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CUSTOMER SERVICE MARKETING AND CUSTOMER RETENTION IN AUSTRIA, POLAND, AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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ABSTRACT

Customer service marketing and customer relationship management have been shown to be important factors at influencing customer retention in the American marketplace for large organizations however the research on foreign markets is limited. Using three samples of small entrepreneurial businesses in Austria, Poland, and the Czech Republic we examine CSM programs and their influence on customer retention. The type of CSM and CRM programs used were found to have an influence on customer retention and there were also variations from country to country. The largest variations were found in the Czech Republic with differences in retention rates being more than twice as large as those observed in Poland and Austria.

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FROM CONCEPT TO COMMERCE: THE ROLE OF PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT IN THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

New product development and evaluation is a part of the modern marketplace, and the need for independent third-party evaluations of new products is already established. This study examines how these types of evaluators view the similarities and differences between goods at three levels of product development: invention, innovation and commercialization. Using an instrument created by Udell, O'Neill, and Baker (1977), the authors find that 28 of 39 criteria are able to correctly classify almost 95 percent of the study's cases and that these criteria can be grouped into seven factors describing both the potential downside of product acceptance and the skills needed to establish a product on the market. These 28 criteria seem to be assessed in a similar manner by evaluators, at least in part, with stage of development in mind, and the evaluator's ratings indicate commonalities between products at these three levels in terms of product and firm quality.

WHAT STUDENTS VALUE IN EVALUATING BUSINESS PROFESSORS

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses what students consider important in evaluating their business professors. Variables include speaking clearly, level of preparedness, knowledge of subject, relates subjects to real world, enthusiasm for subject, availability outside of class, fairness in grading, easily approachable, self-confidence, professionalism, excellent sense of humor, discusses research findings in class, makes students feel comfortable when asking questions in class, and encourages the students to think. This paper also identifies strategies that can be used by business professors to increase their popularity among their students.

INTRODUCTION

The author selected this topic because he is a business professor who is very interested in learning which factors are viewed as important by his students when they evaluate their professors. Professors are providing a service and it is recognized that it is more difficult to evaluate services than it is goods (Kerin, Hartley, Rudelius, 2010).

A number of studies have conducted over the years to identify attributes on effective business teachers. Enthusiasm for subject and preparation for class were identified as key attributes for effective business teachers (Hooper and Page, 1986). Rapport, delivery, fairness, knowledge and credibility, organization, and preparation were found to be important factors in teaching effectiveness of marketing instructors (Faranda and Clarke, 2004). Supportiveness and personality of the professor were found to be important attributes (Clayson, 1999).

METHODOLOGY AND SURVEY RESULTS

A focus group interview was conducted at a public university in the Midwest with eight students participating. The purpose was to identify and discuss variables students consider when evaluating faculty of business courses. Efforts were made to use a representative sample. Half of the participants were male and the other half were female students. One of the students was an athlete and another one was a veteran who had served overseas. There was a foreign student participating. Some of the students were excellent and some were not.

After the focus group interview was completed, the author wrote a survey that was administered to a group of students at the same public university in the Midwest to measure the importance of different variables in evaluating the quality of their business professors. A rating of 1 to 5 was used for each variable, with a rating of 1 signifying very unimportant and a rating of 5 indicating that it is very important when evaluating faculty.

The most important factor in evaluating business faculty is knowledge of the subject with a score of 4.9. The next two factors are level of preparedness and fairness in grading with a score of 4.7. Making students feel comfortable asking questions in class was next with a score of 4.6. The least important factor is discussing research findings in class with a score of 3.6. Exhibit one summarizes the survey results.

IMPLICATIONS

Business faculty should focus on demonstrating their knowledge of the subject because this is the most important criterion when students judge teaching effectiveness. This should not be done with discussing research findings because this was perceived as being the least important factor in evaluating teaching effectiveness. One suggestion for demonstrating knowledge would be to use a wealth of real world examples. This should convince the students that the professor has knowledge on the subject. The business professors could also discuss their consulting experiences in class. It is especially applicable if the companies are local and the students can better identify with the situation.

The business faculty members need to convey an impression that they are well prepared. Arriving to class a few minutes early and setting up in an efficient and neat manner should convey an air of preparedness.

It is important for the faculty members to be perceived as being fair with grading. It is suggested to give everyone in the class credit for a question when students can point out the lack of validity with a question. Even the best of professors can occasionally use a question that is confusing. Students react favorably when a professor admits to making a mistake and takes corrective action.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The author plans to administer the same survey to business faculty. It will be interesting to see how business faculty measure teaching effectiveness and compare it to student ratings. Another plan would be to administer the same survey overseas. That paper would compare the findings and discuss the implications.

Exhibit 1: Level of Importance in Evaluating Teaching Effectiveness of Business Faculty	
Knowledge of subject	4.9
Well prepared	4.7
Fairness in grading	4.7
Makes students feel comfortable asking questions in class	4.6
Speaks clearly	4.5
Encourages students to think	4.4
Relates subjects to real world	4.2
Enthusiasm for subject	4.2
Professional	4.1
Easily approachable	4.0
Self-confident	3.9
Good sense of humor	3.8
Availability outside of class	3.7
Discusses research findings in class	3.6
Note: 1 signifies not important and 5 means very important.	

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SOCIAL MEDIA FROM A CORPORATE PERSPECTIVE: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF OFFICIAL FACEBOOK PAGES

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ABSTRACT

When discussing advertising and marketing strategy today the discussion would be incomplete without considering the use of social media. What is social media and why should companies be considering establishing a presence in social media? The number of people who use social media is always growing rapidly. Given this tremendous growth, companies are scrambling to try and figure how to utilize social media to reach the millions of consumers who use it on a daily basis. This paper examines how companies use social media in their marketing and advertising strategy by content analyzing the official Facebook pages of 70 global brands. It appears that companies have recognized the need to establish a presence in social media but use a variety of approaches with their Facebook pages.

INTRODUCTION

When discussing advertising and marketing strategy today the discussion would be incomplete without considering the use of social media. What is social media and why should companies be considering establishing a presence in social media? Social media refers to “online tools where content, opinions, perspectives, insights, and media can be shared ... (and) at its core social media is about relationships and connections between people and organizations (Nair 2011, p. 45). These tools include blogs, widgets, discussion boards, wikis, vlogs (video logs), consumer product rating sites, chat rooms, and social network sites. Social media is becoming increasingly widespread and popular with consumers. Social network sites, which are the focus of this study, allow users to create profiles on the site, to post information and share that information and communicate with other users of the site (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). As of July 2011, the social network site Facebook claims to have over 750 million members and in terms of activity “There are over 900 million objects that people interact with (pages, groups, events and community pages), the average user is connected to 80 community pages, groups and events, the average user creates 90 pieces of content each month and more than 30 billion pieces of content (web links, news stories, blog posts, notes, photo albums, etc.) shared each month.” (www.facebook.com). The social network site LinkedIn had over 100 million members worldwide as of July 2011 (www.linkedin.com).

Social media is changing how individuals communicate with each other. Social media is highly interactive and users share and process information with others (Aula 2010). It is also changing where and how consumers spend their time. Consumers are accessing social media on

their desktops, laptops, and mobile devices. Given this tremendous growth, companies are scrambling to try and figure how to utilize social media to reach the millions of consumers who use it on a daily basis. Social media is unstructured and is focused on generating conversation and building community and may also have an influence on purchase decisions (Nair 2011).

While academic research exists on individual consumers of social media there has not been extensive academic research on what companies are actually doing in social media. Parise et. al. (2008) interviewed executives about their use of social media tools to generate some suggestions on how get the best results from social media. Jansen et. al. (2009) evaluated the content of posts or “tweets” on the micro-blog Twitter on corporate accounts and discovered that consumer purchases are influenced by web communications and social media. They also recommend microblogging as an opportunity for building brands and for developing relationships with customers. Colliander & Dahlen (2011) compared consumer reactions to blogs and online magazines and found that consumers exposed to information on blogs and stronger brand attitudes and higher purchase intentions. Phan (2011) investigated the use of social media for thirteen luxury fashion brands to determine if having a presence in social media influenced consumer perceptions of the brands and determined that social media had no impact on consumer purchase intentions or reputation.

NATURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Traditionally, advertisers had control over where their message was placed and when consumers would have access to it but with social media advertisers may be able to only control the initial placement of information but not be able to directly control how that information is disseminated once it is placed (Mangold & Faulds 2009). Consumer use social media to keep in touch with friends and family and also for entertainment and while doing so may also be exposed to ads placed by advertisers. For advertisers social media allows them to talk to their customers as with traditional media but unlike traditional forms of advertising the consumers can also talk directly to the advertiser and to an unlimited number of other consumers (Mangold & Faulds 2009).

Social media network sites allow individuals to create public or semi-public profiles within a system, to identify other individuals that they share a connection with and to view information about their connections within the system (Boyd & Ellison 2008). These profiles provide advertisers with a vast amount of useful information. Social media users also generate content, engage in peer-to-peer conversations, collaborate, and share, tag, edit, or create information (McAfee et. al. 2011). Consumers may also use social media to help them make decisions about purchases because they rely on recommendations from friends (The Economist 2009)

COMPANIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Companies are trying to encourage consumers to interact with them the same way they do with their friends and family. Today’s consumers almost expect companies to have a presence

online and in social media and the challenge for companies is how to get involved and establish a presence (Nair 2011). From a corporate perspective, social media presents both a challenge and a tremendous opportunity. Social media is not just another channel for distributing corporate information or an add-on to a firm's current media offerings because it allows consumers to interact and participate with companies and brands and allows them to share their opinions with others which helps to influence corporate reputations (Aula 2010; Nair 2011). Companies must keep in mind their strategic goals when making decisions to be establish a presence in social media and avoid creating a Facebook page or establishing a Twitter account just because everyone else has one without first determining strategically why these moves might be effective for the organization and what goals the organization wants to achieve (Bottles & Sherlock 2011; Phan 2011). Choosing the right social media tool depends on the target market, the message being delivered, and the level of control over how the message is disseminated (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010).

Social media can provide a variety of options for companies who wish to establish a social media presence. Due to its interactive nature, opportunities are available for companies to generate feedback from their consumers that can be helpful in product development, advertising campaign development, and marketing research (McAfee et. al. 2011). Companies can develop applications or "apps" that allow users to customize their profiles, share movie preferences, chart travel histories and share information with others (Boyd & Ellison 2008). Social media also offers a platform for serving customers, listening to customers, monitoring customer feedback, encouraging dialogue, and establishing connections (Nair 2011). Companies must also try to integrate their social media activity with their activity in traditional media to increase the likelihood that consumers will be engaged with their brand and to present a cohesive brand image (Mangold & Faulds 2009; Kapland & Haenlein 2010). Weinberg & Pehlivan (2011) examine the different types of social media and make recommendations on what types of social media might be most suited for achieving different types of marketing goals. Social network sites, for example, are effective for influencing and tracking consumer beliefs and attitudes related to products and brands, while microblogs are useful for creating awareness and brand recall for established brand and provide a fast option for companies to communicate brief information.

CONCLUSIONS

After evaluating the official Facebook pages of 70 global brands it appears that an encouraging number of companies (65 of 70) had established an official Facebook page at the time this study was conducted. Companies are using Facebook for a variety of purposes but the focus seems to be more on trying to develop relationships with consumers rather than on simply providing information. Facebook pages have a different look and feel to them than the typical website. On most of the official pages in this study, companies seem to control the wall content rather than allowing users to post directly on their walls without responding to a current posting. Companies post on average 24 times within a month which implies that consumers receive a

message in their news feeds from companies that they like every few days. Companies need to be conscious of not bombarding users with messages.

The type of posting varies. Some postings are product related and may either provide product information or ask users to talk about their experience with the product or vote on how they use the product or select their favorite aspects of the products. Fashion companies tended to have postings that showed celebrities using their products at prestigious events such as movie premieres and award shows. Polls and poll questions seem to be useful tools for marketing research. Most companies posted some form of video on their official pages. Videos of commercials offer an additional way to distribute advertising content beyond traditional sources. Content offering consumer incentives such as coupons, sweepstakes, and contents was also frequently used. This type of content gets consumers involved and may get them to purchase the brand which is the ultimate goal of most marketing efforts. Postings requesting feedback from consumers through multiple choice polls or by simply posing questions seem most appropriate for marketing research purposes.

Several companies have significantly large numbers of users who “like” them which suggests that the brand is popular but the sheer number of likes does not definitively measure sales figures or purchase intentions (Manjoo 2011). The like button seems most suited to determining the success of sales promotions such as contests, sweepstakes, and giveaways as participation rates can be compared to previous promotions.

Future research could examine whether Facebook users respond to information that appears in their newsfeeds, whether they notice advertising on Facebook, and whether they are interacting with brands on Facebook beyond initially clicking on the brand’s Like button. Research could also investigate whether exposure to social media content influences purchase intentions and actual purchases. While the number of consumers using social media is continuing to grow, it remains to be seen whether companies can effectively tap into this market.

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HEAVY VERSUS LIGHT USERS: A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR PATTERNS IN TWO LOW-INVOLVEMENT RETAIL SERVICES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to investigate differences in profiles between heavy and light users of two relatively low involvement retail services: fast-food burger outlets and convenience store. The findings indicate that heavy users, along with more visits to the services, have generally had experience with more brands in each of the retail service categories. Light users tend to concentrate their purchases in a smaller number of brands than do heavy users, indicating higher loyalty levels in light users.

INTRODUCTION

Many segmentation schemes are possible, most commonly lifestyles or demographics. However, volume segmentation may provide similar or better insights into understanding consumption (Twedt, 1964; Clancy & Shulman, 1994). The 80-20 rule suggests that a large proportion of business is derived from the heavy users in relation to the remainder of purchasers, emphasizing the importance of the heavy-light user research for companies in general (Cook & Mindak, 1994; Pareto & Page, 1971). Although, the conceptual development of the heavy and light user literature has resulted in many noteworthy findings (e.g. Goldsmith, 2000), many related areas remain unexplored. This study aims to extend the heavy and light user literature by addressing their differences in relation to experience and consumer loyalty. Specifically, in the context of two low involvement service categories, the focus will be on the following: the number of visits to outlets, the number of service outlets with which users have experience, and the loyalty to a particular service provider.

LITERATURE REVIEW

At the current time, there is no definitive methodology for distinguishing between heavy and light users. However, a clear distinction in the purchase volume between the two segments seems clearly evident (e.g. Goldsmith, 2000). Many options, all related to purchasing activity, exist for creating segments including volume, spending, experience, consumption time, and occasions. For example, buyers may be classified as heavy users if they spend more than others, buy more product units than others, have experience with more products than others, participate for longer periods than others, and purchase on more occasions than others.

It would seem obvious that, if heavy and light users are truly different, that behavioral or outcome-related distinctions would be evident. Research has shown that the two segments react differently to price promotions, with light users increasing their consumption and heavy users increasing their stockpiling (Chan et al., 2008). Also, it has been shown that heavy users process advertisements differently than do light users (Jewell & Unnava, 2004). Additionally, heavy chocolate users did not perceive store brands to be of inferior quality compared with manufacturer brands, a common perception among light users (Lybeck, et al., 2006). Also, heavy consumers of fish are shown to be better at judging quality than light users (Brunsø et al., 2009).

As previously mentioned, the distinction between heavy and light users may depend on the product category or setting. In other words, do the findings in a study of women's shoes generalize to the sports industry? Notable past studies have examined fashion lovers, wine hobbyists, and travelers (Goldsmith et al., 1994; Goldsmith, 1998; Goldsmith et al., 1998; Goldsmith et al., 1999). Despite the difference in the products or service, it is evident that specific consumers are heavy users because of the intrinsic satisfaction or pleasure which a specific type of product or service brings to them. Therefore, heavy users (or light users) will not be heavy users for all categories in which they consume; only those for which they derive a special satisfaction.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Consumers who are less aware of available brand are likely to sample more variety (Hoyer & Brown, 1990; Macdonald & Sharp, 2000). Not only has past research demonstrated that less knowledgeable buyers are more willing to purchase from a variety of outlets, but also more experienced buyers have shown to be more loyal to a particular brand (Day, 1969; Kuehn, 1962). Thus, we might presume that when buyers initially enter the market they have little experience with the products. At that time they will begin to sample products over time from the available selection(s). After gaining more experience with the products they will eventually settle on a smaller number of brands from which to choose. An analogy might be made with heavy and light users. Initially everyone is a light user, testing a variety of products. After time some of these will become heavy users. These heavy users will narrow their selection possibilities to a smaller more select few, based on their greater experience, which they will continue to purchase from in large volumes. The light users on the other hand have less experience in general and are likely to purchase from a larger variety of retail outlets. Therefore, the following hypotheses are presented for testing.

H1: Heavy users have experience with more retail outlets than have light users.

H2: Heavy users are more loyal than light users.

DATA COLLECTION & MEASUREMENT

The data for the current study was gathered from undergraduate business students who are users of fast-food burger outlets and/or convenience stores in a university town within the

USA. Information is accepted in the form of self-administered questionnaires only from respondents who buy from the specific category. Six classes are selected at random from the offering at the university. Three classes are asked about fast-food outlets and three classes are asked about convenience outlets. This process results in ninety respondents for convenience stores and ninety-seven respondents for fast-food burger outlets.

Two categories of service were included since differences based on retailer-types might be expected (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2002). Also, the Murphy and Enis (1986) taxonomy would most likely identify fast-food outlets (preference services) and convenience stores (convenience services) as low involvement services. Regarding the two service categories, the number of outlets/brands (i.e. Burger King) was limited to those within the city limits by speaking with the buyers and looking through the yellow pages. This methodology resulted in twelve possible convenience stores and six fast-food hamburger outlets.

The study includes six total indicators: two indicators of usage (H1: TIMESNUM, USEDNUM), three indicators related to brand attachment/loyalty (H2: MPB%, 2NDMPB%, 1B%) and one indicator of user type (USERTYPE). The details of each indicator are described below.

The number of times a buyer *purchases from each retail service* (TIMESNUM) is defined as the number of total purchase visits per period. Respondents were asked to indicate, by writing a number next to each of the retailers, how many times they purchased (visits) from that retailer each month. Then the numbers were summed for each respondent to arrive at a total. For example, if respondent #19 purchased from store A two times, store B three times, and store C five times, then TIMESNUM=10 for that respondent.

The main construct in the study is the categorical indicator *user type* (USERTYPE), which refers to the buyers levels of consumption. The frequency distributions for TIMESNUM are used to classify the consumers into heavy and light user segments. For both retail service categories a (conservative) two to one ratio of light users to heavy users is chosen as appropriate. Therefore, all those buyers with the number of visits above the 66.6 percentile are classified as heavy users for each category. The remaining respondents are classified into the light user category. The exact cutoff point may vary slightly from the two-thirds target due to particulars of the sample frequencies.

The cutoff points for classification into light versus heavy users are as follows. For fast-food burger outlets the range of consumption is from one to thirty-three visits, with light users defined as those buying eight times or less per month and heavy users as those who consume nine times or more per month. For fast-food, this results in thirty-two heavy users and sixty-five light users. For convenience stores the range is from one to forty visits, with light users defined as those buying twelve times or less per month and heavy users as those consuming thirteen times or more per month. For convenience stores, this results in thirty-one heavy users and fifty-nine light users.

An estimate of experience, the number of *retail service brands previously used* (USEDNUM), is defined as the total number of stores that a respondent has purchased from in the past. This indicator of experience was measured by asking respondents to check a box next

to all the brands that he/she had purchased from previously. Then the total checks were summed to arrive at the indicator of USEDNUM.

Three indicators of buyer attachment (loyalty) are included: the percent of purchase from the most purchased brand, the percent of purchase from the second most purchased brand, and the percent which purchases only one brand (Pleshko 2006). The *most-purchased-brand percent* (MPB%) is defined as the percentage of a respondents' total visits, given that the store is the most used by that respondent. The *second-most-purchased-brand percent* (2NDMPB%) is defined as the percentage of a respondents' total visits, given that the store is the second most used by that respondent. The *purchase-only-one-brand percent* (1B%) is an indicator of brand insistence for users regarding the service retailers. This is defined as the percentage of respondents, whether heavy or light users, who only purchase from one service retailer, given the category (Heiens et al 2006).

ANALYSIS/RESULTS

The relevant analysis for testing mean differences for two groups is the T-test. The averages of the various indicators, the test statistics, and the findings for the two retail service types are shown in Table 1 and Table 2. In general, it can be seen in the two tables that heavy users have more experience with each of these categories than do light users as is revealed by larger means for USEDNUM and TIMESNUM (as by definition). Also, light users seem to be more attached, showing higher loyalty levels and consuming fewer brands than do the heavy users. Additionally, the results were very similar for both fast-food outlets and convenience stores.

	<i>User Type</i>	Heavy Users	Light Users			
	<i>Variable</i>	(HU)	(LU)	t	'p'	Finding
	Size (N)	32	65	n/a		
<i>H1</i>	TIMESNUM	14.65	4.03	9.65	0.000	HU>LU
<i>H1</i>	USEDNUM	4.43	2.87	6.11	0.000	HU>LU
<i>H2</i>	MPB%	47.67	57.81	2.53	0.012	LU>HU
<i>H2</i>	2NDMPB	24.17	25.92	0.76	0.448	
<i>H2</i>	1B%	0.00	16.90	3.61	0.001	LU>HU

	<i>User Type</i>	Heavy Users	Light Users			
	<i>Variable</i>	(HU)	(LU)	t	'p'	Finding
	Size (N)	31	59	n/a		
<i>H1</i>	TIMESNUM	19.06	5.83	9.42	0.000	HU>LU
<i>H1</i>	USEDNUM	5.22	3.13	4.79	0.000	HU>LU
<i>H2</i>	MPB%	45.21	57.83	3.04	0.003	LU>HU
<i>H2</i>	2NDMPB%	24.92	24.46	0.18	0.854	
<i>H2</i>	1B%	0.00	16.90	3.44	0.001	LU>HU

DISCUSSION/LIMITATIONS

The purpose of the study was to determine if there are major differences in experience and loyalty between heavy and light users of convenience stores and fast-food outlets. Positive support is offered for one hypothesis. In both categories, heavy users appear to have more experience with a variety of outlets than do light users. For the second hypothesis, evidence supports the opposite of what was hypothesized. In both categories, light users more than heavy users appear to focus their purchases on a smaller number of brands and oftentimes limit that to a single brand. The actions of the light users may be attempts to reduce risk by focusing on a few brands with which they are familiar and like (e.g. Roselius,

The readers must wonder if the current findings are indicative of general tendencies or simply a characteristic of this limited student-based study of two service retailer-types in a single university town. The sample size is definitely an important limitation. While the one hundred and eighty-seven respondents might be enough for a single category study, it may be insufficient for a multi-category study. Additionally, although students are common users of each of these services, it would be important to include other demographic or psychographic segments in future studies. Another possible improvement would be to include a wider variety of service retailer categories, such as banking or automotive or coffee shops.

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AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF SAFARI HUNTERS' MOTIVATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Although participation in outdoor leisure activities has been the frequent focus of research, very few studies have examined non-residents' motivations for participating in a South African hunting safari. The purpose of this study was two-fold: firstly to explore why hunters hunt, and secondly, to examine why they travel to South Africa for this. A factor analysis indicated the following activity-related factors: personal values, ego enhancement, self-awareness, excitement/challenge, caring for family, and social interaction/mental stimulation. Destination-related factors were: destination attributes and features, novelty and external stimuli.

These results may inform the strategies of South African hunting safari marketers and help them remain competitive in an international market which is characterized by a growing variety of destinations for recreation and leisure activities.

INTRODUCTION

Although hunting can be viewed as a food resource, a way of life, or the primary tool with which wildlife management agencies can control game populations (Brown, et al., 2000 cited by Lindberg, 2010), the South African hunting safari is a typical, wildlife-related, nature-based, outdoor leisure activity. Safari hunting (also known as sport hunting or trophy hunting) refers to legitimate and organized hunting activities undertaken by individuals, mostly from abroad, whose primary objective is securing trophies from killed animals, birds, and reptiles (Report to the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 2005). Trophies are presented as skull mounts, shoulder mounts, full mounts, tusk mounts and/or rugs.

As tourists, hunters often travel considerable distances from their homes for a wished-for hunting experience (Brainerd, 2007). The largest demand among European hunters comes from Germany, Austria, Denmark, the Benelux countries, Italy, and Spain, while popular destinations include Scandinavia, Hungary, Poland and other Eastern European countries (Brainerd, 2007). In addition to competing with these non-African hunting destinations, South African trophy hunting providers also have to vie for patronage by approximately 18,500 international hunters, not only from Europe but also from the United States of America and the rest of the world, who annually visit Africa (Lindsey, 2008: 42).

People have differing motivations for participating in recreation or leisure activities and for travelling to specific destinations for this purpose. Although these motivations have been

fairly well researched, they have hardly been investigated in the context of the South African hunting safari. An understanding of hunters' motivations is important because it can help marketers design experiences that more closely match clients' needs, and improve their satisfaction and loyalty. This may enhance competitiveness in an increasingly well-informed and demanding market.

The purpose of the current research is firstly to explore the motivation for participating in hunting, and secondly, to explore hunters' motivations for choosing South Africa as a hunting destination.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivations

A popular tool to analyse motivations is the Leisure Motivation Scale, which categorizes motivations into four groups: (1) motivations with a mental and intellectual component, comprising elements such as learning, exploring, discovering, thinking, and imagining; (2) motivations with a social component, describing the needs for friendship, interpersonal relationships and the esteem of others; (3) motivations with a physical competency-challenge component, represented by a need to achieve, master, challenge and compete; and (4) motivations with a stimulus avoidance component, reflected in the desire to avoid social contact and seek solitude, calm, and rest (Ragheb & Beard, 1982; Ryan, 1995).

Another well-known approach that is also applied in leisure, recreation and tourism contexts, is the Iso-Ahola theory (Snepenger, King, Marshall & Uysal, 2006) which holds that motivation comprises two principal components: escaping from routine environments and seeking intrinsic rewards (Iso-Ahola, 1982).

The escape-seeking dichotomy contributes to the "push-pull" framework (Dann, 1977). In this framework, "push" or impelling factors (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996) are primarily related to internal or emotional aspects, such as the desire for escape, rest and relaxation, adventure or social interaction. Push factors are complemented by "pull" factors (Shen, 2009) which describe the external, situational, or cognitive aspects associated with the destination (Devesa, Laguna & Palacois, 2010). Pull factors relate to the features, attractions, and attributes of the destination (Kim, Lee & Klenosky, 2003), such as leisure infrastructure, cultural or natural features (Devesa et al., 2010), key tourist resources, information, convenience, accessibility and transportation (Kim et al., 2003).

Two important sets of motivations can be identified from the preceding discussion: firstly, internal, psychographic or emotional motivations which largely influence the choice of tourist activity, and secondly, external, situational or cognitive motivations that impact on the decision of where such an activity should be undertaken.

The South African Safari Hunt

Most trophy hunting in South Africa occurs on privately-owned game ranches (Von Brandis & Reilly, 2007). These hunts are regulated by a well-organized game ranching and professional hunting industry (PHASA, 2009). A hunting outfitter typically provides all the services required by the hunter. These include the arrangement of the hunt, obtaining the required hunting permits, dealing with landowners, and seeing to written agreements regarding trophy fees, daily rates, and the species and sex of game offered (PHASA, 2009). Other services relate to ground transportation, accommodation, domestic air charters, actual hunting, and preparation, packaging, and shipping of trophies (Booth, 2009). The outfitter is assisted by trained professional hunters, trackers, skimmers, lodge staff, and taxidermists.

Hunters can choose from a wide selection of safari packages. The final cost of the safari is negotiated according to the availability of the area, dates and species to be hunted, the status of the booking sheet, and the reputation of the outfitter and/or professional hunter. These negotiations can take up to 18 months, with the typical big-game hunter paying over US\$100,000 for a 21-day hunting experience (Booth, 2009). This figure excludes costs for additional guests such as observers or family members who may accompany the hunter.

METHODOLOGY

Three sections of a structured questionnaire designed to solicit data on aspects of the South African hunting safari were pertinent to the current study, and are reported here. One section obtained socio-demographic data, while the other two dealt with motivations. An initial pool of statements embodying motivational items was refined into a 29-item list of activity-related motivations, and a 13-item list of destination-related motivations. The respondents were asked to use a 6-point forced-choice Likert scale to indicate their level of agreement (1 = *strongly disagree* and 6 = *strongly agree*) with each of the statements.

With the assistance of an official facilitator in the industry, 2000 survey packages (each comprising a questionnaire and a postage-paid reply envelope) were sent to conveniently selected potential respondents who had participated in a South African hunting safari in recent years. By the due date, 236 useable questionnaires were returned. This yielded a tolerable overall response rate of 13.2% (Dillon, Madden & Firtle, 1994). However, only 191 respondents answered all the questions relevant to the section dealing with motivations, and the results reported here pertain to these respondents only.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The vast majority of the respondents (98%) were males, 76.4% lived in the United States of America, almost 50% grew up in rural areas, and 57% still lived outside cities. Eighty-seven per cent had a post-school education and 59% had an annual household income of more than US\$100,000. A large proportion of the respondents (75%) were experienced hunters.

Six activity-related factors and three destination-related ones were indicated by the factor analysis (Table 1). All the items comprising *Personal values* had mean scores exceeding 5 on the 6-point scale. Of particular importance was hunters' motivation to contribute to wildlife conservation and improving their knowledge of nature. The low scores for *Caring for family* indicate that safari hunting was seen as a recreational activity and not a source of food. It is interesting that hunters were not motivated by a desire to reinforce their male identity ($M = 2.98$, Item 07) or show their dominance ($M = 2.32$, Item 15), but did perceive hunting to be an instinct ($M = 4.26$, Item 14). The hunters were motivated by the *Excitement and challenge* of having to outwit the animals and test their skills against the latter, but it was less important to show off their hunting skills ($M = 3.39$, Item 23) or use their trophies as evidence of their hunting successes ($M = 3.71$, Item 19). *Social interaction/mental stimulation* elements of the hunt were fairly important, but far less important than contributing to wildlife conservation or learning about nature.

In terms of destination-related motivations, the results indicated that the respondents were attracted to South Africa by its abundance of game ($M = 5.41$, Item 01), its exceptional natural beauty ($M = 5.31$, Item 03), and the variety of habitats and huntable species (Items 07 and 09). Hunting in South Africa also had high novelty value. While some hunters were motivated to travel to South Africa because of the recommendations of other hunters ($M = 4.60$, Item 06), other forms of promotion also played a lesser motivating role.

CONCLUSIONS

This empirical research attempted to contribute to the body of knowledge on the motivations of hunters by exploring the reasons why they hunt and why they travel to South Africa for a hunting safari. The results indicated that hunters primarily hunt for reasons related to their personal values and because of the excitement and challenges associated with the activity. Ego enhancement, self-awareness, caring for the family, and social interaction are of lesser importance. They travel to South Africa because of the unique attributes of the country and because it is a novelty. External stimuli play a lesser role.

Table 1: Activity-Related Motivations			
Item nr	Item	Mean	SD
	Factor 1: Personal values (Cronbach's alpha: 0.75)		
01	Hunting allows me to actively contribute to wildlife conservation	5.54	0.75
16	Hunting improves my knowledge of nature	5.51	0.81
05	Hunting is a means to escape from the stress of daily activities	5.50	0.79
02	Hunting is in my blood	5.31	1.09
04	Hunting provides me with good exercise	5.31	0.96
03	Hunting is part of my heritage	5.17	1.30
06	Hunting affords me an opportunity to share a special experience with my loved ones	5.05	1.29
	Factor 2: Ego enhancement (Cronbach's alpha: 0.82)		
22	I like it when others admire my trophies resulting from my hunts	4.20	1.51

Table 1: Activity-Related Motivations			
Item	Item	Mean	SD
19	My trophies show that I am a successful hunter	3.71	1.55
23	I enjoy showing off my hunting skills	3.39	1.69
	Factor 3: Caring for family (Cronbach's alpha: 0.64)		
17	Hunting is an opportunity to provide my family with food	3.91	1.68
09	Hunting shows that a man can care for his family	2.62	1.67
	Factor 4: Self-awareness (Cronbach's alpha: 0.70)	3.16	1.15
14	Hunting is an instinct	4.26	1.43
13	Hunting allows me to get rid of my frustrations	3.05	1.69
07	Hunting reinforces my male identity	2.98	1.72
15	Hunting satisfies man's need to be in control	2.32	1.47
	Factor 5: Excitement/challenge (Cronbach's alpha: 0.80)		
21	Every hunt is unique and gives me a new story to tell	5.28	0.95
11	To me, hunting is the most exciting type of adventure sport	5.20	1.01
20	I enjoy the challenge of having to outwit the animal	5.10	1.06
24	I enjoy testing my skills against that of the animal	5.00	1.25
18	I like the "thrill of the chase"	4.99	1.17
	Factor 6: Social interaction/mental stimulation (Cronbach's alpha: 0.68)		
25	I often learn a lot from others when on a hunting trip	4.95	1.12
10	Hunting allows me the opportunity to share time with like-minded people	4.93	1.27
12	Hunting trips allow me the opportunity to meet new people	4.93	1.19
	DESTINATION-RELATED MOTIVATIONS		
	Factor 1: Attributes and features (Cronbach's alpha: 0.76)		
01	South Africa has an abundance of game	5.41	0.82
03	The country has exceptional natural beauty	5.31	0.80
07	The country has the best variety of species to hunt	4.75	1.07
08	South Africa offers many cultural attractions apart from hunting	4.55	1.31
09	The country offers a wide variety of hunting habitats and therefore many different hunting regions	5.13	0.97
	Factor 2: Novelty (Cronbach's alpha: 0.87)		
11	Hunting in South Africa is a truly unique experience	5.04	1.11
12	Hunting in South Africa is a dream come true	5.03	1.15
	Factor 3: External stimuli (Cronbach's alpha: 0.62)		
04	Brochures and other marketing material persuaded me to hunt in South Africa	3.55	1.58
05	Exhibitions at a convention persuaded me to hunt in South Africa	3.48	1.75
06	Recommendations by other hunters persuaded me to hunt in South Africa	4.60	1.31

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DRIVERS OF STUDENT RETENTION: THE NEED FOR SERVICE MARKETING

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INTRODUCTION

In today's economic and social climate higher education institutions are facing increased pressure to raise retention rates while battling a declining initial enrollment. According to the U.S. Department of Education, Center for Educational Statistics, only 50% of those who enter higher education actually earn a bachelor's degree (Seidman, 2005). Due to this, enrollment management and the retention of students remain a top priority of federal and state government, colleges, universities, and parents of students who are attending college as well as students themselves (Seidman, 2005). In order to reverse this trend, higher education administrators are increasing their focus and administrative effort towards understanding why students depart from institutions prematurely and what can be done to reverse these trends (Roberts & Styron, 2010).

There is no doubt that student satisfaction has a positive impact on, if not highly correlated to student motivation and retention (Elliott and Shin, 2002; Shah, 2009). For many years it was the common belief that teachers in Higher Education were the primary if not only factor that drove student satisfaction. This assumption has impact on the behaviors of upper administration and resource deployment within Higher Education. The thought process has been, "If we higher high powered researchers or outstanding teachers, students will be retained". The outcome of this mentality has been increased pressure on teacher performance, punitive attitude towards educational divisions with low retention rates and/or resource and training deployment away from other University support services. This paper proposes that any university is an aggregate of service encounters, of which only one of these service encounters is the interaction between a teacher and a student. By examining all services offered at a University which a student must interact with (student affairs, financial aid, etc.) a better understanding of what influences or drive student satisfaction and hence retention can be gained. Hence the purpose of this paper is to examine student satisfaction as it is driven by the service encounters experienced by students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Importance of Retention

Understanding retention is important for many reasons. For the employed in higher education setting, there is a moral obligation to help students achieve satisfaction in their academic and social lives. There is also a certain level of responsibility to provide an

atmosphere that is conducive to each student's ability to build a solid foundation of knowledge and skills in order to enter the world of employment. While the moral responsibilities linked to student retention are important, the financial impact that is the result of attrition vs. persistence often provides the rationales to understand retention as much as possible. There is an obvious connection between an institution's financial stability and student persistence.

While one approach to improving retention may be to focus on minimizing factors which have a negative impact, it may behoove an institution to, instead, focus their energy on efforts that can have a positive on retention numbers. To that end, it is important to first understand that positive relationships tend to help students the most and are in fact the strongest indicators of student persistence. (Brooks, 2010; Fike & Fike, 2008) Many students report that the most important factor that influenced their decision to remain in school was a positive relationship with someone on campus. These relationships could be with other students, faculty, coaches, advisors, support staff and so forth. Hence, with the multitude of interactions a student may have on campus, each potentially an important one, retention efforts cannot be narrowly focused on only those relationships formed between the teacher and student. University administration must understand that it is the responsibility of all campus constituents to provide an atmosphere conducive to these relationships forming and growing.

Lau (2003) suggest that hiring the "right" people is the first step towards creating an environment in which these meaningful relationships can be formed, but it may take more than just hiring the right people. Naturally, good customer service requires hiring involved and caring faculty, but customer service is also delivered by all those who have even one interaction with a student (Li&Whalen, 2005). Students have more service interactions outside the classroom than within. Creating a supportive environment to aid in the retention of student is everyone's job. Teachers are only one delivery system (that of knowledge) within entire delivery system

Student Satisfaction/Service Quality

The economic climate plus the mindset of the modern student of being a customer rather than participant in their education, creates a high priority to ensure the student is satisfied both in and out of the classroom. Students spend an average of 15 hours per week in the classroom, leaving 153 hours left to choose to do whatever they desire. There is a debate focusing on assessing teaching/learning/assessing the total experience (Aldridge & Rowley, 1998).

During the last decade, research has focused more towards the total student experience. With this trend of thinking, it is imperative for universities to understand and deliver what is important to students (Elliott and Shin, 2002). More and more institutions are adapting a services marketing model to understand and affect retention rates (Henning-Thurau, 2001). With a strong level of service quality, customer (student) satisfaction, enhanced return rates (retention), and high recommendations can be achieved (Nadiri and Hussain, 2005).

This paper focused specifically on understanding the relationship between service quality and student satisfaction. It is proposed that student satisfaction and hence retention is affected by a multitude of interactions across a university campus. As a student interfaces with financial aid, the registrar, student services, professors, etc. s/he are making evaluations based on these

interactions which will affect his/her overall evaluation of the University. Key to this evaluation is to take into account the number of interactions an individual has with each key service area. The hypothesis is that the more service encounters, the higher the impact on the evaluation.

METHODOLOGY

A random sample of students across all academic standings from a small private liberal arts university completed a questionnaire to assess their satisfaction with various service areas across campus. To measure service quality encounters within the academic setting, the questionnaire was segmented into assessment areas of: courtesy and respect, trust, service quality and overall satisfaction with the service area. Every respondent self identified two service areas to be evaluated (open ended question) along with the number of times s/he interacted with the department. In addition students were asked to evaluate their satisfaction of their college unit. In the case of this University there were four possible areas (Business, Liberal Arts, Art and Design and Engineering). The data was analyzed by Spssx.

RESULTS

Four hundred and eighty three students comprised the respondent base. ### were male and ### were female with an equal representation across all class standing (freshmen to seniors).

Two fundamental analyses were conducted to determine first, if there is indeed a relationship between the numbers of visits to a respondents satisfaction level. Based on the question "I am satisfied with this department overall" and the number of visits to a service area, there was a significant relationship ($p = .28$, $n = 483$). This relationship suggests that the more an individual interacted with a service area, the higher the impact on their positive or negative evaluation of that area or unit on campus.

Secondly, it was suggested that all service units have equal responsibility in impacting student satisfaction. A regression analysis was employed using "I feel happy being a student at this University" as the dependent variable. Table 1 displays these results.

Variable	t value	Sig.
I identify with this University	11.39	.000
Professors do an excellent job of build rapport	5.266	.000
Staff was ready to answer my questions	3.208	.001

As it can be seen, there are three major factors which drive student satisfaction and hence (based on previous retention literature) drive student retention, identification with the University, rapport with professors and staffs' ability to answer questions. These results support previous documentation that professors do have significant impact on student satisfaction as well students having a strong sense of identity with the university. Of particular note however, is the "staff's

ability to answer my questions”. Out of 24 questions evaluating self identified service encounters, results indicate that the competence of support staff is critical to their satisfaction.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper examines the validity of applying the concepts of service marketing and customer service to the area of student retention. The results indicate that in addition to in-classroom interaction with professors, staff competency (“staff is able to answer my questions”) is critical to student satisfaction. This makes sense. In most cases students seek help from a variety of support services when they don’t have the answer. Navigating the financial aid arena, accessing academic or personal support from student services, adding and dropping classes are just a few instances where students’ life on campus can be deeply affected. These types of instances place a student in an anxious and/or frustrating situation. The ability for them to be able to interact with personnel who have the answers would have significant impact on their satisfaction as these results indicate. Sending students to a variety of campus units at various locations due to a lack of staff knowledge is detrimental. Hence the focus of universities should be on adequate training for all support staff that have interactions with their student population. The University’s ability to provide knowledge based support through customer service training would have a significant impact on student retention.

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A STUDY OF WAL-MART'S RFID ADOPTION EFFECTS IN THE RETAIL INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Wal-Mart is the pioneer company to use the RFID technology in their Supply Chain operations. The inventory and profitability ratios of U.S. retail companies were collected from the fiscal years of 2001-2010 financial statements to investigate the effects of RFID technology. RFID does not have a clear effect on profit margin within the short period of time, but there is a clear relationship between the inventory management and profitability of retail companies.

THE ROLE OF CULTURE, MESSAGE SIDEDNESS AND CONCLUSIVENESS IN PREDICTING THE EFFECTS OF DIFFERING CLIMATE CHANGE ADS: A COMPARISON OF CHINESE AND U.S. COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Chinese and U.S. college students grow up in very different cultural environments. One element that they do share in common is the heavy consumption of advertising. Given the extensive cultural differences, it is reasonable to expect that the same advertisement will have very different effects on Chinese and U.S. college students. Growing up and being educated in a culture that cherishes individualism, independence, and freedom, U.S. college students should be more influenced by advertisements that provide both sides of the story and are less conclusive, which leaves room for ad viewers to think and draw conclusions for themselves. On the other hand, given that Chinese culture emphasizes authority, obedience, and collectivism as well as social norms, it should be expected that Chinese college students will be more influenced by advertisements that provide only one-sided information and are more conclusive. Therefore, given the cultural differences, we hypothesize:

- H_{1a}** *Compared to one-sided ads, two-sided ads will increase U.S. students' post knowledge of the climate-change issue, while Chinese students' post knowledge of the climate-change issue will be lower.*
- H_{1b}** *Compared to one-sided ads, two-sided ads will increase U.S. students' post attitude toward solving the climate-change issue, while Chinese students' post attitude toward solving the climate-change issue will be lower.*
- H_{1c}** *Compared to one-sided ads, two-sided ads will increase U.S. students' post behavioral intention of solving the climate-change issue, while Chinese students' post behavioral intention of solving the climate-change issue will be lower.*

- H_{2a} Compared to close-ended ads, open-ended ads will increase U. S. students' post knowledge of the climate-change issue, but Chinese students' post knowledge of the climate-change issue will be lower.*
- H_{2b} Compared to close-ended ads, open-ended ads will increase U. S. students' post attitude toward solving the climate-change issue, while Chinese students' attitude toward solving the climate-change issue will be lower.*
- H_{2c} Compared to close-ended ads, open-ended ads will increase U. S. students' post behavioral intention of solving the climate-change issue but decrease Chinese students' post behavioral intention of solving the climate-change issue.*

While the scientific debate over the existence of global warming appears to be largely resolved, in the United States the political debate over this issue is still hot and heavy (Zhao, Leiserowitz, Maibach and Roser-Renouf, 2011). In China, however, the question has rarely been publicly discussed. Since in the United States this remains an unresolved issue and is little discussed in China, the topic provides a fertile area for research regarding attitudes on this issue. Therefore, this study uses the issue of global warming to examine differences in the effectiveness of advertisement among Chinese and U.S. college students.

The study employed a total sample of 315 college students, 161 from China and 154 from the U.S. The experiment was conducted in both the US and China. The Chinese sample was collected from two Chinese universities in Guangzhou, China, while the U.S. sample used 4 classes at a medium sized Midwestern university. The classes were selected based on their availability.

The study used a 2x2x2 experimental design to test the effect of culture in terms of sidedness and conclusiveness. There were three independent variables. The first variable was message sidedness. While the one-sided ads only provided opinions supporting the scientists' argument for the existence of the climate-change phenomena, the two-sided ads provided both the scientists' opinion and the arguments such as that the scientists were twisting their data. The second variable was conclusiveness. The open-ended ads provided information on climate change and then asked readers if they should do something to solve the climate-change issue. The close-ended ads provided information and then made a call for action. The third variable was culture.

The study tested the independent variables' effects on three dependent variables: advertising knowledge recall (what facts participants could remember about global warming), post attitude change (participants belief in the existence of global warming), and post behavioral intention change (participants intention to take action on the issue). All three dependent variables were measured with multiple questions.

A total of eight groups of students were used, four groups from China and four from the U.S. Each group was placed in one of four conditions: viewing a one-sided conclusive ad, two-

sided conclusive ad, one-sided inconclusive ad, or two-sided inconclusive ad. Both the Chinese and U.S. students were randomly assigned to one of the four groups.

Three-way ANOVA was used to test the effects of the three independent variables on the three dependent variables: advertising knowledge recall, post attitude to support solving the climate change issue, and post behavioral intention of doing so. Only culture made a statistically significant difference in the three models.

While the sample size is too small to be representative of all Chinese and U.S. college students, the results indicate that U.S. students are more responsive to climate-change ads, more supportive to solve the climate change issue and are more willing to take individual actions to solve the problem. One explanation for this finding could be because climate change is a heated topic in the US, but it is still something rarely discussed by the Chinese college students. Even though the Chinese sample, which included 56 graduate students, was taken from one of the largest metropolitan areas in China (where environmental awareness is supposed to be higher than in more rural areas) and the U.S. sample consisted of all undergraduates and was taken from a medium sized rural college town, the U.S. college students showed more awareness on the severity of the climate change issue.

The overall pattern of the results is consistent with the theoretical expectations. For the U.S. students, two-sided ads clearly increased their performance in the knowledge test after viewing the ads, while Chinese college students performed better in the knowledge test when they were exposed to the one-sided ads. Likewise, U.S. students gained more knowledge from viewing the open-ended ads while Chinese students seemed to be better served by close-ended ads. The same pattern appeared for post attitude support for the issue. While two-sided ads increase U.S. students' post supportive attitude toward solving climate change issues, they slightly decreased Chinese students' support toward the issue, compared to the one-sided ads. Further, it is also clear that, while open-ended ads slightly increased U.S. students' support, it decrease Chinese students' support. Results for post behavioral intention were also consistent with expectations, as compared to one-sided ads, two-sided ads made little differences for U. S. students but a clear difference for Chinese students. The only effect that was different from what was expected was that of the message conclusiveness on post behavioral attention. Compared to an open-ended message, a close-ended message increased U.S. students' post behavioral intention to do something to solve the climate-change issues but decreased the Chinese students' post behavioral intention to do so. This result was also different from message conclusiveness' effects on post knowledge and post attitude and might be because the close-ended ads also called for an action, which U.S. students responded to more actively.

Overall, the results provide tentative, but limited support to the conclusion that, because of cultural difference, open-ended or two-sided ads work better for U.S. students but close-ended or one-sided ads work better for Chinese students. This conclusion is consistent with the theoretical expectation about the two cultures and was generally supported by our data. Since we put a news story before the ads in the experiment to disguise our research purpose and make the experiment more close to a everyday life setting, our experimental stimulus may have been offset. Future study with sufficient strength in the experiment stimulus should confirm these findings.

This study has implications for public service advertising as well as commercial advertising. The results indicate that it is important to understand cultural influences on message construction. Additionally, these results help us to better understand the two cultures.

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A CROSS CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER IDENTITY CONSTRUCT PRIORITIZATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on research conducted to better understand how strength of ethnic identification and other demographic variables drive consumer identity categorization. Typically, studies on identity, based on ethnicity or other categories, concentrate on a single indicator. This research recognizes the validity of multiple categorical alignments, and examines how temporal and situational the intensity of these choices may be. Results indicate that ethnicity is an antecedent to both strength of ethnic identification, as well a social identity.

THE EFFECT OF SIMILARITIES ON PEOPLE'S PREFERENCES

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ABSTRACT

Research from social psychology suggests that people tend to perceive more positively others when they have similarities with them, even when those similarities may be trivial or random. Such trivial similarities may include common names or initials. We examined this issue specifically within the context of people's preferences for romantic partners. Data were provided through Facebook pages of more than 1,000 people, examining name similarities each person had with the person they had listed as their relationship partner. The names of each couple were analyzed in terms of similarities in initials for first and last name as well as similarities in the sounds and syllable patterns of first and last name. Although the results found some couples with very strong name similarities, in the majority of the cases there was a weak similarity or no similarity at all.

INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Marcy Rhoades, Amanda Bearse's character in the sitcom *Married ... with Children*, gets married to a man named Jefferson D'Arcy and subsequently becomes Marcy D'Arcy, a fact that others in the show would often note jokingly. However, based on research from social psychology, the tendency for people to be attracted to others with whom they share name similarities is not surprising.

Bestselling author and noted social psychologist Robert Cialdini and his colleagues highlight such tendencies not just for selection of partners but also for other important life decisions and raise the important question whether it "is possible that our names can affect important, life-altering decisions, such as the type of career we decide to pursue or where we decide to live" (Goldstein et al., 2008, p.128). The underlying reason for why such behavior may take place is based on two key facts: 1) One's name is one of the most important aspects of one's identity, and 2) People tend to respond more favorably to others with whom they share a similarity, however trivial or random such similarity may be. Therefore, when there is any similarity between one's name and another entity, the individual will develop more positive attitudes toward that entity.

There is research evidence providing support for such tendencies. For example, people were more likely to move to locations that shared a similarity with their name (e.g., people who moved to Florida were disproportionately likely to be named Florence) or pick streets whose names match their own (Pelham et al., 2002). An especially interesting finding from that research was that there are almost twice as many dentists in the national directory of the

American Dental Association who are named Dennis than ones named Walter or Jerry, even though, according to general population data, these three names were similarly popular among males (Pelham et al., 2002). Our research examined this question within the context of another important decision, the one regarding selection of one's romantic partner.

METHODOLOGY

Data were collected from publicly available information available on profiles of over 1,000 Facebook users (n=1,033). In some cases for females, they listed as their last name their married name without any mentioning of their maiden name. As a result, it was difficult to assess whether there was a similarity between the maiden name and the married name. Thus, those cases were excluded from the analysis, bringing the sample size to 1,002. The profiles were randomly selected and only included people who listed a partner's name under "relationship status," in terms of being married to that person or engaged to that person or simply in a relationship with that person.

Subsequently, a table was created with all the first and last names of the Facebook profiles and the first and last names of their partners along with a classification of any similarity between the names for each couple. Identified similarities included same initials (e.g., Jordan and Jessie), similar sounding names (e.g., Gutierrez and Reyes), or similarity in syllable pattern (e.g., Anthony and Stephanie).

FINDINGS

Analysis of the names within each couple revealed some moderate or strong similarities in several cases (e.g., similar initials or similar sounding names for both first and last names). However, in the majority of the couples, there was no similarity between the names of the two partners. The following table summarizes all cases and the name similarities that were found.

NATURE OF SIMILARITIES	FREQUENCY
No similarities	716 (71%)
Weak similarities	251 (25%)
Moderate similarities	27 (3%)
Strong similarities	8 (1%)

We also examined the couples in terms of the nature of the relationship to assess if there was any correlation between that and name similarities between partners. The results suggested no such correlation or pattern as the majority of couples within each relationship status category did not share any name similarities with each other.

In addition to examining the names from all sample participants, we also focused on the first names that appeared most frequently within the sample. Those names were: Ashley (n=40), Amanda (n=24), Chris (n=30), and David (n=26). We specifically examined if a person with

each of those names would be more likely to share a similarity with his or her partner. The most similarities were for participants named Ashley, where 40% of them shared a name similarity with their partner, followed by Amanda and Chris, with 33% of name similarities in each case, and lastly David where 27% of them had a name similarity with their partners. Overall, there was some support but not strong support for having name similarities between partners for any of the most popular names of the sample.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the results provided weak support for the hypothesis that name similarities influence people's preferences in regard to romantic partners, in the sense that many of the people did not share any name similarities with their partners. However, this should not be interpreted as if similarities are not important when it comes to making important choices like selecting a romantic partner and, especially, a spouse. Instead, more obvious and meaningful similarities (e.g., similar interests, similar political beliefs, and similar personalities) may be more important than seemingly random ones (like name or initials). Along those lines, from a practical standpoint, salespeople can possibly build rapport with a potential client by identifying trivial similarities with each other (like sharing a birthday month) but they are probably more likely to establish such rapport by highlighting stronger similarities (e.g., similar hobbies and activities).

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MAPPING OVERALL SATISFACTION IN A B2B SETTING: SATISFIED AND DISSATISFIED CUSTOMERS

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ABSTRACT

In this study we simulate customer satisfaction data to model empirical customer satisfaction data in a B2B setting for medium technology offerings. The model is compared to empirical customer satisfaction response data to examine fit. Our model suggests that customer satisfaction response in this setting can be characterized as a combination of two distinct normal distributions for satisfied and dissatisfied customers. Research and managerial implications are discussed.

AN EMPIRICAL EXAMPLE

Kellar and Preis (2011) demonstrated that customer satisfaction for products from medium-technology industries differs from satisfaction for products from industries utilizing other levels of technology and should be modeled separately. We restrict our attention to medium-tech industries, as well. Utilizing a sample of 71 observations obtained from members of the National Association of Purchasing Management (now the Institute for Supply Management) we will model the sample using two normal curves, one representing satisfied customers and the other representing dissatisfied customers. Satisfaction with the product, satisfaction with vendor performance, satisfaction with the relationship with the salesperson and overall satisfaction are measured. All measures of satisfaction demonstrate a bimodal distribution. For example, vendor performance has a mode of 3 for customers expressing dissatisfaction and a mode of 6 for customers expressing high levels of satisfaction. The sample of overall satisfaction ratings is depicted in Figure 1. As can be seen from this graph, the sample is bimodal, with modes of 5 and 6. The mean of the sample is 6.31 and the standard deviation is 0.709.

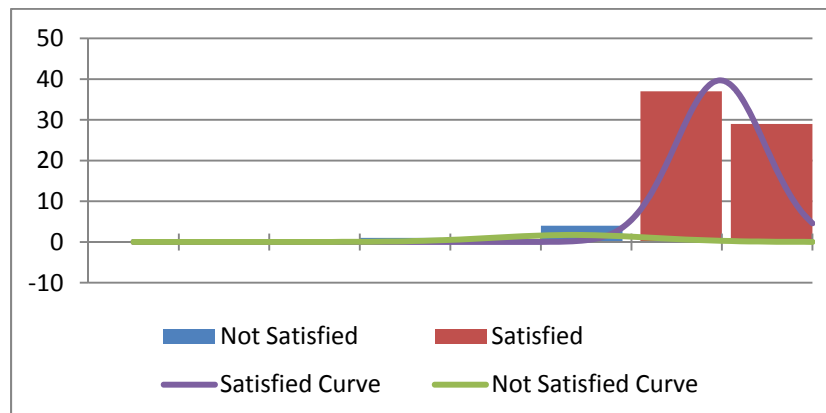


Figure 1: Graph of Survey Data Superimposed with Fitted Curves

We utilized a computer to simulate the observed data. A program was written in Matlab to create two normal curves, simulating the distribution of observations in the sample. With only one point (the point with the lowest satisfaction rating) assigned to the low satisfaction category (all other data points are assigned to the high satisfaction category), all possible combinations of means and standard deviations (in 0.01 increments) for the pair of normal curves are compared to the original dataset. The sum of the absolute values of differences (absolute errors) between the number of observed data points for each survey response level and the number of data points simulated for each response level by the normal curves determined by the means and standard deviations is calculated. The process then repeats itself with the two points having the lowest satisfaction points being assigned to the low satisfaction category. This process continues until the best fitting model is found. In particular, the model with the lowest sum of the absolute errors is selected. The pair of normal curves that best fits the sample data is shown superimposed on the observed data set in Figure 1. Simulated data sets that are randomly generated emphasize the goodness of fit of the pair of curves. In particular, with a sample size of 71 the sum of the absolute value of the differences between the original data set and simulated data sets range from 2 to 6 with a mode of 4. As shown in Figure 1 the fit of the two normal curves to the observed data is very close and within the range of expected normal variation of samples. We can therefore conclude from this exercise that customer satisfaction response is best modeled with two separate distributions in this case: one distribution representing satisfied customers and a separate distribution representing dissatisfied customers.

CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Treating satisfied and dissatisfied customers as distinct segments furthers our understanding of why customer satisfaction exhibit a positivity bias (Peterson & Wilson, 1992). It is also worth noting that the curve of dissatisfied customers occurs at higher average satisfaction levels than might be expected, which contributes to our understanding of why prior research has found higher defection rates from “satisfied” customers than expected (Naumann, Haverila, Sajid Khan, & Williams, 2010).

Our simulation study was based on parameters observed from a single empirical survey of B2B customers in firms in medium technology industries. Our study may not generalize to different industries, different levels of technology or to the consumer segment. . Further research is needed to test the applicability of these findings in other situations. Future research should examine whether the two-factor model of overall customer satisfaction has multiple components, as has been shown to be the case for the expectancy-disconfirmation model. Research should also focus attention on whether the satisfaction or dissatisfaction segments correlate with repurchase intentions.

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