drive more sales from social media content, increase customer satisfaction through a high response rate or increase their brand awareness, the airlines combine creativity and high-quality ideas to better promote their products and services to customers all around the globe. The paper analyses the content (number of fans, posts, number of likes, the dynamics of comments, response rate) on the Facebook pages of Tarom, Blue Air, Wizz Air, Lufthansa, Austrian Airlines, KLM International and Air Europa on a one week period (10th February – 18th February 2014) and successful practices on social media. The paper also aims to provide solutions for airlines to better connect with their passengers and effectively use the social media environment to increase sales and customer satisfaction.

Keywords: *customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, social media, social networks, airline companies, response rate, Facebook,, Tarom, Blue Air, Wizz Air, Lufthansa, Austrian Airlines, KLM, Air Europa.*

JEL Classification: *M11, M30, M31*

1. Introduction

In the last 2 years, the fast-growing industry of technology has developed opportunities for companies to create and implement different communicational strategies by using social media networks. For an industry like aviation, communication is essential in establishing a win-win relationship for both the company and the customer, eventually increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty. The increase usage of smartphones, tablets or any other devices for communication, changed the way customers search for information, how airline companies promote their services or products and most important the way in which information is shared and how it gets to the customers. Social media is seen as an advantage for the aviation industry, mainly because information gets to the customers in short time and at low costs for the airline companies. Living in a tech-geek era, people tend to spend a huge amount of time on social networks in search for more information on their favorite topics and this includes following the airline companies for offers, latest news or even to take part in different competitions.

From the customer perspective, social media has created a link between them and the airlines. Time being precious, the customers want their problems to be solved in the less amount of time possible and with

great accuracy, therefore increasing loyalty and trust for that particular brand. From the airline perspective, social media is a huge chance for getting real-time feedback from its customers, solve any question addressed to the social media team with the single purpose to differentiate the brand, building a profitable customer relationship. Also, from this perspective, social media can change the customers' faith in the brand, creating a belief in their decision when choosing the airline. Credibility comes from taking part and interact with the customers on the social media page, speaking their language, and often including different games and competitions so that the customers get to know the service and finally create a positive desire for flying. To achieve success, social media for airlines often implies active audience and engagement-worthy posts.

2. Literature Review

Becoming a modus vivendi of the 21th century, social media has facilitated a strong growth interaction between companies and customers all over the world. To understand social media as a marketing tool, we must first acknowledge what Web 2.0 is, a term that describes a new way in which end users use the World Wide Web, a place where content is continuously altered by all operators in a sharing and collaborative way (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Social media, also called consumer-generated media are a sub-group of new media defined by three characteristics: (a) they integrate telecommunications, data communications and mass communications into a single platform, (b) their content is interactive and (c) they are available in a digital form (Van Dijk, 2006). Xiang and Gretzel (2010) define social media as Internet-based applications that carry consumer –generated content which encompasses media impressions created by consumers, typically informed by relevant experience and archived or shared online for easy access by other impressionable consumers. Same authors divided social media into (a) virtual communities, (b) reviews, (c) blogs, (d) social networks and (e) media sharing sites. *Virtual communities* are online places where users share their knowledge and experience in fields of common interest, *reviews* are online websites focused on rating and reviewing places, products and services, *blogs* are personal online journals intended for general public, where authors analyze situations from their personal lives and present their opinions on various topics. *Social networks* are web-based services that allow individuals to construct public or semi-public profile with a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by other within the system. The last sub-group of social media are media sharing websites such as Youtube (Boyd and Ellison, 2007).

All of these media can be used for communications between airlines, customers and the public. Taking into account the direction of communications, three groups of social media can be identified (Grancay, 2013): (a) bidirectional social media, enabling mutual communications between airlines, customers and the public. Facebook and Twitter are social media that allow all users to add content and all users can reply. For example, airlines inform public about important latest news and other users can share the information and also comment it. In this case, all users can ask questions regarding their problems and airlines as well as other users can reply ; (b) airline-to-public social media, also known as A2P are those used for one-way communication from airline to the public, in which customers cannot leave any feedback but can share, re-post or even email airline's posts; (c) public-to-public social media, also known as P2P which is similar to A2P, but instead of an airline, the page is administered by a different user who can post airline-related content. In this category, blogs, virtual communities, airline rating websites and media sharing platforms can be included.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, 61) define social media as a „group of Internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user generated content". The unique aspects of social media and its immense popularity have revolutionized marketing practices such as advertising and promotion (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011). Social media has also influenced consumer behavior from information acquisition to post-purchase behavior and due to the disadvantages of social media in connecting businesses to end-consumers directly, in a timely manner and at a low-cost (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) in influencing customers perceptions and behavior and in bringing together different like-minded people (Hagel & Armstrong, 1997; Wellman & Gulia, 1999) it has become the center of attention in different industries. The much higher level of efficiency of social media compared to other traditional communication channels prompted industry leaders to state that companies must participate in Facebook, Twitter, Myspace and other in order to succeed in online environments (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

It is vital for retailers and marketers to be aware of the factors that affect consumer attitudes and motives because consumers and increasingly creating content about brands, something previously controlled solely by companies (Heinonen, 2011). Chu (2011) also found that users who are Facebook members maintain a more favorable attitude towards social media and advertising. Di Petro and Pantano (2012) found that the

fun provided by Facebook, as well as the opportunity it provides users to ask for suggestions in an easy and entertaining way, motivates individuals to pay more attention to the products or services promoted on Facebook. Facebook promotes a consumer to consumer approach, exploited by consumers to share experiences and create a common knowledge on products and services, on the other it provides managers a direct channel for communicating with clients through a business to consumer approach. Companies tend to improve their Facebook pages appeal by adding games, contests and interactive applications, which attract more users.

3. Research Methodology and Data Collection

The purpose of this research is to analyze the comparative content of the Facebook pages of the Romanian-based airline companies and western European carriers and the different marketing strategies adopted by each airline. For the Romanian companies, there was no criteria established, proposing Tarom, Blue Air and Wizz Air for analysis. For the western European companies, two selected airlines must operate on at least 2 airports in Romania with its branded-aircrafts and not being in the same airline alliance as Tarom, selecting Lufthansa and Austrian Airlines for analysis. For the last two western European companies, one company must operate on at least 1 airport with its branded-aircrafts, while being in the same alliance as Tarom, proposing KLM International for analysis and for the last company, it must operate in Romania through codeshare agreements, while being in the same alliance as Tarom, proposing Air Europa for analysis. The data was collected using own research, Socialbakers and Quintly website, on a one week period, from 10th of February – 18th of February 2014 and it aims at analyzing the number of likes, daily posts (category), average number of posts, average likes, comments and shares, response rate and wall posts.

Table 1. *Total number of fans per page (10th February 2014 – 18th February 2014)*

| Airlines/ Date	10.feb	11.feb	12.feb	13.feb	14.feb	15.feb	16.feb	17.feb	18.feb
Air Europa	57361	57426	57487	57538	57593	57625	57661	57702	57758
Austrian Airlines	201945	202092	202254	202444	202595	202706	202869	202990	203103
Blue Air	36919	36925	36945	36964	36981	36986	36999	37007	37033
KLM	5095038	5119793	5144297	5174614	5199363	5215k	5232k	5249k	5266k
Lufthansa	1526457	1527506	1528562	1529744	1530777	1531k	1532k	1533k	1533941
Tarom	30547	30584	30612	30640	30696	30782	30819	30842	30875
wizzair.com	273715	274090	274395	274801	275137	275333	275517	275728	275959
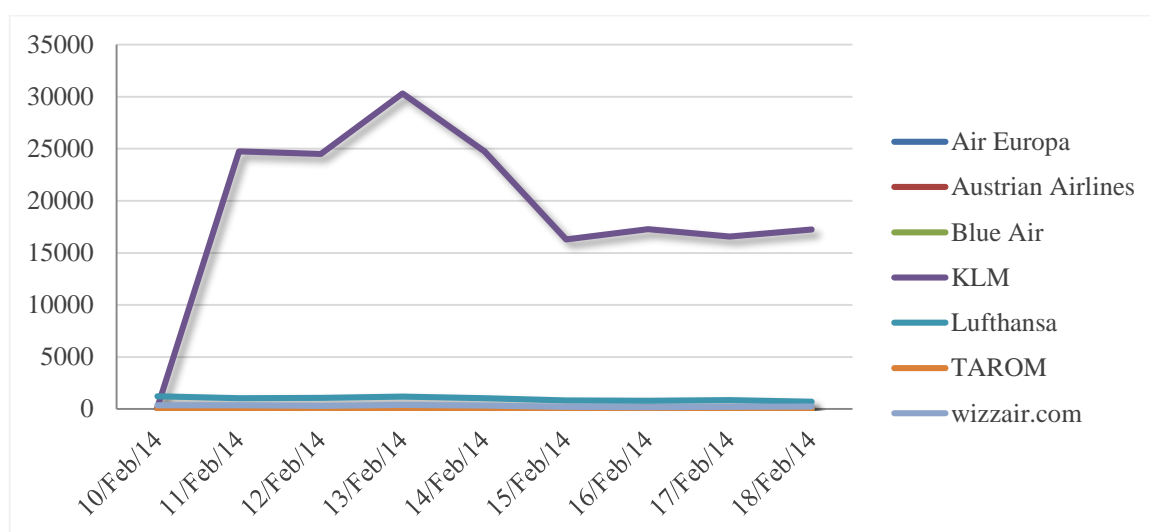
Figure 1. *Number of fans - growth (absolute)*

In the analyzed period, Tarom recorded the lowest number of fans on Facebook while KLM recorded the highest number of fans, passing 5 million. Both Romanian-based companies, Blue Air and Tarom recorded under 50.000 fans on Facebook while Wizz Air, with headquarters in Budapest, but strong operations in

Romania recorded over 250.000 fans on Facebook. For the western European companies, KLM, Austrian Airlines and Lufthansa overpassed 200.000 fans, while Air Europa could be included in the same category as Romanian-based airline companies. The highest growth (absolute) of fans in the period was recorded by KLM on the 13th of February, 30.317 more fans, followed by Lufthansa on 10th of February, 1.229 more fans on Facebook. The other companies recorded around 100 more fans on their Facebook pages, with Blue Air being the lowest performer with just 5 more fans on the 13th of February.
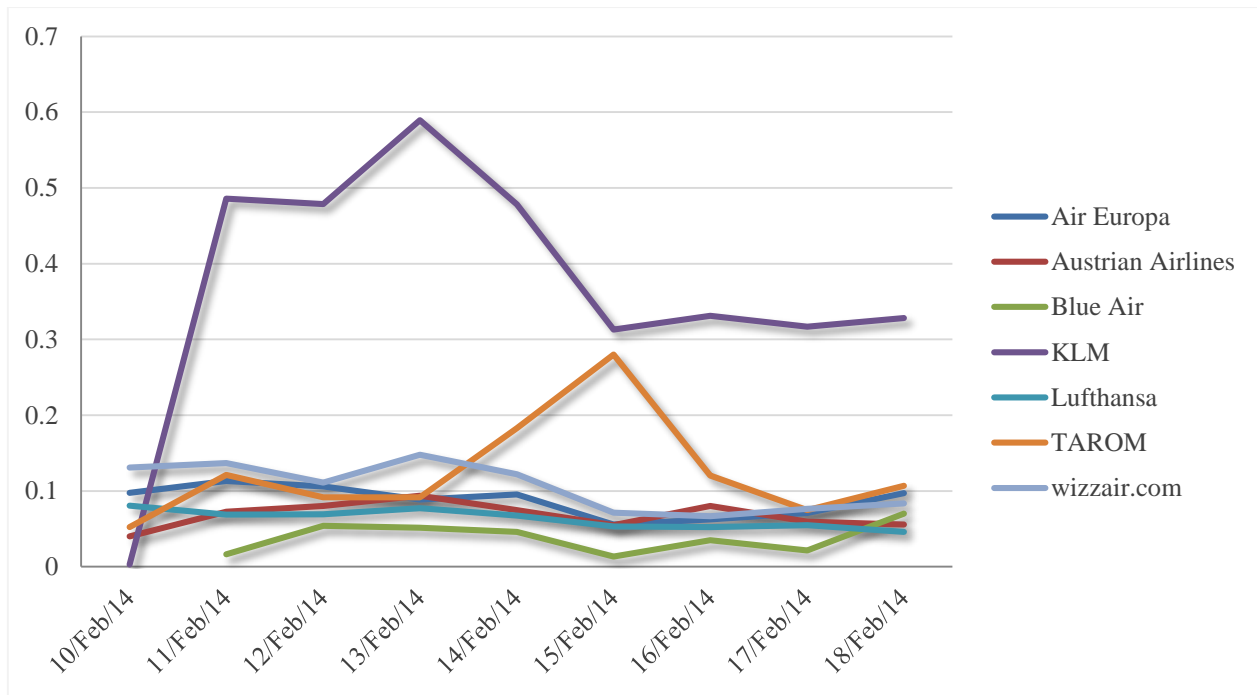
Figure 2. *Number of fans - daily growth (%)*

The strongest performer based on the daily growth is again KLM with the highest growth recorded on the 13th of February, 58.93%. The weakest performs are Blue Air, Austrian Airlines and Lufthansa with a growth below 10%, while Tarom highest growth was 28.01% recorded on the 15th of February 2014.
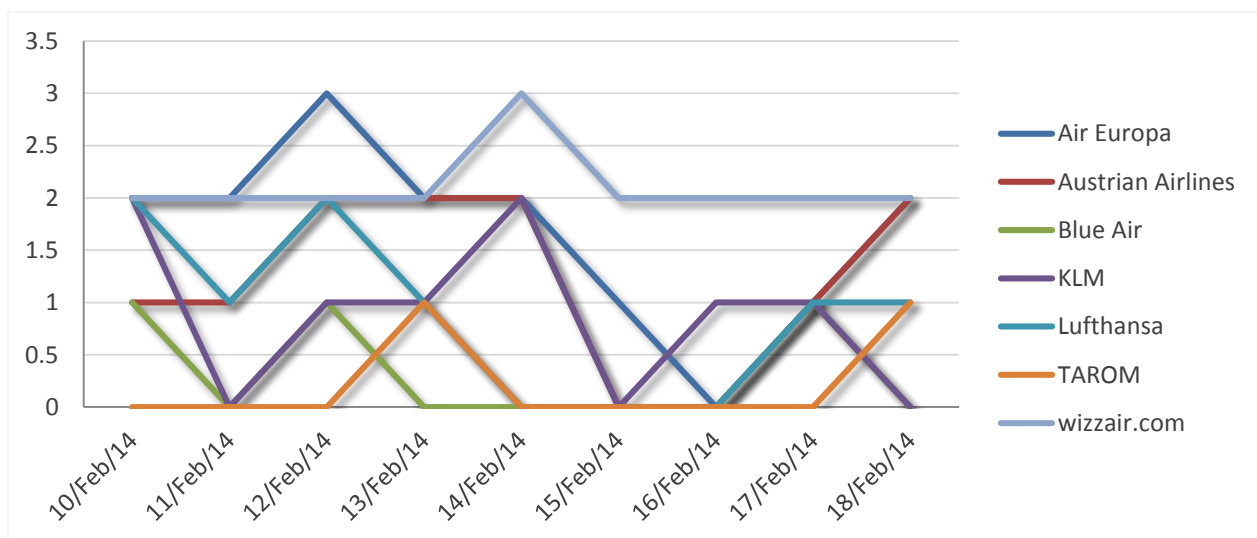
Figure 3. *Daily number of posts (absolute)*

In the analyzed period, 66 posts were recorded on the Facebook pages. Air Europa gathered 15 posts with at least 2 daily posts, Austrian Airlines 11 posts, Blue Air 3 posts, KLM 8 posts, Lufthansa 8 posts, Tarom 2 posts with Wizz Air being considered the strongest performer with 19 posts. Again, there is a clear cut

distinction between the usage of social media between Romanian and western European airlines, the Romanian airlines (except Wizz Air) are the weakest performers when the number of posts is taken into account.

Figure 4. Type of posts

Figure 5. Number of posts in categories

Fig 6. Type of posts – airline analysis

Figure 7. Number of comments
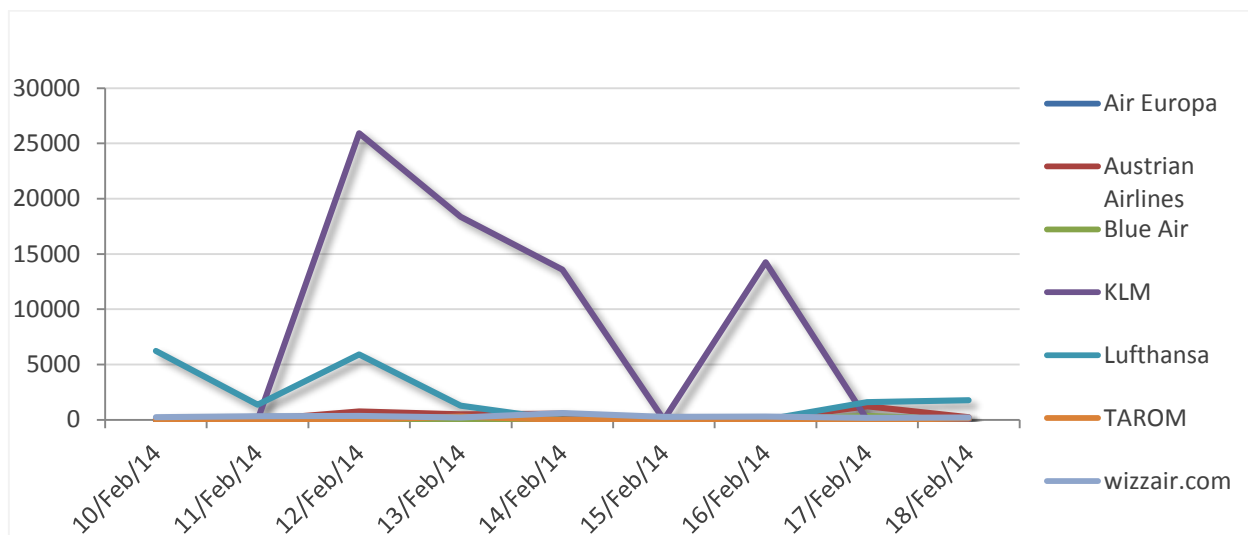
Figure 8. *Number of likes*
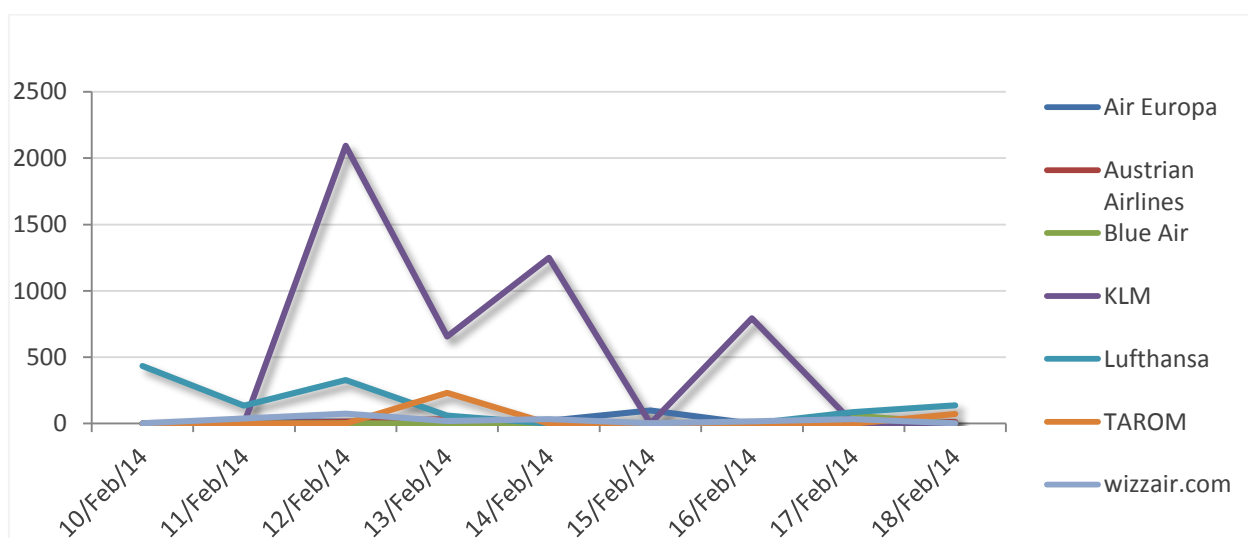
Figure 9. *Number of shares*

In the period analyzed, the airline companies in their Facebook online marketing strategies used photos (86%), videos (6%), status (5%) and last links (3%). The total number of posts were divided into 3 categories: sales steering (destination promotion, new route announcement, discounts) – 32% of the total posts; customer engagement (quotes, 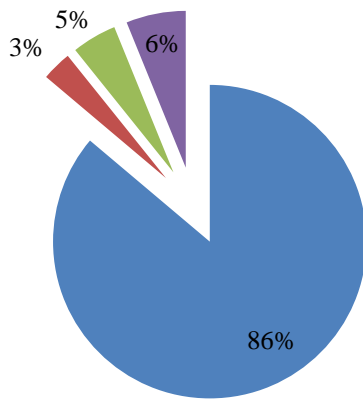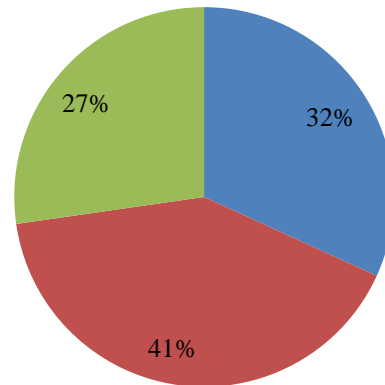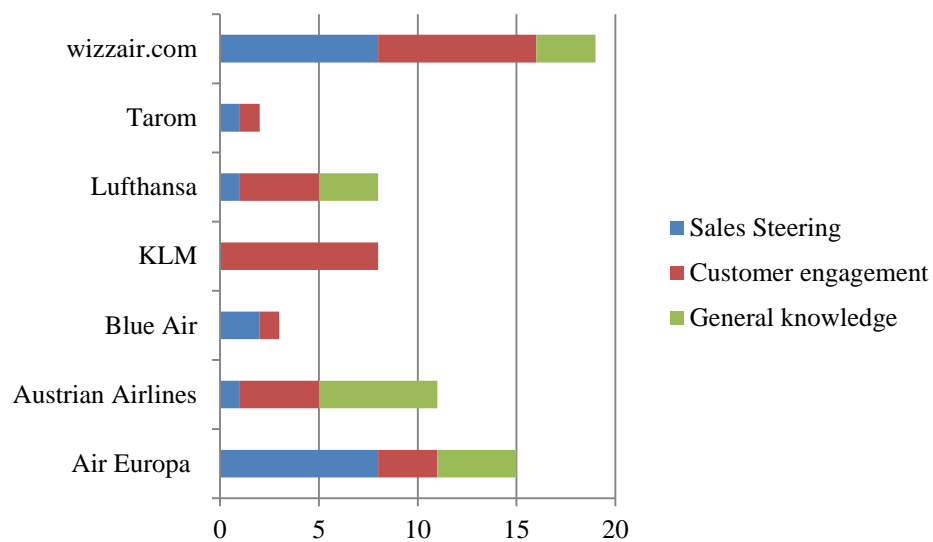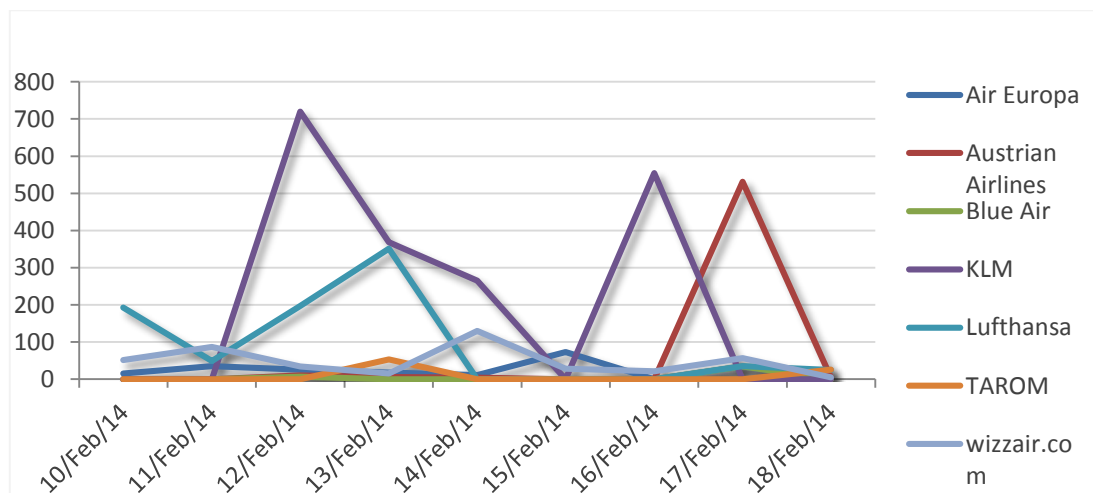questions, fleet presentation, service promotion, prize competition) – 41% of the total posts; general knowledge (aviation facts, activity presentation, job offers) – 27% of the total posts.

Considering the type of posts by every airlines, Wizz Air strategy focused on sales steering and customer engagement rather than general knowledge, Tarom strategy focused on sales steering and customer engagement in a balanced way, Lufthansa focused on customer engagement and general knowledge rather than sales steering, KLM only on customer engagement, Blue Air on sales steering and less on the other categories, Austrian Airlines focused on general knowledge and customer engagement and less on the sales steering and Air Europa on sales steering and general knowledge and less on the customer engagement.

Analyzing the number of comments, KLM and Austrian Airlines are the top performers with posts reaching over 500 comments, followed by Lufthansa with around 300 comments for its viral post. KLM is the top performer when likes and shares are analyzed, reaching over 25.000 likes and almost 2.100 shares on 12th of February 2014, considered a peak day for viral posts. Lufthansa is the next performer with almost 5000 likes and roughly 400 shares on a top day. Even though Wizz Air has the highest number of posts, it reached only 75 shares on the 12th of February 2014 and 342 total shares on the same day. The Romanian companies performed less than western European companies, Tarom reaching only 307 likes on the 13th of February 2014

and 230 shares on the same day while Blue Air reached only 355 likes on the 17th of February 2014 and 59 shares on the same day.

Figure 10. Engagement matrix
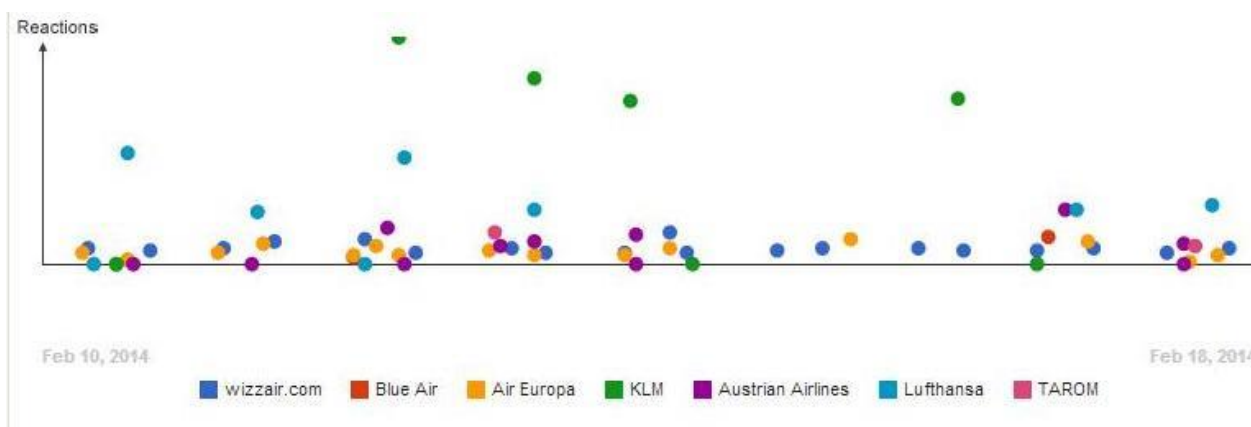
Figure 11. Posts reaction

The engagement matrix shows a higher usage of pictures, which triggers a higher customer engagement. The posts reaction clearly shows that KLM's and Lufthansa's posts triggered more reactions than any other company. The higher the dot, the more reaction the post triggered.

4. Results and Recommendations

Tarom's usage of Facebook is extremely low and doesn't have a specific strategy given the low number of posts. The company doesn't allow its customers to post on the page wall but rather comment the posts, which doesn't create any sense of loyalty and the brand doesn't deliver its promise to the customers. Given the high number of foreign travelers, the company posts are mainly in Romanian language and should focus offering in both English and Romanian languages. The response rates is extremely low, around 30% (Socialbakers analysis) and with a response time over 4 hours. The Facebook page offers application for online reservations, promotional offers and offers the possibility for customers to send private messages.

Blue Air usage of Facebook resembles to Tarom's page, offering posts just in the Romanian language, with a low response rate, around 30% (Socialbakes analysis) and a response time over 4 hours. The Facebook page offers application for online reservations, offers the possibility for customers to send private messages or write wall posts for a better communication.

Wizz Air, the company with the highest number of posts, is not offering the possibility to send private messages or write wall posts. However, posts are available in English and some customized posts for regional

areas such as Bulgaria or Serbia are written in the local language. The response rate is 100% (Socialbakers analysis) with a response time just under one hour to increase customer satisfaction. The page offers application for complaints or compliment, find an available job or prize competition.

Lufthansa usage of Facebook is well-organized, focused on customer engagement with no possibility to send private messages but offers the chance to write wall posts. The response rate in 100% (Socialbakers analysis) with a response time under 2 hours available only in English and German languages. The page offers application such as Ask Lufthansa, Flight track Collection or Prize Competition for a better brand awareness.

Austrian Airlines usage of Facebook is well-organized as Lufthansa, focuses more on general aviation knowledge with the possibility to write wall posts, send private messages, with a response rate of 100% (Socialbakers analysis) and a response time under 2 hours available in both English and German languages. The page offers applications for online reservations, newsletter subscription, red blog guide, reviews and prize competition.

Air Europa usage of Facebook is customer-oriented with at least 2 daily posts, with the possibility of sending private messages, write wall posts, with a response rate of 100%, but with a time response of over 4 hours. Posts are only available in Spanish, focusing on a single region, but with the possibility to receive feedback in both Spanish and English languages. The page offers application for complaints but no possibility to book a ticket via Facebook or subscribe to a newsletter.

KLM is probably the best airline company on Facebook when it comes down to innovation and creativity. With over 5.2 million fans, the page does not offer the possibility to send private messages but allows wall posts, with a response rate of 100%, a response time around 1 hour and a 24/7 online assistance. The posts are only in English (the company has other regional pages) but responses are offered in 10 languages to assist as many nations as possible. The page offers applications such as book a trip via Facebook in under 5 minutes, flight status, KLM Trip Planner, Videos, KLM Passport or even application for reviewing Fly Magazine.

The difference between the Romanian-based companies and western companies derives from high social media penetration in Western Europe with more technology-oriented companies with a high desire to understand customers and a most deep understanding of the market and the desire for a fast communication. Tarom and Blue Air, along with Wizz Air should focus on their customer desire for a high response rate, increase brand-awareness by adding mind-blowing posts which encourages customers to engage in certain conversations with the company and other travelers. Unlike the western based companies, Tarom and Blue Air lack creativity and should better connect with their passengers by adding value to their pages, involve passengers in different prize competitions, offer responses in at least 5 languages to meet fast-growing travel demand and review online strategy by adding daily posts to decrease dissatisfaction, deliver the brand promise and finally have happy customers with a strong desire to fly with the company. Facebook strategies for Romanian-based companies should focus on sales steering, increase brand trust by promoting how the company works for the passengers, how safety is promoted and how flying with them will change perspectives. Contests and free tickets are no longer enough to drive engagement, and every airline with a desire to perform will have to stay ahead of the competition by identifying key business goals, like loyalty. A new bridge between social media and real-world relationship needs to be built as customers are more connected to social media than ever. Airlines should build a strong relationship with the connected traveler, especially when it comes to having in-flight Wi-Fi on-board the aircraft, meaning that travelers are well-connected throughout their journey. If a passenger experiences something unpleasant during the flight, he is likely to post it on Facebook, along with a photo and the social media team should be able to respond properly and be connected even during flight. In this way, customer service is delivered in a manner close to real-time in order to maintain brand affinity. Romanian companies should build face-to-face relationships with online users that they have been interacting with, mainly because real-world relationships can go a long way in building online advocates. For a successful strategy, social media should build a bridge between the company and the real-time travelers who want problems to be solved as quick as possible, while maintaining a strong and efficient interaction.

5. Conclusion

In a world that craves for better connectivity and fast communications, airlines try to adapt to the market changes and build a long-term relationship with its passengers on both online and offline environments. A highly competitive market such as the aviation industry where the switching cost between airlines is non-existent for the customers, requires a well-based social media strategy to create a favorable environment for communication. The base of success for every airline is a fast response rate on social media, creativity, mind-blowing ideas. Every front-runner adopts innovation in its strategies to make a difference on the market and

allows its passengers to be a part of the company, an important key for better changes in the industry. Social media for airlines and passengers means efficiency, interaction and most of all emotional needs, states, attachment and aspirations.

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Sales Promotion in the Marketing of Telecommunication Services in Nigeria: Impact Analysis

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The adoption of sales promotion in the marketing of telecommunication services in Nigeria is common among the front line GSM service providers. This however does not yield the much assured increasing return on investment, hence is unprofitable and the required fund for the expansion of infrastructure base of operation is not earned, and serve rendition is as a result poor. Studying the impact of sales promotion on patronage based on the data sourced and analyzed using Likert's ranking scale, questionnaire and analysis of variance (ANOVA), the work discerns and concludes that the high level of illiteracy based on quantitative rather than qualitative education high level of poverty as well as high rate of rural dwelling are challenges to the expansion of the level of consumption of telecommunication services even at the offer of sales promotion incentives. Recommended is a good quality marketing research with consumers as thrust point for efficiency in market segmentation as basic in the adoption of sales promotion strategy.

Keywords*: Sales promotion, telecommunication, perception income, illiteracy, rural dwelling, marketing research and market segmentation*

JEL Classification*: M31*

1. Introduction

Most economies, developed and developing are showing interest in information and communication technology (ICT) as thrust for economic growth and development and for positive impact on citizens' quality of life. In the midst of the ICT aspirations, Nigeria is challenged by poor level of infrastructural development, low level per capita income, high level of rural urban population and high level of illiteracy-BBC News (2007 July 11), Nkanega (2007) and Onah (2007). Hence the development of the know-how for building content, and applications considered vital for social, educational, political and economic interactions as bases for the consumption of the services of the telecommunication industry have been poor.

In the presence of this circumstance, the government has initiated and executed liberalization policies and exercises in the telecommunication industry that are challenges to its ability to wire the country, with the additional struggles to meet the attendant regulatory and governance challenges for network service providers. In between the government as platform for telecommunication service provision and the consumers of the services-as GSM operators. The need to satisfy the government regulatory requirements and the service consumers with good quality services for high level service turnover as basis for

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profitability is challenged by the unwillingness and inability of the consumers to make demand. Thus service provider are compelled to adopt sales promotion marketing strategies to stimulate service consumption.

Frame Work of the Study

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is considered a factor index in Nigerian's strive for economic development through growth. Given this, government policies have been much in the area of addressing the challenges to comprehensive ICT infrastructural development as hub for social economic liberalization. These policies have spurred up indigenous and foreign firms' collaboration, direct foreign investments and franchise investments that have attracted national long distance communication operators, wireless access network operators, interconnect exchange operators, internet exchange operators and internet service/solution providers – Xinhua (2007) as well as unified access network providers – Nweke (2007).

Based on the availability of these ICT services, the consumption level has multiplied in GSM and CDMA base solutions respectively - Adekoya (2007) as well as internet and mobile subscribers respectively - Balancing Act News Update (2007).

The increase in demand for the services of these GSM providers has spurred up increase in cost of service provision far beyond measure, thus service providers are caught in the webs of service failures, poor service quality, law suits instituted by dis-satisfied service consumers among others – Funso (2007), AAGM (2007) and ANC (2007), resulting from inability to generate enough fund in the midst of regulation in service charges. Following this, marketing warfare exist between the firms in the telecommunication industry and the popular tool (weapon) of this warfare is tailored around price as service charge with its cardinal issue as sales promotion.

This work is thus focused at identifying the challenges to adopting the tool (weapon) of sales promotion in the telecommunication industry of Nigeria.

Significant of the Study

Literature exist on the study of the relevance and challenges to the adoption of sales promotion in different facets of domestic durable and non-durable items of exchange both in the developed and developing economies. These include Vyas (2007), that appraised the role of sales promotion practice in the apparel retail sector of India and associated future challenges; Liu (2007), on the long term impact of loyalty programs on consumer purchase behavior and loyalty; Meyer-Waarden and Benavent (2006), on the impact of loyalty on Repeat Purchase Behavior based on the behavior scan single source panel; Kincade et al. (2012), a study of Buyer-Seller relationships for promotional support in the apparel sector, Deeter-Schmeltz et al. (2000); and Hyllegard et al. (2005) that x-rayed the perception of Spanish consumers of US apparel specialty-retailers products and services. These studies have their thrust as perceptions of market intermediaries; comparative of foreign retailers and local market target, longitudinal sourced data for convenience store franchise; and offering frequency and perceptions of importance. None of these studies considered the peculiar characteristics of the target market as seller market advantaged, high level rural-urban density base and high level of quantitative rather qualitative literacy rate as basic characteristics of consumers of telecommunication services in Nigeria- BBC News (2007), Nkanga (2007) and Onah (2007).

Based on these, this work is considered significant as it assesses the impact on sales promotion of the consumption behavior of Nigerians as target market for telecommunication services given the fact that more than 50% of Nigerians live below the poverty line (BBC News, 2009), 70% of the country's populations dwell in the rural areas (Nkanga, 2007) and 85% of the 60 million adults in Nigeria under the age of 35 can neither read nor write (Onah, 2007).

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to ascertain the impact of sales promotion on the sales volume and value of telecommunication services in Nigeria; however the subsidiary objectives include:

- To determine the impact of the low level of per capita income situation in Nigeria on the consumption of telecommunication services in the face of the adoption of sales promotion.
- To determine the impact of the high level of rural – urban dwelling rate in Nigeria on sales volume and value of telecommunication services given the adoption of sale promotion tool by service vendors.
- To determine the impact of the high level of quantitative rather qualitative education on the turnover of GSM providers given the adoption of the tool of sales promotion.

Hypotheses

The work is based on the following hypotheses stated in their null form.

H_{01}: The low level of per capita income in Nigeria has no significant impact on GSM service providers offer giving the adoption of sale promotion incentives.

H_{02}: The high level of Nigeria population as rural dwellers does not have significant impact on the consumption of telecommunication service given the offer of sales promotion incentives,

H_{03}: The high illiteracy rate in Nigeria does not have significant impact on the acceptance level of the service of GSM providers given the available promotion incentives

Methodology

The study has its scope as the six geopolitical zone of Nigeria with an acceptable Pareto ratio of 7:3 sample populations between the rural and urban dwellers. This ratio makes it possible to have fair character representation of poverty rate and level as well as level of academics attainment. Copies of questionnaire were administered to the sample population and were supported with oral interview schedule. The copies of questionnaire were ranked based on the Likert ranking scale and analyzed using statistical tool of analysis of variance (ANOVA) –Ezejelue et al. (2008).

Organization of the Study

The work is organized under sub-headings of introduction, made up of frame work of the study, significance of the study, objectives of the study, research hypotheses and methodology of the study; literature review; analysis; findings; discussion of research findings; conclusion and recommendations.

2. Literature Review

For GSM service providers to spur up demand for their market offer as means to enhanced profitability, the tool of sales promotion is considered vital. This is because of the relatively low level of business initiatives, low level of poor capita income, high level of illiteracy among others common among the Nigeria communities that constitute over 70% of the market for the offer. Thus Nigeria subscribers need to be motivated to loyalty based on incentives.

2.1. Characteristic of Sales Promotion:

Sales promotion as marketing incentives and inducements offered a target market has the potency of spurring up efficiency along the channel of product distribution based on staff force motivation for ultimate objective of turnover enhancement based on increase in product demand (Oko, 2002); therefore it is targeted at the members of corporate sales force (personnel); members of the marketing intermediaries and the ultimate consumers. Organizations adopt the tool of sales promotion as aid to building brand loyalty, given its ability to attract loyal and profitable customers and to protect the product vendor from competition, especially as it grants the vendor greater control in the planning and blending of the marketing mix elements (Shira, 2003).

Firms adopt sales promotion tool as weapon of warfare for securing and enhancing marketing share, given the degree of market competitive (Odunlami and Ogunsiji, 2011), hence it is cost involving in terms of planning and execution (Preko, 2012). Thrust issues of sales promotion are generation of turnover, stock file disconnection (elimination), enhancement of vendor's image and the creation of price image (high-low). (Vyas, 2007).

In the Nigeria telecommunication service market, like in most other sectors, sales promotion aids the vendor manage the perceived financial, social and psychological risks associated with product consumption-Oko (2013), Oko and Etuk (2012) and Oko and Egwu (2014) as consumers develop confidence in the offer, as acquired from accredited vendor(s); product usage confirming to the societal norms and are within the technological awareness and acceptance level of the society and as accepted brand are offered for sale during a defined sales promotion marketing period.

These characteristics of sales promotion, if positively integrated and efficiency adopted yield functional publicity in favour of the vendor and the product, based on functional word of mouth communication - Vyas (2007), Oko (2013), Kotler and Armstrong (2010) and Kotler and Keller (2010).

2.2. Application of the Tool of Sales Promotion

The ability to determine sales promotion target market leads to the selection of the target audiences – sales force, marketing intermediaries or ultimate consumers to receive the sales promotion messages, as well

as the role of sales promotion in the integrated (total) marketing communication (promotion) effort of the organization within the defined time frame. This provides answers to:

- What is the role of product users, influencers and purchasers in the product buying decision process and buying process, and
- What purchasing groups of individuals make purchase decision (Luck and Ferrell, 1979).

For sales promotion inclined market offer; the decision is often in favor of pushing the product the promotion messages and efforts to the ultimate consumers through the marketing intermediaries whose corporation must be gained. This accounts for the use of sales agents in the marketing of telecommunication services in Nigeria.

2.3. Sales Promotion (Effectiveness Measurement) Evaluation and Control:

It is important to establish control mechanism in the exercise of sales promotion as means of ascertaining its adequacy or otherwise, and for the purpose of checking excessive, wasteful or irritating marketing warfare actions (Krugman, 1975). Sales promotion as an intra-element of promotion complements other marketing mix elements, thus its effectiveness is measured using either or a combination of economies of scale; threshold effect and interaction effects (Lilien et al. (1976), in the face of good marketing intelligence activities, inclusive of marketing research activities tailored around a good systematic method of performance data collection and collation (Luck and Ferrell, 1979). This measurement should be based on clearly determined objectives of sales promotion exercise; comparing sales promotion performance as actual results with expected performances as stated objectives and the evaluation and improvement of overall effectiveness of the utilization of sales promotion research results and managerial judgment –Cravens et al., 1976).

Contrary to this projection, vendors measure the impact of sales promotion activities by assessing sales volume and value during promotion period, some others assess this based on the rate of decline in number of calls by buyers, or/ and average bill size during promotions period among others (Vyas, 2007). Only very few however assess the level of profit made during promotion relative to the cost of profit generation Vendors do not go beyond these as measures of sales promotion effectiveness, as a result of paucity in ability at data collection and collation. This is compounded by the inability of the firms involved in sales promotion at isolating the effect of different promotions events in situations of promotion overlap as well as the impacts of other elements of marketing on sales volume and value.

2.4. Challenges of Sales Promotion in Nigeria:

Generally, the impact of sales promotion on sale volume and value is only on the short run; as it does not build market offer brand nor sustain market loyalty. Given this, market performance does not have linearity in relationship with the different market periods' sales activities. The seasonality of the characteristics of sales promotion tailored around communication, provision of incentives and calls to defined target market to engage in transaction-Kotler (2003), are valid within a specific time frame.

The level of awareness in Nigeria is low given the high level (rate) of quantitative rather than qualitative education that has given rise to low level of marketing awareness and knowledge assimilation rate. Corporate marketing policies in price and pricing issues, product design and formulation, distribution and general promotion do not create the desired impact on the target market. Hence the expense of sales promotion and policy issues have remained of least significance to different target markets (Ewah and Ekeng, 2009).

It is on record that Nigeria is one of the nations with lowest per capita income globally –Bureau of Statistics (2013), and BBC News (2007, July 11). This situation constrains the ability of Nigerians to exploit the benefits associated with the adoption of sales promotion both from the vendors' and target markets' points of view. In addition to this, is absence of active competition among firms inter and intra industrially. Most firms in different industries adopt collusive oligopolistic competitive marketing principles and strategies thus; sales promotion activities are poorly executed.

The gross absence of competition has significant negative impact on the rate of macroeconomic development. Given this, the catalytic activities necessary for spurring up the acceptance of sales promotion as marketing warfare tool and strategy are not considered relevant. This is evidenced by the poor level of the nation's per capita income-World Development Reports (2010) and National Bureau of Statistics (2012).

3. Analysis and Data Presentation:

The per capita income as a variable influences the level of education attainment as well as level of awareness and the status of the people. This is also exhibited in the place of residence of the people; and access to and the use of the services of telecommunication.

Based on the foregone, this analysis has it thrust as assessing the impact of the peoples' per capita income, level of quantitative and qualitative education/knowledge and ratio of rural urban population on the acceptance and adoption of the use of telecommunication services as offered and spurred based on the entrance of sales promotion.

Analyses:

Analyses of data in this work are built around the relationship between sales promotion as an independent variable and per capita income, rural population density and high level of illiteracy as dependent variables in relation to the acceptance of telecommunication services offered based on sales promotion incentives. These are presented thus:

3.1. Test 1: Test for the impact of low per capita income in Nigeria in the acceptance of telecommunication services based on the use of sales promotion incentives.

Data base of the analysis is presented in table 1.

Table 1. Low per capita income and the Rate of Acceptance of Telecommunication service Offer Based on Sales Promotion

Basis	Firms	Agent	Consumers
Availability of basic infrastructure for telecommunication	21	16	14
Availability of office, school and home basic technologies for telecommunication	18	15	12
Cost of telecommunication consumables	15	18	14
Cost of telecommunication skill acquisition	17	18	16
Technological choice & developments	16	15	13
Telecenters in development	8	6	4
Compliance to telecommunication policies, trade & regulations	30	26	24
The demand by people for telecenter services	40	36	40
Poverty level	28	26	27
Total	**193**	**176**	**164**
Mean	**21.4**	**19.4**	**18.2**

Based on Likert's ranking scale, the decision rule that serves as guide to decision is as follows,
- ➢ Accept Projected Statement: If and only if the value calculated as mean is greater than the accepted mean of 50 (fifty) percent
- ➢ Reject Projected Statement: If otherwise

Projected Statement: The demand for telecommunication services is high in Nigeria given its accompanying sales promotion offer.

Analysis: Based on calculation in table 1, the firms in telecommunication service marketing, their agents and consumers assessed the rate of telecommunication services acceptance given sales promotion inducements at 21.4%, 19.6% and 18.2% respectively.

Decision: The ratings of the firms, agents and consumers as marketers and consumers of telecommunication services respectively are below the fifty (50) percent acceptance mean. The decision therefore is that the demand for telecommunication services is low in Nigeria given its accompanying sales promotion inducements.

To test for significance in mean difference or otherwise between the rating of the three groups of respondents at 0.05 level of confidence. The hypothesis is re-structured thus:

H_0: ($\mu_1=\mu_2=\mu_3$) there is no significance difference between the rating of the vendors, their agents and consumers on the impact of sales promotion inducements on the demand for and consumption of telecommunication services.

H[1]: ($\mu_1 \neq \mu_2 \neq \mu_1$) significant difference exists between the rating of the vendors, agents and consumers on the impact of sales promotion inducement on the demand for and consumption of telecommunication services.

Where μ_1, μ_2 and μ_3 are means of the rating of the three groups of respondents.

Given $f = \dfrac{V_b}{V_w} = \dfrac{between\ groups\ variance}{within\ group\ variance} = \dfrac{S_B^2}{S_W^2}$, where $V_B = \dfrac{SSB}{df_B}$ and $V_W = \dfrac{SSW}{df_W}$

The computation of f - ratio is shown in table 2.

Table 2. *Computation of f-ratio; rating of impact of sales promotion indumenta on the demand for telecommunication services in Nigeria given the low level of per capita income*

Vendor Firms		Agents		Consumers	
X_A	X_A^2	X_B	X_B^2	X_C	X_C^2
21	441	16	256	14	196
18	324	15	225	12	144
15	225	18	324	14	196
17	289	18	324	16	256
16	256	15	225	13	169
8	64	26	36	4	16
30	900	26	676	24	576
40	1600	36	1296	40	1600
28	784	26	676	27	729
$\sum X_A = 190$ $\overline{X_A} = 21.4$ n = 9	$\sum X_A^2 = 4883$	$\sum X_B = 176$ $\overline{X_B} = 19.6$ n = 9	$\sum X_B^2 = 4038$	$\sum X_C = 164$ $\overline{X_C} = 18.2$ n = 9	$\sum X_C^2 = 3882$

$Grand\ Mean = \dfrac{21.4+19.6+18.2}{3} = 19.7$

$SSB = 46.35$

$SST = 2,408.35$

$V_B = \dfrac{46.35}{2} = 23.175$

$V_W = \dfrac{2362}{24} = 98.41$

Substituting for the formula f-ratio
$f = \dfrac{V_B}{V_W} = \dfrac{23.175}{98.41} = 0.23$

A summary of the ANOVA is shown in table 3.

Table 3. *Summary of ANOVA*

Source of Variation	df	Sum of Squares SS	Mean of Square MS	f-cal	Critical Value of F	Significance	Decision
Between groups	2	SSB 46.35	V_B 23.18				
Within groups	24	SSW 2362.08	V_W 98.41	0.23	4.53	Not significant	Reject H[1]
Total	26	2408.35	12.59				

At 0.05 level of significance, the critical value of F is given as 4.53 f < f0.05 (4.53) H[1] is rejected. The conclusion is that there is no significant difference between the rating of the vendors of telecommunication services, their agents and consumers on the impact of high level of poverty in Nigeria on the demand and consumption of telecommunication services based on sales promotion inducements.

3.2. Test 2: Test for the impact of the high level of rural urban population in Nigeria on the demand for telecommunication services based on its offer using sales promotion inducements

Data for this test are presented in table 4.

Table 4. Assessment of the acceptance rate of telecommunication services as presented given sales promotion inducements

Basis	Firms	Agents	Consumers
Weak domestic coverage and last mile connectivity	22	20	21
Poor level of business activities	18	16	14
Under developed nature of schools, offices and pubic structures	16	18	20
High level of unemployment	18	16	16
Low level of social network of relationships	20	22	24
Poor and irregular supply of power supply for energizing telecommunication base of operation	18	16	18
Poor attitude of rural dwellers to telecommunication services	16	18	20
Expensive nature of telecommunication infrastructure and high cost of service	18	18	16
Unaffordability of the basis for consuming telecommunication service, phone, computer and internet connectivity	19	18	16
Total	**165**	**162**	**165**
Mean	**18.3**	**18.0**	**18.3**

Based on Likert's ranking scale, the decision rule stated as follows serve as guide:
➢ Accept projected statement: If and only if the value calculated mean is greater than the accepted mean of 50 (fifty) percent
➢ Reject Projected Statement: If otherwise

Projected Statement:
The high number of rural dwellers in Nigeria does not have significant negative impact on the consumption of telecommunication services given the offer of the service based sales promotion incentives.
Analysis:
From the calculation as shown in table 4, it is discernable that the level of consumption of the services of telecommunication vendors is low in Nigeria based on the high level of rural density in spite of the fact that the offer is based on sales promotion inducements. These calculations are at 18.3%, 18.0% and 18.3% are all below the 50% acceptance mean value.
Decision:
The rating of firms, as vendors, their agents and consumers as marketers and consumers of telecommunication services respectively in Nigeria are below the 50(fifty) percent acceptable mean. The decision therefore is that the high number of rural dwellers in Nigeria has significant negative impact on the consumption of telecommunication services even at the offer of sales promotion incentives by vendors.

To test for the level of significance or otherwise in the mean difference assessment of the vendors, agents and consumers of telecommunication services at 0.05 level of confidence, the hypothesis is re-structured thus:

H_{02}: ($\mu 1 = \mu 2 = \mu 3$) there is no significant difference between the assessment of vendors agents and consumers on the impact of high level of rural dwelling rate on the consumption of telecommunication services as offered based on sales promotion incentives.

H_{12}: ($\mu 1 \neq \mu 2 \neq \mu 3$) significant difference exists between the assessment of vendors, agents and consumers on the impact of high level of rural dwelling rate on the consumption of telecommunication services as offered on sales promotion incentives.

Where $\mu 1$, $\mu 2$ and $\mu 3$ are mean ratings of the three groups of respondents.

Given $f = \dfrac{V_b}{V_w} = \dfrac{between\ groups\ variance}{within\ group\ variance} = \dfrac{S_B^2}{S_W^2}$, where $V_B = \dfrac{SSB}{df_B}$ and $V_W = \dfrac{SSW}{df_W}$.

The computation of f-ratio is shown in table 5.

Table 5*. Computation of f-ratio, rating of the impact of sales promotion inducements on the demand for telecommunication services in Nigeria given the high level of rural dwelling ratio.*

Vendor Firms		Agents		Consumers	
X_A	X_A^2	X_B	X_B^2	X_C	X_C^2
22	484	20	400	21	441
18	324	16	256	14	196
16	256	18	324	20	400
18	324	16	256	16	256
20	400	22	484	24	276
18	324	16	256	18	324
16	256	18	324	20	400
18	324	18	324	16	256
19	361	18	324	16	256
$\sum X_A = 165$	$\sum X_A^2 = 3053$	$\sum X_B = 162$	$\sum X_B^2 = 2148$	$\sum X_C = 165$	$\sum X_C^2 = 3105$
$\overline{X_A} = 18.3$		$\overline{X_B} = 18.0$		$\overline{X_C} = 18.3$	
n = 9		n = 9		n = 9	

$Grand\ Mean = \frac{18.3 + 18.0 + 18.3}{3} = 18.2$

$SSB = 0.54$

$SST = 140.54$

$V_B = \frac{0.54}{2} = 0.27$

$V_W = \frac{140}{24} = 5.8$

Given this, substituting for f-ratio formula is thus:

$f = \frac{V_B}{V_W} = \frac{0.27}{5.8} = 0.05$

A summary of the ANOVA is shown in table 6.

Table 6*. Summary of ANOVA*

Source of Variation	df	Sum of Squares SS	Mean of Square MS	f-cal	Critical Value of F	Significance	Decision
Between groups	2	SSB 0.54	V_B 0.27				
Within groups	24	SSW 140.0	V_W 5.8	0.23	4.53	Not significant	Reject H_1
Total	26	140.54	6.35				

At 0.05 level of significance, the critical value of f is given as 4.53. Since f < fo.05 (4.53), H1 is rejected. The conclusion is that there is no significant difference between the assessment of vendors, agents and consumers on the high level of rural dwelling in Nigeria on the consumption of telecommunication services, give the offer of sales promotion incentives. The impact is on the negative as consumption rate does not increase significantly.

3.3. Test 3: Testing for the impact of the high illiteracy rate in Nigeria on the consumption rate of telecommunication services at the offer of sales promotion incentives.

Association data for this assessment is shown in table 7.

Table 7*. Illiteracy rate and consumption of telecommunication services as offered based on sales promotion incentives*

Basis	Firms	Agents	Consumers
High rate of illiteracy	21	20	18
Lack of awareness of the need for information	20	18	20
Inability to communicate in writing in local language (language barriers)	18	18	18
Inability to code information for transaction as text	19	20	16

Inability of information recipient to de-code text messages	16	18	20
Smallness in scope of business activities	19	18	16
Limited official working period	16	20	22
Total	**129**	**132**	**130**
Mean	**18.4**	**18.9**	**18.6**

Assessing for the impact of the indices of illiteracy rate on consumption of telecommunication services as offered, using sales promotion tools, based on Likert ranking scale, and the decision rule of:
➢ Accept Projected Statement: If and only if the value calculated is greater than the accepted mean mark of 50 (fifty) percent
➢ Reject Projected Statement: If otherwise.

Projected Statement:
The high level of illiteracy rate in Nigeria does not have significant negative impact on the acceptance rate of telecommunication services, given the availability of sales of promotion incentives
Analysis:
Table 7, shows that sales promotion as its inducements does not cause Nigerians to increase their patronage for the telecommunication services given their high level of illiteracy and associated challenges. Given this the telecommunication services firms assessed sales promotion induced patronage at 18.4%, agents at 18.9% and consumers themselves at 18.6%.
Decision:
Based on the ratings (18.4%, 18.9% and 18.6%) that are below the acceptance mean score of 50%, the decision is to reject the projected statement that high level of illiteracy rate in Nigeria does not have significant impact on the acceptance rate of the services of telecommunication firms given the availability of promotion. Hence, the high level of illiteracy rate in Nigeria has significant impact on the acceptance rate of the service of telecommunication firm.
For the purpose of testing for significance in difference or otherwise between the assessments of the three groups of respondents on the acceptance rate of telecommunication service at 0.05 level of confidence, the hypothesis is re-structured thus:
H_{03}: ($\mu 1 = \mu 2 = \mu 3$)   there is no significant difference between the assessment of service providers, their agents and consumers on the impact of the high rate of illiteracy rate in Nigeria on the acceptance of telecommunication services as offered based on sales promotion incentives.
H_{13}: ($\mu 1 \neq \mu 2 \neq \mu 3$)_ significant different exist between the assessment of service providers, their agents and consumers on the impact of the high illiteracy rate in Nigeria on the acceptance of telecommunication services as offered based on sales promotion incentives.
Where $\mu 1$, $\mu 2$ and $\mu 3$ are mean ratings of the three groups of respondents.

Given $f = \dfrac{V_b}{V_w} = \dfrac{between\ groups\ variance}{within\ group\ variance} = \dfrac{S_B^2}{S_W^2},$ where $V_B = \dfrac{SSB}{df_B}$ and $V_W = \dfrac{SSW}{df_W}$.

Based on the foregone, the computation of f-ratio is shown in table 8.

Table 8. Computation of f –ratio, the rating of the impact of high level of illiteracy on the demand for telecommunication services given the accompany sales promotion inducements

Vendor Firms		Agents		Consumers	
X_A	X_A^2	X_B	X_B^2	X_C	X_C^2
21	441	20	400	18	324
20	400	18	324	20	400
18	324	18	324	18	324
19	361	20	400	16	256
16	256	18	324	20	400
19	361	18	324	16	256
16	256	18	324	20	400
19	361	18	324	16	256
16	256	20	400	22	484
$\sum X_A = 129$	$\sum X_A^2 = 2399$	$\sum X_B = 132$	$\sum X_B^2 = 2496$	$\sum X_C = 130$	$\sum X_C^2 = 2444$
$\overline{X_A} = 18.4$		$\overline{X_B} = 18.9$		$\overline{X_C} = 18.6$	
n = 7		n = 7		n = 7	

$Grand\ Mean = \frac{18.4+18.9+18.6}{3} = 18.6$

$SSB = 0.91$

$SST = 59.20$

$V_B = \frac{0.92}{2} = 0.46$

$V_W = \frac{58.27}{18} = 3.23$

Given this, f-ratio is calculated thus:
$f = \frac{V_B}{V_W} = \frac{0.46}{3.23} = 0.14$

Summary of the ANOVA is shown in table 9.

Table 9. Summary of ANOVA

Source of Variation	df	Sum of Squares SS	Mean of Square MS	f-cal	Critical Value of F	Significance	Decision
Between groups	2	SSB 0.91	V_B 0.46				
Within groups	18	SSW 58.27	V_W 3.23	0.14	4.59	Not significant	Reject H_1
Total	20	59.18	3.69				

At 0.05 level of significance, the critical value of f is given as 4.59, since f < f.0.05 (4.59), H_1 is rejected.

4. Conclusion

The conclusion therefore is that the high level of illiteracy in Nigeria and its associated problems has significant negative impact on the acceptance rate and level of telecommunication services as offered based on sales promotion incentives. However no significant difference exists between the assessments of vendors, agents and consumers of the services.

4.1. Findings
This work has the following as findings:
- In-spite of the offer of incentives based on sales promotion, the low level of per capita income in Nigeria makes it difficult for Nigerians to patronize the telecommunication service offer of the vendors relative to investment on sales promotion.
- The high level of rural dwelling is a challenge to the consumption of the services of telecommunication firms in Nigeria even in the presence of offer of sales promotion incentives.
- It is also evident, that the high level of quantitative rather than qualitative education with its high tendency to illiteracy is responsible for the relative lack of patronage for telecommunication services in Nigeria even in the face of sales promotion incentives offered by vendors.

4.2. Discussion of Findings
Literature and research findings show increase in revenue accruable to government as increase of taxes and levies following enhanced acceptance of telecommunication service and its core base of operation –Nigeria Tribune Newspaper (2004, July 16). This sector of the economy has been so attractive that it is considered second to the oil sector as National Revenue earner, hence investment in the telecommunication industry has increased, as well as the rate of intra industrial competition-Ndukwe (2003).

Advocates of increase acceptance of the telecommunication offer are of the opinion that the adoption of telecommunication services account for improvement in sectorial efficiencies especially productivity with reduction in transaction costs and service innovations that have improved the macro quality of life - Ndukwe

(2003), Diso (2006), Zaid and Popoola (2010) and Adeyinka et al. (2007). This quality of life enhancement is attributed to increase in private sector earning that has made it possible for people to own houses (Okello, 2007); more hither-to jobless people are employed courtesy of telecommunication services marketing - Mohombu (2000); the earning capacity of the populace of the macro society has also been enhanced as the telecommunication facilities aid market inter connectivity for better value for productive output (Okiy, 2003, and Phillipis, 2005), hence poverty level is reduced (Fasorandti, 2008).

In the area of health as an off shot of quality of life, telecommunication services as basis for educating people on health management (Okello, 2009) and in the education sub sector, the telecommunications facilities are increasingly being adopted for formal and informal learning – Zaid and Popoola (2010) and Vision (2010).

The telecommunication services have also enhanced the social life of people within neighborhoods- Adejummobi and Odumosu (1998), as children are influenced positively or negatively socially, Becker (2000), Subrahmanyam et al. (2000), Kraut et al. (1998) and Kraut et al. (2002) and Psychologically - Schields and Behrman (2000), hence people enjoy enhanced feelings of self-worth.

In the family circle, people employ the services of telecommunication to encourage and advice one another on issues on marriage, childcare and juvenile delinquencies as means of improving quality of life – Diso (2006) and Zaid and Popoola (2010). People have also been encouraged to led fulfilled spiritual life based on spiritual values and faith passed through the telecommunication media; as such harmony and peace of mind are secured in inter and intra family social and business relationships (Zaid and Popoola, 2010).

Governments have also been able to influence target audience positively based on information past using the telecommunication media as mass media based or customized; deficiencies of government are equally past across to concerned agencies based on the use of defined telecommunication media, as such the quality of life is positively influenced for macro social and economic development.

On the account of these impacts of telecommunication on the quality of life, telecommunication service providers have always targeted at defined and or the general market with their service offer and have always adopted the tool of sales promotion for enhanced market acceptance of these offers.

Research results show that these firms expend implicitly and explicitly to attract the target market without adequate consideration of the peculiar nature of the Nigeria market; especially as it relates to the poor level of per capita income. Though income is an important, but not limiting factor to ownership and use of mobiles as medium of telecommunication, ownership of mobile telephones is shown to be less skewed towards those with higher income than for field lines in some countries – Samuel et al (2005) not Nigeria. Poverty accounts for one of the obstacles to information accessibility in Nigeria (Zaid and Popoola, 2010). Unlike education at specific levels and states and road networks that are provided by government at tax payers cost, electricity and telecommunication services are investments of the oligopolists in Nigeria, thus are not free rather are expensive compared to the standards in the developed societies (Zhao and Kanamori, 2007).

In the study on why Home Net Too children make so little use of the internet's communication tools, the US Department of Commerce (2000 & 2002) asserts that the children have friends and members of extended family that are poor; thus conclusively, poor people do not typically have home internet assess.

Though standard of living is not equal to amount of spending but assessing Nigerians in terms of ability to acquire necessities, comforts and luxuries at individual or group levels as are required to maintain proper states or circumstances, Nigerians are generally poor (Asogwa et al., 2013). Standard of living measurement based on gross domestic product, human development index, satisfaction with life index and happy planet index do not show Nigeria as measuring up to global standards (Nieck, 2011). Poverty limits the rate of responsiveness of Nigerians to the sales promotion incentives as base for the marketing of the telecommunication services, thus telecommunication service providers in their effort at wooing service consumers to enhanced patronage are challenged. More than 50% of Nigerians live below the poverty line – BBC News (2007, July 11). On account of this, these telecommunication services providers record decreasing return to scale on their investments.

Records have it that expansion in the number of telephone lines grew exponential between the year 2000 and 2003 compared to the period between 1960 and 2000. As at 2003, Nigeria had attained over 3 million lines (2.3 million of this figure were digital lines), tele density was recorded at 0.4 lines per 100 inhabitants in 1999 and 2.6 per 100 inhabitants by September 2003 (Adeyinka et al. 2007), and 3.92 lines per 100 inhabitants in 2004. This was when the National Population was estimated at 140 million (Itu, 2004). These statistics show a poor and dysfunctional pattern of technology diffusion given the supposed growth and development in the industrial sector of Nigeria.

The poor level of acceptance of the technology of communication is attributed to high level of rural-urban population in favor of the rural area at the ratio of 7:3 (Nkanega, 2007 and Adeyinka et al., 2007). Rural areas in Nigeria are economically backward and show high level of unfavorable income disparity compared

with people dwelling in the urban areas, especially at household levels (Torimiro et al., 2005, Torimiro and Lawal, 2001) and Zaid and Popoola, 2010), thus are unable to access information considered useful for the management of challenges of daily living as well are unable to accumulate capital for small scale enterprises that serve as catalyst for the consumption of telecommunication services.

Providers of telecommunication services are spurred into sales promotion on the account that the numbers of mobile users is growing twice as fast as in developing countries as in developed countries-Vodafrne (2007), the question is how many of these persons that bear mobile phones make two (2) calls in a day. Most people especially rural women do not make calls throughout a period of 3 months; however they receive calls from relatives dwelling in the urban areas. Rural people do not afford the consumable base of telecommunication services and the electronic bases are most often gifts from relatives and friends.

Statistics show that the impact of urban migration from the rural area occasioned by the high level of poverty creates demographic in-balanced population of women, young children and older people (Crutsourka, 2004) who lack the basic necessities of life such as food, shelter, clothing among others (Zaid and Popoola, 2010 and Adeyinka et al., 2007). Based on this assertion, it is logical to conclude that those who cannot afford basic necessities of life will not and must not have saved money to re-charge their phones even when the phones they bear are gifts from friends and relatives.

This work is of the opinion that it is not an economically acceptable decision nor profitable for providers of telecommunication services to enhance the adoption of sales promotion (incentive based) strategy for the marketing of telecommunication consumables in Nigeria as returns on such investments record either a constant return or decreasing return to scale. This accounts for why the service providers are not able to satisfy the regulatory conditions of operation nor satisfy the basic need of regular supply of services across the nation. How can these firms break through without proper thought that 70% of the Nigeria population live in rural areas (Nkanga, 2007).

In this era of global growth in qualitative education, Nigerians are quantitatively educated with qualitative impact relegated to the background. Most people are capable to operate only a few operations/functions among the numerous functions in the different telecommunication electronics devices (making and receiving calls). The use of text messaging in the rural communities is much lower due to high level of illiteracy and the Nigeria indigenous languages are not basic codes of communication neither in writing nor in telecommunication device usage manuals. This, as supported by Vodafrne (2008) research results, has implications for other technologies that use the written word, such as internet. Zaid and Popoola (2010) assert that good education, knowledge of the information sources, the formats, linguistic and cultural behaviours and the type of occupation the information recipients are engaged in constitute factors that limit access to information especially based on the use of telecommunication in Nigeria where over 70% of the population are rural dwellers and greater number of the rural dwellers are subsistent farmers with little or no formal learning background, the use of telecommunication systems and their gadget is poor, therefore their patronage for telecommunication services offered based on sales promotion inducement is also poor.

In the marketing of telecommunication services and associated consumables, the service providers are yet to accord recognition to the fact that over 85% of the 60 million adults target market in Nigeria under the age of 35 can neither read nor write (Onah, 2007), hence assessing the impact of internet on and potential contribution to social economic development, Nigeria is said to have strong international bandwidth, but weak domestic coverage and last-mile connectivity. This suggests a relatively low performance in infrastructure (Busayo, 2013) base of telecommunication service provision.

It is difficult on this account to accept that sales promotion activities of telecommunication service providers in Nigeria are based on good quality marketing plans and decisions where mass marketing strategies are adopted in product planning and design, marketing promotion, pricing and distribution and logistics especially given the fact that 25% of rural dwellers in Nigeria lack access to telecommunication (Busayo, 2013).

A study of these sales promotion incentives based on the situation in Nigeria reveals the reasons for the poor patronage of telecommunication source market offer in –spite of the associated inducements:

7078: Dear valued subscriber, recharge N1500 by today and get 25% bonus talk time Glo to Glo, Glo unlimited 2014./04/28.9.31am

7078: Dear valued subscriber, recharge N1000.with next 3 days and get 50% bonus talk time Glo to Glo Glo unlimited 2014/05/04/8.02am.

These sales promotion offers are presented using the platform of text message. Only very few Nigerians are literate enough to access and read text mails, some that are literate do not have time to study text mails.

The minimum wage in Nigeria is N17, 000.00. Some state governments pay what is referred to as "consolidated salary" where workers on grade level 1 do not earn more than N18, 000.00 per month and Directors on grade level 16 earn less than N80,000.00. per month. These has lowest and highest daily earnings as N600.00 and N2667.00 respectively are too low to attend to family needs for discretionary balance for telecommunication services as his wage structure is too poor that only a few persons may afford to recharge at N1000.00 or N500.00 at a stretch. Those who may afford to recharge at a stretch to earn the associated bonus may not have business opportunities for the utilization of the bonus offer as the business environment catalyst that spur of the consumption of telecommunication services are not present in Nigeria where social, education political and economic environmental interactions as basis for the consumption of telecommunication services are not poorly utilized. Most calls are family members based. This situation is worst in the rural areas.

These challenges to the consumption of the services of telecommunication services call for consumer marketing research, for good quality market segmentation as requisite for sales promotion incentives presentation

4.3. Conclusion

Economic growth for Nigeria like in most other economies is a function of efficiency in the integration of macro-economic variables which telecommunication is a part. The impacts of the adoption of the telecommunication network are evident in the improved quality of life of both urban and rural dwellers.

It is however important to note that the consumption of the services of the telecommunication industry does not show linearity in relationship with economic development in Nigeria, given the investment on sales promotion as platform for marketing of the service. This non linearity in relationship is attributed to the high level of poverty common in Nigeria, the high number of rural dwellers as well as high rate of illiteracy among the target market of these services of the telecommunication industry.

Following the above, it is important that vendors of telecommunication services in Nigeria should be involved in of marketing research as source of input for decision on market segmentation and targeting, as strategies for qualitative investment in sales promotion and for the achievement of increasing return to scale on investment rather than constant or decreasing returns.

4.4. Recommendations

The promising further of the telecommunication industry in Nigeria has attracted a few other service providers thus supply of services reasonably exceeds demand based on the fact of the high level of incidence of poverty and low literacy level. However in the midst of some technological hitches that have negative impacts on service efficiency rate, supply is projected as higher. To mop up this excess supply, vendors have always adopted the tool of sales promotion, with the entire market (universal) as target.

These mass market oriented marketing activities are considered non profitable, hence alternative strategies are advocated for. This is the essence of these recommendations.

Following World Bank recommendation –a systematic approach to the application of IT to the needs of rural communities –World Bank (1998), firms in telecommunication services provision should as a matter of importance:

- Identify the needs and priorities of Nigerians in the different sectors of industrial operations as well as domestic usage of telecommunication services.
- Determine the acceptable platforms that meet the information needs of the Nigerian populace with special bias for the urban-rural area dwelling density.
- Determine the gap difference between the intellectual capacity of the Nigeria populace and that necessary to operate, given the current weave in the telecommunication industry
- Devise strategies and techniques for the closing up of the gap based on the optimization of the features of the telecommunication service offer in favor of the target market.

Achievement of the optimized feature of telecommunication service lays in the qualitative and quantitative consumer research efforts, on the part of the telecommunication service providers that are aimed at determining the telecommunication service market size, market potential and market trends (Ogwo, 2012). These research activities should also identify telecommunication service consumers' motivation in Nigeria, their buying pattern, network providers and the level of inter and intra industrial competition.

Data base of these research exercises should be relevant, accurate, timely and valuable (Oko, 2002 and Ogwo, 2012) especially given the dynamic nature of the consumption behavior of Nigerian consumers in response to environmental variables-economic, social, psychological, technology and competition.

Research into the Nigeria telecommunication service industry with bias for consumers should size the consumers along the ultimate and industrial consumers and prioritize the purchasing power of these difference classes of consumers, their size of purchase in quantity, frequency of purchase and geographical disperse.

This study should unveil consumers' buying motive along rationality; emotionality and admixture of both as well as the level of specialized /technical knowledge consumer categories have relative to telecommunication services and the rate of sensitivity the different classes of consumers have to changes in price-as price elasticity of demand variable.

Firms in the telecommunication service industry should be able to determine the demographic, firm graphic and economic profiles of the target markets as means of ascertaining the markets' disposable and discretionary income as basis for planning sales promotion activities targeted at members of the telecommunication service providers' sales force, members of the market intermediaries and the ultimate consumers (Oko, 2013).

Equally important in sales promotion management in the telecommunication service industry is good quality geographic mapping that enables service providers take decision on the sitting of service centers, agents' selections, and storage facilities location as well as the planning of transportation and logistics activities.

Knowledge of this market should aid service providers segment the telecommunication market for adequacy in adoption of sales promotion tools and incentives given the measurably, accessibility, substantiality, differentiability and actionability of the market for benefit maximization (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010).

It is appreciated that the rural areas in Nigeria do not yield much total revenue for telecommunication service providers compared to the low density urban areas (Harris et al., 2001), it is expected that incentive packages as part of the sales promotion programs for the rural Nigerians should aim at minimizing costs in terms of operating capital, operating expenses and maintenance costs. This must aim at recognizing the relative level of poverty of the rural areas.

Sales promotion activities in the telecommunication service industry must be believable especially given their incentive package and must address the economic appeals of the target markets (Okpara, 1999). Sales promotion should serve as a mix of elements in promotion and must be proceeded by advertising (Christopher and Cowell, 1970, and Sungo and Lin, 1978).

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Buying Intentions Influenced by Various Determinants in Tourism

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Marketing has acquired a central role in tourism because it helps organizations to create value in transactions with buyers. Thus, this important area of any business process is used to educate consumers, to add value to their experience in tourism, and to seek new ways to reward loyalty through innovative schemes (e.g., programs for frequent travelers). This paper presents the examination of the responses of 154 tourists in relation to their intention to purchase a travel package and the factors that are usually decisive in the decision making process regarding tourism services, factors that could also create the loyalty that any tourism enterprise can create through marketing.

Keywords: *purchase intention, consumer behavior determinants, customer loyalty, multiple linear regression*

JEL Classification: *M31*

1. Introduction

In tourism, the added value of the transaction becomes the basic concept in marketing, especially in the development of relationship marketing to build long-term relationships between customers and suppliers, with consistent quality and value of the predominate transactions, and the mutual benefits. For a travel company, this means it must develop the know-how for marketing and the necessary expertise to understand and properly interpret the needs of the consumer.

Therefore, tourism marketing should be a philosophy adopted in all business operations, so the basics of marketing (research, product, creating the value, promotions, etc.) have to be integrated around customer orientation. Tourism marketing requires all organizations to understand both short-term needs to attract consumers, but also long-term goals to retain them, and thus to improve their level of loyalty.

Loyalty in the tourism sector has been poorly studied; therefore there remain many questions about how to retain customers in the long-term. Tourism has seen the introduction of relationship marketing techniques and indeed has been in the vanguard of the industries that have adopted this focus. Nevertheless, the concept of destination loyalty has received little attention in the literature (Fyall et al., 2003; Yoon and Uysal, 2005) and neither have companies that offer different ways of accommodation.

Today destinations face the toughest competition in decades and it may become tougher still in years to come so marketing managers need to understand why tourists are faithful to certain destinations and what determines their loyalty (Chen and Gursoy, 2001). One might usefully ask whether a particular destination can generate loyalty in people who visit it. In this regard Alegre and Juaneda (2006, p. 686) hold that "some

tourism motivations would inhibit destination loyalty", such as, for example, the desire to break with the monotony of daily life, engage with new people, places and cultures or look for new experiences.

In conclusion, it is crucial for a tourism manager to research and understand the way in which consumers make decisions and the determinants that motivate and encourage tourists to make particular purchases, because this is the only way in which companies could gain loyal tourists and have a profitable business, which could surpass all the competitors from this complex area.

2. Customer Loyalty in Tourism

Since the 1990s there has been a large and growing interest in relationship marketing, within the broader field of marketing (Christopher et al., 1994). This has risen as a response to a new competitive era characterized by growing maturity, fragmentation, complexity, and intense competition in markets. At the same time customers have been seeking more personalized vacations and become more sophisticated and demanding, which has forced tourism enterprises to focus their efforts on the construction and maintenance of relationships with the various parties participating in the process of interchanges of businesses (customers, suppliers, competitors, divisions of the company and employees, nonprofit organizations, government, etc.) (Hunt and Morgan, 1994; Grönroos, 1999; Payne, 2000).

Riley et al. (2001) note that the literature on loyalty demonstrates a problem in its conceptualization, to be resolved by empirical means or operational definitions, depending on the purpose of the study. Loyalty is very difficult to define, but usually it appears when a customer continues to believe that the products or services offered by some particular company are their best option. It best fulfills their value proposition whatever that may be and they also take that offer whenever faced with that purchasing decision.

Yoon and Uysal (2005) note that destinations can be considered as products and tourists can visit them again or recommend them to other potential tourists such as friends or family. Chen and Gursoy (2001) operationally defined destination loyalty as the level of tourists' perception of a destination as a good place, one that they would recommend to others, noting that studies which only consider repeat visits as an indicator of loyalty to the destination are deficient. This occurs because those who do not return to a particular destination may simply find different travel experiences in new places, while maintaining loyalty to the previously visited destination.

Being aware of different factors that create loyalty in the tourism industry is the key in having a successful business. It is necessary to recognize what generates loyalty, different preferences of the targeted consumers, the factors and determinants that motivate them to come to the same travel agency. And in this way, the company could have a loyal customer base that will improve the profitability of tourism destinations and that particular firm.

Also, in this field, it very important to take into consideration that recommendations are not made only by the process word of mouth (WOM), but also by the recommendations via Internet (eWOM): websites, social networks, blogs, etc. These types of recommendations are becoming a challenge for academics or practitioners because in the online environment it is difficult to control them.

3. Determinants in the Decision Making Process in Tourism

Determinants are divided into two main categories: those variables which determine whether or not someone will be able to go on a holiday and those factors which determine the type of vacation, providing that the first set of determinants allows a holiday to actually take place. Determinants can be subdivided into: those which are personal to the tourist and those which are external to the tourist (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2003).

Personal determinants of tourist behavior are: (a) circumstances: health, disposable income, leisure time, family commitments, work commitments; (b) knowledge of: destinations, the availability of different tourism products, price differences between competitor organizations; (d) attitudes and perceptions: perceptions of destinations and tourism organizations, political views, preferences for particular countries and cultures, their attitudes to standards of behavior as a tourist; € experience of: types of holidays, different destinations, taking a trip with particular individuals or groups (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007).

These determinants will differ among tourists and depend on the time. Different individuals will perceive certain determinants to be more important than others, based on their attitudes, personalities, principles, fears, and past experiences. Even for the same person, these determinants will vary, depending on

different factors such as family situation, changes in age and experience as a tourist. Thus, these personal determinants could represent a market opportunity for the tourist industry.

Moreover, external determinants of tourist behavior are represented by: (a) political factors: government legislation and policy, immigration restrictions and visa requirements, civil disorder and terrorism, the nature of the political system, taxation policy, tourist taxes; the media - travel media (promotion through mass-media and guidebooks), and (b) non–travel media: news programs and wildlife programs on television); (c) tourism organization marketing: foreign destinations' advertising campaigns, tour operator's brochures, travel agent's special promotions (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007).

Tourist behavior is driven by their own personal determinants or external determinants, depending on their personality and lifestyle. People who enjoy outdoors activities and environment and social responsibilities could be more tented to take into consideration external factors when making a decision to purchase a travel package, while introverted people may be influenced by a series of internal determinants.

In the decision making process, these determinants could be facilitators (e.g., an appealing guidebook) or restraints (e.g., a limited budget) through tourists who want to transform their motivations and desires into reality.

4. Research Methodology
4.1. Research Context and Hypotheses
4.1.1. Research Instrument and Data Collection

The survey represented the research instrument for this article. Through the survey, we explored two main questions, in addition to three socio-demographic questions that were used for classification. Constructs used in the model are presented in Table 1 in terms of their conceptual and operational definition.

Table 1. Conceptual and operational definition of variables used in research

Question no. and dimension explored	Conceptual definition	Operational definition
Q1. Buying intention (Propensity to purchase a travel package)	Planned action of an individual to buy a travel package in the next year.	Not likely 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 Definitely
Q2. Preferred travel type	The preferred form of purchasing vacation packages.	Q2a. All-inclusive vacation (that included transport, accommodation, food, drinks) Q2b. Other holiday packages Q2c. Travel services purchased separately (different transportation from accommodation that may or may not be all inclusive).

The primary scope of this study is to understand the touristic behavior of consumers who intend go on a holiday in the next year. In this paper, we measured two interval constructs to examine the proposed relationships. An online consumer survey was developed and used for data collection, from January 4 to March 14, 2014. Primarily, 154 responses were gathered from different forums devoted to online shopping and social networks such as Twitter and Facebook. The profile of the respondents is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondents' profile

Sex	Age	Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Male	< 20 years	Pupils	2	100.0	100.0
	Between 20-25 years	Students	10	37.0	37.0
		Employee full-time	11	40.7	77.8
		Employee part-time	1	3.7	81.5
		Free independent	4	14.8	96.3
		Unemployed	1	3.7	100.0
		Total	27	100.0	
	Between 25-30 years	Employee full-time	9	100.0	100.0
	Between 30-35 years	Employee part-time	4	66.7	66.7
		Free independent	2	33.3	100.0

	Total	6	100.0		
Over 40 years	Employee full-time	1	100.0	100.0	
Total male respondents		45	29.2		
Female	< 20 years	Pupils	4	100.0	100.0
	Between 20-25 years	Students	63	69.2	69.2
		Employee full-time	23	25.3	94.5
		Employee part-time	2	2.2	96.7
		Free independent	3	3.3	100.0
		Total	91	100.0	
	Between 25-30 years	Students	1	12.5	12.5
		Employee full-time	6	75.0	87.5
		Free independent	1	12.5	100.0
		Total	8	100.0	
	Between 30-35 years	Employee full-time	3	60.0	60.0
		Free independent	1	20.0	80.0
		Unemployed	1	20.0	100.0
		Total	5	100.0	
	Over 40 years	Full-time employee	1	100.0	100.0
	Total female respondents		109	70.8	

5. Empirical Analysis and Results

To have a better understanding of the data we will be exploring, Table 1 and Table 2, to present the descriptive statistics for the questions and the answers of the respondents from Romania who participated in this online research on their exhibited tourist behavior.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for the propensity to purchase a travel package, in the next year

Q1.	Statistic	1 (Not likely)	2	3	4	5 (Definitely)	Total
Propensity to buy a holiday package in the next year	**Frequency**	18	35	33	29	39	154.0
	Percent	11.7	22.7	21.4	18.8	25.3	100
	Mean	3.23					

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for the preferred travel type

Q2.	Statistic	1 (Strongly disagree)	2	3	4	5 (Strongly agree)	Total
Q2a. All-inclusive vacation	**Frequency**	48	23	26	30	27	154
	Percent	31.2	14.9	16.9	19.5	17.5	100.0
	Mean	2.77					
Q2b. Other holiday packages	**Frequency**	17	39	42	38	18	154
	Percent	11.0	25.3	27.3	24.7	11.7	100.0
	Mean	3.01					
Q2c. Travel services purchased separately	**Frequency**	31	32	29	30	32	154
	Percent	20.1	20.8	18.8	19.5	20.8	100.0
	Mean	3.00					

Further, we will explore a widely used analysis technique. Regression analysis is a powerful and flexible procedure that used to study the association relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. This analysis technique can be used in various ways (Malhotra, 2007):

• to determine if the independent variable explains a signifying variance with regard to the dependent variables (if there is a relationship).

• to determine how much of the variation in the dependent variables can be explained by the independent variable(strength relationship).

• to determine the structure or form of the relationship: mathematical equation which is correlated with the independent and dependent variables.

• to predict values of the dependent variables.

• to control for other independent variables when evaluating the contribution of a variable or set of variables.

In this section I will apply a multiple regression which involves a single dependent variable (probability of buying a tourist package) and several independent variables that examined the types of services offered in a tourism package.

Thus, the dependent variable (propensity to purchase a travel package) for the multiple regression will be studied with three independent variables representing possible answers to question 1 of the questionnaire that measured three semantic differential scales. The scales examined the general premises of arranging a holiday, such as all-inclusive vacation (that included transport, accommodation, food, drinks), other holiday packages, or travel services purchased separately (different transportation from accommodations that may or may not be all inclusive).

Table 5 shows an indicator that measures how suitable the proposed regression model is in the research context. This indicator is called the coefficient of determination (R^2) which takes values between [0, 1]. As shown, nearly half (47.2%) of the variation of the variable that studied the predisposition to purchase a travel package in the next period is explained by the proposed model.

Table 5. Regression model for the predisposition to purchase a travel package and the preferred travel type

Model	R	R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.687[a]	0.472	1.255

In table 6, the ANOVA reports a significant F statistic (9.97) indicating that the use of the model is better than average approximation. The total variance of the model is divided into variation that can be explained by the independent variable of the model (the value of the regression line: 47.155) and the variation that cannot be explained by the independent variable (residual value: 236.43).

Table 6. ANOVA for the regression model for the predisposition to purchase a travel package and the preferred travel type

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	47.155	3	15.718	9.972	0.00
Residual	236.43	150	1.576		
Total	283.584	153			

In table 7 we can observe the predictors of the regression model and the model constant (the Y intercept, respectively the height of the regression line when it intersects the y-axis). In our case, the constant variable 0.910 represents the projected value for the propensity to purchase a tourism package, when all the other variables are 0. Then, coefficients of the regression model were determined in Table 7.

Table 7. The coefficients of the regression model for the predisposition to purchase a travel package and the preferred travel type

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t statistic	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	*B*		
(Constant)	0.91	0.471		1.933	0.055
Q2a. All-inclusive vacation	0.327	0.075	0.561	4.339	0
Q2b. Other holiday packages	0.265	0.086	0.332	3.096	0.002
Q2c. Travel services purchased separately	0.379	0.079	0.418	2.618	0.005

Based on table 7, we may determine the overall multiple regression equation to predict the dependent variable from the independent variables, as follows:

$$Y= \beta_0+\beta_1 x_1+\beta_2 x_2+\beta_3 x_3+...\beta_k x_k+E$$

Which can be estimated by the following equation:

$$Y'= a+b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3 + ... + b_k X_k$$

And, in this case, it becomes:

Y'= 0.910 + 0.327*All-inclusive vacation + 0.265*Other holiday packages
+ 0.379*Travel services purchased separately

Coefficient 0.327 for 'All inclusive vacation' denotes that an increase by a unit in this variable implies a forecasted increase by 0.327 in the predisposition to purchase a tourism package, while the other variables remain constant. Similarly, the other unstandardized coefficients can be explained. On the other hand, the standardized coefficients are the coefficients obtained by standardizing all variables in the regression model (both the dependent and independent ones).

The t statistic and the associated statistical test of significance are used to test whether a coefficient is significantly different from 0, using a standard level of significance of 0.05. The regression model is appropriate, and all the coefficients of the independent variables are significantly different from 0 for values of significance are less than 0.05. However, the constant variable exceeds the level of 0.05 slightly, indicating a level p-value of 0.055.

6. Conclusions
6.1. Theoretical Contributions

In the current context characterized by the fact that tourism is one of the most important industries in the world, the research that is the subject of this article sought to explore some dimensions of tourism behavior of 154 persons from Romania.

Consumer purchase behavior should be studied in terms of several models that arise during the buying process because it depends on various factors that may occur during an acquisition (e.g. type of holiday, the reasons and factors that determine a particular procurement, lifestyle, social position). Another restriction in terms of tourist products and services is intangibility of these offers, which often leads to doubts and uncertain decisions during the purchase. This is the reason why consumers can frequently listen to advice from friends, relatives, travel agencies or TV; these influences may cause some impediments for companies when studying tourism consumption patterns and habits.

In conclusion, the subject of consumer behavior is the principal instrument to the foundation of all marketing activities which is implemented to establish, promote, and sell different products and services. In order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of all marketing activities that interfere in the decision making process, companies have to comprehend how consumers take their decisions to purchase different products or services. If they alert with all the changes that may occur in the behavior of consumers, what motivates them or what determinates them to buy, then they will know when to intervene in the process to achieve the results that they desire and also who to target at a particular time with a specific product or service, that will surpass consumer's expectations.

Romania has a well-developed tourism potential, but unfortunately, currently, the means of country promotion are not very well used. The purpose of this paper is to provide new and improved insights into the behavior of tourists and the factors that influence the decision making process for Romanian tourists. Thus, I considered that any development that leads to better understanding and better promotion of tourism is welcomed. Also, future research should draw attention to the process of making the right decisions in this particular area and to understand how consumers respond to different variables. Mostly, it is important to study tourist behavior in relation to different types of tourism activities (mass tourism, niche tourism, and macro-niche tourism, which is further subdivided into cultural, environment, rural, urban, etc.).

6.2. Implications for Managers

In conclusion, it is crucial for a tourism entrepreneur to be conscious of the ways that he could transform his potential clients in loyal clients by using different forms of promotions, and also to use in his advantage the determinants that influence consumers to purchase, in order to have a profitable business.

Is essential for a company to satisfy the needs of their targeted consumers. In his distinguished work, Philip Kotler says that 'usually, the sales of a company comes from two groups: new customers and repeat customers (customers who are loyal to a company)'. An estimation shows that attracting new customers can

cost five times more than satisfying a customer who is loyal to the particular company. Also, may cost sixteen times more to bring a new customer at the same level of profitability that the one already lost.

Customer retention is therefore much more important than customer attraction. For this reason, it is necessary that tourism managers to fully understand all the dimensions that lead to the manifestation of a particular tourist behavior.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

The limits of this study include those commonly associated with online surveys, including unsystematic sampling procedures, low response rates, weak links between units of analysis and respondents. While the representativeness of the sample can always be improved, for this research particular efforts were made in order to obtain a high response rate and to have a sample which reflects the target population.

Besides the outlined goals, the present research has proposed a validation of the statistical methods used, but for the future it is recommended the improvement of the statistical methods used by performing some additional statistical tests to validate the statistical significance of the results and determine a representative sample (which in this research was not a principal purpose).

Especially in terms of consumer behavior in tourism, it can be argued in favor for a longitudinal study to track and confirm the model based on the behavior of a group of tourists. A cross-sectional study differs from the longitudinal research in the homogeneity of groups and the users' experience of purchasing tourism products.

Also, the research can be extended internationally to observe a comparison analysis between similar data from Eurostat and the opinion of tourists who live in different geographical areas and come from different cultures.

This research leaves additional new research directions that need answers. Future research will focus on the tourist market segmentation by holiday type or most important factors that are required by different groups of tourists. Thus, I will try to determine the profitability of business tourism compared to mass tourism, or leisure tourism, and the dimensions of consumer behavior that are triggered more strongly for efficient advertising campaigns targeted by these two types of tourism.

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