
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Rajagopal is a Professor of Marketing at the Graduate Business School (EGADE) of Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education (ITESM) in Mexico City Campus and Fellow of the Royal Society for Encouragement of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce, London. He is also Fellow of the Institute of Operations Management and Fellow of Chartered Management Institute. His biography is listed in various international directories including Who's Who in the World and International Biographic Center, Cambridge, UK, since 2008. He holds Doctoral Degree from Ravishankar University, India, and has been conferred the award of National Researcher Level-II of Mexican National System of Researchers.

Globalisation has driven most companies on focusing business development strategies towards matching and outperforming their competitors. Consequently, the strategies of firms with such orientation tend to take on similar dimensions setting the market-oriented and competitive dynamics. Such strategic moves of the companies drive head-to-head competition based largely on incremental improvements in marketing-mix constituents, quality of services and customer value. Conventionally, the marketing mix built around 'four Ps' comprising product, price, place and promotion served as a marketer's toolkit for success. However, these toolkit constituents have been enhanced and reinforced by the emerging companies with addition of 'seven Ps' including packaging, pace (dynamics), people (front liners), performance, psychodynamics, posture (corporate image and reputation) and proliferation (vertical and horizontal diversification). Market orientation is positively associated with performance of dealers in terms of customer service quality, growth in sales and increase in market share. Market orientation also has a positive influence on measures of cost efficiency, such as productivity and sales per employee. In addition, profitability measures are highly associated with operating effectiveness and cost efficiency. The adoption of a market orientation can help supply channels design and offer a service mix that is perceived by core customers as of superior quality, while making a profit and building competitive advantage (Rajagopal, 2009).

Market orientation positively influences customer-oriented behaviours of salespersons and supplier-oriented behaviours of purchasers. The behaviours of salespersons also have a positive effect on the customer's trust in, cooperative norms in and satisfaction with the relationship with the manufacturer. The behaviours of purchasers positively affect the supplier's trust and cooperative norms in the relationship.

The customer's perception of trust, cooperative norms and satisfaction positively influences the manufacturer's financial performance. The supplier's trust and cooperative norms in the relationship also positively affect the manufacturer's financial performance. An important managerial implication is that the manufacturer is partly dependent on the behaviours of purchasers and salespersons for using market orientation to build and maintain channel relationships. The recent research studies on market orientation suggest that companies need to rebuild the marketing machine by focusing on the key strategic issues that companies and marketers face in today's rapidly evolving, digitised marketplace to sustain the creeping competition (Crittenden, 2005).

Market orientation strategies in products and services marketing increase economic satisfaction of consumer with the channel, as it reveals competitive advantage in making the buying decision. A strong market-oriented strategy of the firm alleviates the possibility of using coercive influence strategies by the competitors and offers advantage to the customers over competitive market forces (Chung et al., 2007). However, market-oriented focus of companies inculcates industrial rivalry and drags them into the race of leading the market by pulling the competitors down. In this process often enhancing market share of the company attains higher priority over the consumer value. On the contrary, companies that develop customer-centric strategies gain higher market share by holding higher brand equity and customer values. Hence, identifying the customer-centric business model for addressing global customers and formalising that model into a global customer management programme is a key challenge for any firm with global aspirations. The key to success is embedding such strategies firmly within the firm's corporate strategy. Customer-centric approaches are practised efficiently by the call centres to connect the customer issues with appropriate and interactive solutions (Rajagopal and Rajagopal, 2010).

A firm with strong customer-focus beliefs strives in catering to the customer needs and delivering maximum satisfaction by ensuring a pleasant, positive and value-adding experience, which requires the commitment and support of the channel managers in integration with the corporate philosophy of the retailing firm (Jindal et al., 2007). In a competitive marketplace, companies invest enormous amounts of energy and capital in creating value for customers by segmenting buying behaviour comprising convenience, status and quality. Customer-centric strategies are the means of assuring that companies assess the value they create for customers and extract that value from the marketplace (Cross and Dixit, 2005).

A favourable combination of market orientation and superior customer services will lead to produce exceptional business performance, such as higher sales and profitability. A dedicated market-oriented dealer firm drives hard to maintain its sustainable competitive advantages by continually engaging in market-oriented efforts and making timely tactical adjustments that lead to improved performance by earning more customer value. Systematically explored concepts in the field of customer value and market-driven approach towards improving supply designs would be beneficial for a company to derive long-term profit optimisation strategy over the period. Customer needs should be appraised continuously by the managers and appropriate changes may be proposed in a timely manner, which would help in improving market effectiveness.

In this issue of the journal, five research papers have been included that are woven around the concepts of market orientation and customer orientation strategies observed by firms in competitive marketplace. Khare argues that service quality plays an important role in determining customer satisfaction based on empirical investigation in reference to

banking section in India. She finds that foreign banks try to establish their market leadership and develop customer-centric strategies considering the service quality expectations of the Indian customers. Furthermore, Félix González has raised an interested question in the paper about the role of globalisation towards development of local enterprises. She argues that local enterprises need a strong support from the government and society to sustain the impacts of globalisation at the bottom of the pyramid. Castaño et al. find through a qualitative investigation in context to Mexican consumers that for upper middle-level consumers, a financial crisis represents a great threat mainly because of the possibility of losing their jobs affecting the level of their consumption. Another paper authored by Bhattacharyya in this issue of the journal attempts to develop frameworks to explain the next strategic directions business firms will be necessitated to take because of the advent of Web 2.0 as a technology-led market-oriented strategy. The last paper in this issue authored by Flores et al. discusses about the scale that assesses employee organisational commitment and job satisfaction towards supervisor and the organisation in reference to an industry in southern Mexico.

We hope that the papers presented in this issue would contribute to the existing literature on business competition and related subjected and provide directions to the future research on the subject. The papers published in this issue demonstrate that research on business competition and growth has diversified scholarship.

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