Review Centric Exploration of Marketing Research

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Abstract-In this paper Marketing Research strategies are reviewed to gain an understanding of the marketing research process and its possible business implications. Based on these findings a summary of key strategies was developed to help describe practical considerations when conducting market research and an expanded model for marketing research was developed. In addition items of interest for further completing this effort were highlighted. Due to the sound and proven methods, Lepine's review centric strategies will be utilized to "summarize previously established studies and concepts, pinpoint potential problems (such as factual errors), and inspire new discussions and directions for further research activity." [1] This research indicates that marketing research efforts can be time consuming and involves multiple disciplines of business and social science. Four key strategies or areas of concern in marketing research are Consumer behavior studies, Consumer Surveys, Focus Groups, and Product development activities. When starting marketing research activities these four areas should be considered and a proper balance between the four areas needs to be agreed upon. Time was a major limitation when it comes to thoroughly exploring this topic. It would be preferable to have the opportunity to conduct "Real World" testing of the model generated in this article. For example introducing and testing a new product using focus groups, surveys, and data accumulated from studying the target consumer's behavior. Due to the dynamic and rapidly changing climate of business today, sound and practical methods of marketing new products is essential to entrepreneurs and business leaders. Trying to rush a product to market without proper market research may lead to inhibited product performance and or ultimately failure of a product.

General Terms-Marketing Research, Review Centric Research.

Keywords- Consumer Behavior; Focus Groups; Surveys; Product Development

1. INTRODUCTION

(More, 1984) says market research is thought to be essential to success in new product ventures which involve high levels of risk, complex organizational and implementation issues, and uncertainty. Essentially market research is a method of mitigating negative effects of unsystematic uncertainty and reducing the likelihood of new product failure [2]. More introduces an important idea, specifically that market research can be vital to business ventures; this idea will be expanded upon in the following paper.

There is an abundance of literature pertaining to market research methods (Miller & Dickson, 2001) (West, 1974) (More, 1984) (DeLoach, 1949) (Kürthy, 1967) (McAnally, 1951) (Deborah J. MacInnis & Valerie S. Folkes, 2010) (Singh, Howell, & Rhoads, 1990) (Folch-Lyon & Trost, 1981) and (McCarthy, 1959) to name a few. This paper attempts to consolidate information from all of the aforementioned sources as well as others to summarize the key areas of concern when conducting marketing research.

1.2 Research method

The review-centric approach used by (Garrison, 2014) was chosen because it utilizes principles of review centric research covered by Lepine (2010) who says "There is

great value in research intended primarily to review and summarize the theoretical and empirical knowledge existing in a given literature or content domain, especially when the review is relevant, comprehensive, and coherent as a compelling narrative that partitions and puts in order essential past accomplishments while identifying important challenges and future opportunities. The value of published reviews that accomplish these ends is supported indirectly by citation counts that can be quite remarkable, and also in the Academy of Management's recent decision to publish yearly reviews of advances in research in the Academy of Management Annals. In fact, the mission statement of the Annals explains why reviews of this type are important and valuable to scholars: the "Annals summarize previously established studies and concepts, pinpoint potential problems (such as factual errors), and inspire new discussions and directions for further research activity." From this statement it is easy to appreciate that these types of reviews not only provide for synthesis and a convenient repository for existing knowledge in a given area but can also impart the motivation for theoretical research that can advance our understanding of a concept or process relevant to management and organization [1] p. 507."
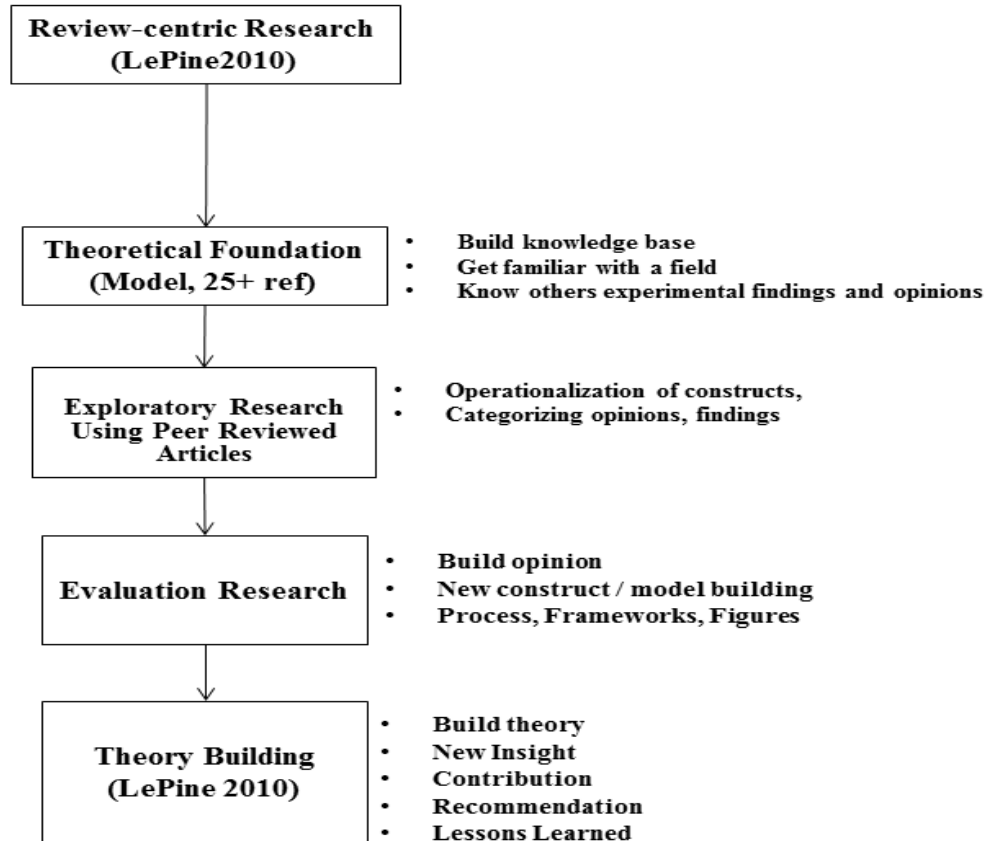
Figure 1: Research model -University of Bridgeport technical writing tcmg495spring14

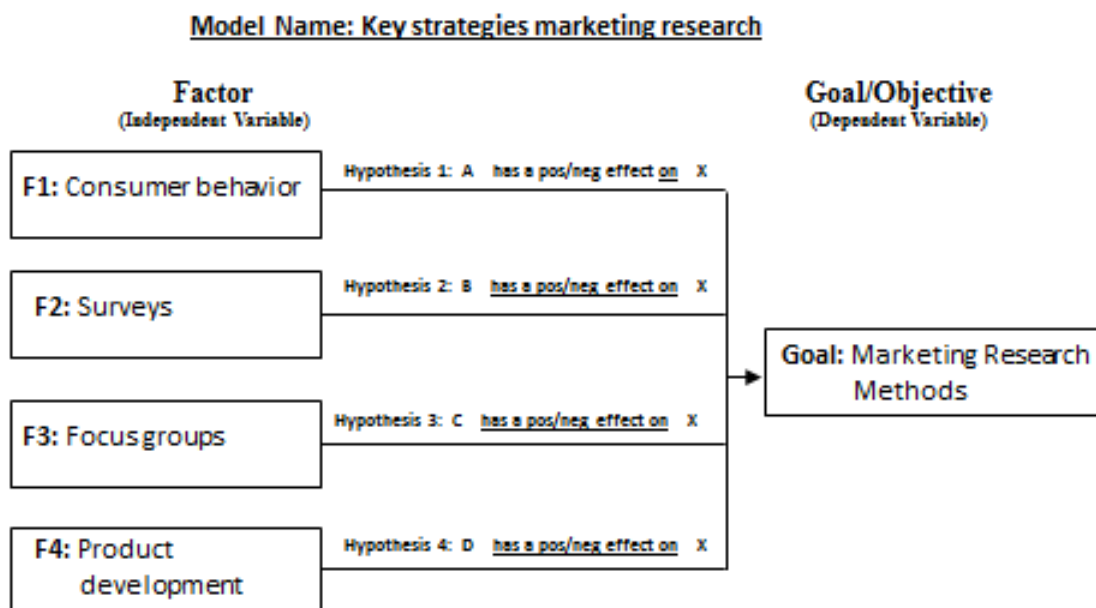Figure 1 shows the process of the review centric research used.

2. MARKET RESEARCH

Figure 2: Marketing Research model showing several key strategies in marketing research -University of Bridgeport technical writing tcmg495spring14

2.2 Traditional vs. contemporary research

"Traditional **market research** is time-and paper-intensive, involving separate phases of survey design, data collection, coding, and analysis. The time to complete a study-a cross-sectional survey of 1,000 consumers, for example is measured in weeks or months. Traditional research methods are being replaced by on-line methods in many organizations. Compared with traditional market research methods, on-line research provides a faster and less expensive method of collecting information. On-line research is of great benefit to firms desiring faster product development and faster implementation of marketing programs. The time to complete an on-line consumer study is often measured in hours or days. [3] p. 139."

2.3 Information and marketing

"**Market research** has been defined as 'the process of gathering, recording and analysing all facts about problems relating to the transfer and sale of goods and services from producer to consumer.' […]. To elaborate, market research is concerned with the provision of information on the market environment, and by the very nature of the marketing process, information is an essential ingredient without which it cannot flourish. All marketing-oriented companies require a constant flow of information about the customers they serve, the suitability of their products, the services they should offer, the success, or otherwise, of their various promotional and sales approaches, and a host of more specialized problems. There are, of course, many ways of obtaining this information, but market research is the only formal approach adopted by marketing departments, large and small. [4] p. 409-410."

2.4 Marketing & product development

"Much has been written about the importance of excellent **market research** to the success of new industrial product ventures. Given the high level of risk frequently associated with such ventures, the complex organizational adoption process, and the related situational uncertainties, market research can be generically viewed as information search by managers in order to reduce situational uncertainty. Growing evidence indicates that failure to carry out effective market research can be linked to new product failure (Cooper 1973). Management behavior in generating and utilizing marketing information has been cited as an important consideration in need of formal investigation. A special joint commission of the American Marketing Association and the Marketing Science Institute surveyed the contributions of more than 25 years of marketing's R&D, and were struck by the discrepancies between the volume of the new knowledge generated and a comparatively low rate of adoption at the line manager level (Myers, Gregsen, and Massey 1979). These comments were parallel to a conclusion of a study of European managers by Permut (1977). Despite the apparent need for further research into managers' use of market information, particularly in an industrial product

context, little formal research on the issue has been conducted. [2] p. 84."

2.5 Marketing and competitive advantage

"Western regional **market research** workers have been very successful in obtaining cooperation from marketing agencies where the information needed related to handling practices and market channels. Reasonable success occurs in obtaining selling prices. The success curve starts downward rapidly when questions are asked concerning costs and the components of costs, and the location of market outlets. This type of questioning gets too closely to the only competitive aspect of many businesses. Cost information is also guarded closely by some types of businesses for fear it will be used to their disadvantage in wage negotiations with labor unions. In other instances the kind of cost data sought by researchers is not available and could not be made available without undue expense to the firm answering the questions. [5] p. 1161."

2.6 Utilizing market research

"When in the course of marketing we have secured the needed information on market events, we then make a plan for what is to be done. The aim is, by means of different operations, to influence the market and the consumer. Such marketing methods are advertising, fairs, diverse types of consumer services, etc. Thus, the work of marketing consists of three phases: Market Research → Planning → Marketing Information → Decision → Implementation. Thus, while through market research we seek to acquire knowledge of market events, in marketing we act on the market so that events should develop in a way favoring our plans and interests. During market research, the characteristics of the marketplace affect the seller; during marketing, the seller's goals affect the market, as shown in the diagram below: But we can also indicate the tasks of **market research** and marketing otherwise so as to better illustrate the sphere of action.[6] p. 50."

2.7 Market research vs. operational research

"THOSE who practise operational research are notoriously fond of framing definitions. Those who practise market research seem from their performance over the last year or so to have a similar fondness for descriptions. The time is ripe for trying to clarify the relationship between them. The reason for suspecting a close relationship is not merely that both are forms of research. Operational research was to a great extent nurtured in the wartime needs of the factories and fighting services. With peace, production retained its full importance, but the function of fighting was in some sense superseded by the function of marketing; and with ideas of this sort in mind one is inclined to think of **market research** as the 'branch of operational research which is aimed at earning dollars or meeting the sales resistance of the home consumer. [7] p. 61."

2.8 Exploratory review

One constant that is touched upon by most of the research is that marketing is not simple but can be utilized in

versatile ways. Miller (2001) says market research is time- and paper-intensive and involves phases of survey design, data collection, and analysis [3]. West (1974) highlights some of the time consuming activities, saying market research is defined by gathering, recording and analyzing problems relating to the transfer and sale of goods and services [4]. More (1984) says that excellent market research is important to the success of new product ventures in that it can be used by managers to reduce situational uncertainty and to avoid new product failure [2]. In addition DeLoach (1949) says that gathering detailed data from businesses can be difficult because of the fear of information being leveraged against them in future negotiations [5]. Kürthy (1967) says that the decision making process of marketing need to be done after all pertinent information is secured. This is done with the goal of influencing both markets and the consumer [6]. Finally McAnally says that market research is a change from operational research which was replaced as society moved further away from wartime needs. As a result it is currently aimed at meeting the economic resistance of home consumers [7].

It is clear that market research can be a difficult task. I agree with Miller's [3] assertion that it is a time intensive process because the most useful data should come from representatives of the market that you hope to impact, namely the consumer. There is no quick way to gather and analyze the thoughts and motivations of consumers. It will take a significant amount of resources to understand what problems consumers face in order to plan a strategy to gather, record, and analyze how they relate to the transfer and sale of goods and services as West [4] implies. The contention of More [2], that market research can be essential to the success of new products can be seen as validated regularly with today's technologies. The X Box One and Microsoft Zune for examples are powerful pieces of hardware that were developed and "marketed" without considering the problems and preferences of the consumer. The Zune eventually failed in the US market and significant efforts were made to deal with the negative feedback resulting from the Xbox one marketing campaign. It is understandable that some organizations fear that proprietary information might be used against them as DeLoach [5] says. However, this information can be vital to sustaining effective market research; efforts should be made to form partnerships with reliable marketing organizations to reduce this risk. As Kürthy [6] says all relevant information is needed to make good marketing decisions. These decisions should be based on meeting the needs   of the consumer instead of "combatting" the consumer's resistance as implied by McAnally [7].

3.   CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

3.2 Consumer & Industry habits
 "Sheth (1974) implicitly recognizes the similarity between industrial and household buying behavior in his theory of family buying decisions. At the individual level, Zaltman and Wallendorf (1979) specify the similarities between **consumer behavior** and industrial buyer behavior as the cultural effects on purchase behavior, norms governing purchase behavior, and the role of others' expectations on purchase behavior. Additionally, "In the process of making a purchase, each gathers information about alternatives, processes this information, learns about available products, determines which alternative matches the perceived needs most closely, and carries through by making a purchase" (p. 9). Moreover, Zaltman and Wallendorf contend that families make group decisions on large or important purchases similarlyt o organizations. After presenting Nicosia's summary of his model of consumer behavior, Webster and Wind (1972) suggest "Change the words consumer to organizational buyer and advertisement to any marketing input in the above statement and you have a general structure of organizational buying behavior." However, they caution that going beyond this level is not operationally feasible. [8] p. 69."

3.3 Industrial and consumer marketing
 "Few rules can be formulated to portray the fundamental differences or similarities between industrial and **consumer marketing**. Although both industrial marketing and consumer marketing have as a common goal the satisfaction of the wants and needs of the customer, the two are significantly different in many important respects. The differences can be attributed to a number of reasons, the most evident of which seems to be the difference in the products themselves. Industrial goods move in a series of steps from the mine, forest, farm, air or ocean in which the raw materials originate through everything from a simple to a very complex set of manufacturing and marketing operations before reaching that final step where they are assembled into the end product, whether it be an industrial good or a consumer good. Consumer goods as they leave the manufacturer and head into the channels of distribution, regardless of how complex the channels may be, are finished goods and usually require no further processing. Every practitioner of marketing, whether it be industrial or consumer, should become, if he not already is, thoroughly conversant with the ramifications of those phases of marketing with which he is engaged and constantly be on the alert to visualize new relationships, new exceptions to his previously accepted theories, and new approaches to his chosen profession. [9] p. 157."

3.4 Research on consumers
 "The past 50 years have witnessed an explosion in academic research about consumers. Studies have yielded substantial knowledge about consumer choice, attitude and satisfaction judgments, consumption meanings, consumer brand relationships, and more. Metrics indicate a thriving field, as evidenced by the increase in the number of articles about consumers, the growing number of researchers engaged in consumer research, and the plethora of topics examined by consumer researchers. Despite the kind of growth that indicates a healthy field, the field has

witnessed repeated editorials, presidential addresses, and commentaries that raise concern because they involve three foundational issues about our field: (1) whether **consumer behavior** should be an independent discipline (Belk 1984; Deighton 2007; Hirschman 1986; Holbrook 1985, 1987; Kernan 1995), (2) what is (and is not) consumer behavior (i.e., what constitutes the field's boundaries; Deighton 2007; Folkes 2002; Frank 1974; Holbrook 1987; Jacoby 1976; Sheth 1982; Simonson et al. 2001), and (3) whether consumer behavior should be interdisciplinary (Gardner 1977; Jacoby 1976; Lutz 1989a; Mick 2003; Sheth 1982; Wilkie 1981). Debate about such issues is natural as the field's members exert social influence for consensus building over its direction. Yet these particular debates seem to have moved us less toward consensus than to conflicting messages. Consequently, researchers often must gain tacit knowledge about the contributions that the field as a whole values. [10] p. 899."

3.5 Consumer segmentation

"'Segmentation is the act of dividing a market into distinct groups of buyers who might require separate products and/or marketing mixes' (Kotler 1991:263). Segmentation of the market makes central use of spatial metaphors. Spatially, the market itself is conceived of in terms of portions, like pie sections (see also Lien 1997:91). By situating **consumer behaviors** in terms of their location in the market, marketers can quantify their progress in 'capturing market share' as well as in envisioning crossing nonmarket borders-national, terrestrial, or cultural-while still remaining on the terra firma of an expanding market. The expanding market, in turn, relies on the notion of converging tastes. By contrast with the spatial dimension, the temporal dimension in marketing segmentation is far more complex for marketers to metaphorize-no pie charts or equivalents are used in the marketing environment to envision the market's temporal proportions-as its logic resides beyond the conscious grasp of the practitioners. [11] p. 268."

3.6 Emotional drivers of consumers

"The consumer-marketer seeks out an emotional impetus behind the material craving, coding it for himself as an emotional need—status, approval, novelty, vitality, embarrassment avoidance, and so on—rather than a material one. The types and levels of researches and practical actions in the marketer's **consumer-behavior** manual are legion, as they vary in accordance with the type of purported need, the media available for contacting the consumer, and the marketing agents involved (who again vary by industry, company size, role the process, and geographical location). But the single philosophy of action and native theory of practice prevails: consumer satisfaction can be attained if the marketer locates and then addresses the specific emotional need behind the purported generalized craving. [12] p. 326."

3.7 Social integration of consumers

"[…] Mexican immigrants' cross-cultural consumer learning processes raise a number of specific marketing and **consumer behavior** issues. Differences in cultural consumption patterns, language abilities, processes of identity formation, and social relations with the larger population raise questions regarding the skills, market practices, and conditions that are necessary for consumers to effectively engage in market transactions. […] Because Mexican immigrants are a significant part of the larger Latino market, with annual expenditures of $188.2 billion in 1994 (McDonald 1994), marketers play a key role in their social legitimation by accommodating them in the United States marketplace. [13] p. 84."

3.8 Exploratory review

The topic of consumer behavior is almost as debated as market research. MacInnis & Folkes (2010) says that there are questions as to whether or not consumer behavior should be its own field and the term "consumer behavior" itself is not well defined [10]. Consumer behavior is a key concern alluded to in a lot of literature concerning market research. Fern & Brown (1984) says that the consumer habits of the individual is similar to that of industrial buying behaviors and can impact cultural norms of purchasing [8].   The Board, Industrial Marketing Committee Review (1954) however says that industrial and consumer marketing strategies should be different because the products offered raw goods Vs. Finished goods for example, are different among other reasons [9]. Applbaum (2000) says that consumer behavior has spatial and temporal segmentation that should be considered. While spatial segmentation is easily defined, temporal segmentation might be harder to conceptualize [11]. Applbaum also says that consumer behavior is driven by psychological urges that all marketers at a fundamental level need to identify and satisfy [12].   Similar to Applbaum's psychological take on consumer behavior, Peñaloza (1995) connects consumer behavior with cultural assimilation. The author says that a consumer's cultural consumption patterns, language, identity formation and relations with the majority population impacts effective market transactions. Marketers can help with cultural integration via marketing practices [13].

Debate regarding consumer behavior is a good thing. MacInnis & Folkes [10] asks if consumer behavior studies should be a field unto itself. It should not because without market research, consumer behavior loses context and can veer too far into the realm of psychology. The similarities in consumer and industrial market habits was raised by Fern [8]. Researchers need to be careful when making predictions based on these similarities. Industrial habits are often driven by the need for survival and guided by proven business strategies. Consumer habits are often driven by society and guided by tacit psychological motives. I agree more with the Industrial Marketing Committee's [9] evaluation of consumer/industrial relations. Applbaum explores some of the consumer marketing topics that

makes consumer marketing different from industrial marketing. In the paper from 2000 [11] spatial and temporal segmentation of consumer marketing is highlighted. Consider fashion for example, the trends in Europe might be different from trends in the Americas (spatial). In addition trends in the Americas today are different from trends a decade ago and will be different from trends a decade from now (temporal). In the 1998 paper [12] Applbaum explores the psychological component of consumers. I agree with his assertion that marketers need to identify psychological drivers and try to satisfy them. Peñaloza [13] on the other hand does not have as strong an argument with the idea of idea of marketing helping immigrant assimilation. When this happens in an organic manner it can be positive. However, if this happens by design, you run the risk of veering too deep into the field of social policy making. There might be conflicts between what is best for business and what is best for the immigrant/society.

4. SURVEYS

4.2 Survey design

 "Within the marketing profession, there is a growing concern for the quality of **survey** data. As marketing problems become more complex, collecting more information and complex data appears desirable. Though surveys can be (and are being) designed to satisfy this demand for more information, researchers have begun to recognize that such 'information-dense' surveys may not only be inefficient (i.e., because of low response rate), but also may compromise the quality of data because of their length and complexity (Childers and Ferrell 1979). New approaches for data collection have been proposed to address this problem. For instance, the computerized interviewing method is reported to be more "efficient" and "interesting" to respondents. Such approaches are useful improvements, but little progress has been made to address the length versus information tradeoff dilemma. For most research involving attitudinal constructs, researchers have no choice but to have respondents respond to all items on a predesigned questionnaire. [14] p. 320."

4.3 Multinational surveys

 "MULTINATIONAL firms are often confronted with the need to carry out comparable marketing **surveys** with respondents located in several different countries. The predominant concern in such investigations is, of course, with cross-national comparisons. Whether a cross-national study concludes that markets are similar or different can have far-reaching policy implications. […] A key issue that invariably arises in connection with these multinational research efforts is whether observed similarities or differences between markets are, in fact, real. Few experienced in primary data collection would question the proposition that the possible threats to validity (Cook and Campbell 1979) increase dramatically as the number and diversity of countries encompassed by a consumer research project is expanded. [15] p. 98."

4.4 Internal surveys

 "Many consultancies required researchers to delve more deeply into the operational details of public programs or a firm's operations than they would otherwise have occasion to do. For example, to advise a bank about its prospects in investing heavily in retail banking operations would have likely required consumer **surveys** about the current services they use and their preferences for improvements. Detailed analysis of the current market and the extent of competitiveness would be another critical element of the work. This is highly specific analysis. But the experience gained would be invaluable, even if as only general background, in working with the Ministry of Finance or the Central Bank on policies governing retail banking. [16] p. 281."

4.5 Survey research vs. marketing research

 "This first special issue of JMR is devoted to **survey** research. In a sense this seems only fitting because survey techniques serve as the basis for the bulk of the research carried on in the marketing field. In many ways survey research and marketing research have moved forward side by side over the last few decades, during which both have made impressive strides. Both have gained a great deal from interchange with other disciplines as well as from each other. Many of the results of this interchange are evident in the articles in this issue. Though focusing on the application of survey techniques to marketing problems, much of this work stems from other social sciences as well as from statistics itself, as will be readily apparent. Indeed, although not written with this objective in mind, many of the articles in this special issue illustrate rather strikingly how survey techniques have acted as a "melting pot" to bring together marketing and other disciplines.[17] p. 277."

4.6 Utilizing data from surveys

 "There is a need for approaches that combine data such as measures of operational inputs, customer perceptions and behaviors, and financial outcomes from multiple sources, providing the firm with not only comprehensive diagnosis and assessment but also with implementation guidelines. Importantly, an approach that is sensitive to and can accommodate the strengths and weaknesses of such data sets is required. We outline and illustrate such an approach in this paper. Our approach has the potential to both identify and quantify the benefits of implementing a service strategy, especially for firms having multiple units (e.g., banks with branches, retail outlets, and so forth). The implementation approach is illustrated using data from a national bank in Brazil. We used customer **surveys** from more than 500 branches of the bank. Each individual customer's marketing survey data was linked to a number of operational metrics. First, behavioral measures of retention, such as the length of the customer's relation with the bank, the deposit amount, and number of transactions with the bank, were obtained and merged with the survey data. Second, the main branch used by each customer was identified and operational inputs (e.g., number of

employees, number of available automated teller machines (ATMs)) used at that branch were obtained and merged with the data set. This data set was used to model the SPC at a strategic and operational level [18] p. 294.”

4.7 Surveys and promotional data

 “However, price strategies and display promotions differ according to variables such as geographical location, demographic features of consumers, and so forth. As a result, consumer decisions, which are made in response to these strategies, differ. For this reason, suppliers want to obtain POS data and promotional data for individual stores to enable them to promote efficient and effective sales. However, while store level POS data is easily obtained, promotional data cannot be obtained unless retailers, manufacturers or third-parties conduct an actual marketing **survey** on every store. [19] p. 38.”

4.8 Exploratory Review

 Another key component of market research is reliable consumer data. The consumer survey is a good method for obtaining data. Singh (1990) says that there is growing concern over survey quality control because surveys are evolving in order to meet the increasing data requirements of researches. This evolution leads to lengthy and more complex surveys which affects the response rate and introduce inefficiencies [14]. Davis (1981) says that globalization has resulted in the need for surveys that cross national boundaries. The differences, similarities, and validity of data from a multinational survey is not yet completely understood [15]. Struyk (2000) says surveys would be required in conjunction with detailed market analysis in order to advice a firm on which services it should focus on improving [16]. Ferber (1977) says that survey techniques are foundational to marketing research. Surveys are a melting pot that brings together multiple disciplines with marketing [17]. Kamakura (2002) says surveys can be used to gather data and link this information to operational metrics for the purposes of identifying and quantifying benefits of implementing service strategies [18]. Sato (2004) says promotional strategies are impacted by the promotional data that is gathered. Marketing surveys are needed to gather promotional information that cannot be deduced from POS data gathered at the store level [19].

Surveys of both the consumer and market are useful tools for market research. As noted by Singh [14] more organizations are realizing the usefulness of surveys and have helped the tool evolve from a simple questionnaire to a tool that can be used to interpret multiple layers of consumer and market behavior. Singh cautions however that increased complexity and data density of surveys might inherently reduce their efficacy. This idea has merit because the increase in survey tools over time has to contend with the decrease in attention span of today’s consumers. When possible raw consumer data should be supplemented with promotional data as Sato [19] notes to advise on pricing and promotional strategies. The questions Davis [15] pose regarding multinational surveys

is an area of importance and needs to be expanded upon since todays markets are often strewn across nations. Car manufacturers can design products in Europe, build them in Asia and market them globally. The similarities and differences between marketing data from the nations involved should be highlighted via market research using surveys and analysis among other tools as Struyk [16] says. This information can then be used to qualify service strategies as mentioned by Kamakura [18] to help ensure successful product offerings. This is in agreement with Ferber [17] who says survey techniques form the foundation of market research.

5. FOCUS GROUPS

5.2 What is a focus group

 “In recent years, there has been a notable growth in the use of **focus group** session research to gain insight into the dynamic relationships of attitudes, opinions, motivations, concerns, and problems related to current and projected human activity. Focus group sessions are a qualitative research technique that is widely used in private industry, where it is considered essential to understand the psychological and behavioral underpinnings of consumer behavior and to identify ways and means to influence this behavior. The breadth of topics on which private industry uses this technique is astoundingly large; for example, detergents, beverages, foods, kitchen appliances, health and beauty aids, outdoor power equipment, automobiles, toys, and even cat litter. It is well known that the decision whether to purchase a product is determined by psychological phenomena as well as satisfaction with the actual product. Indeed, it is difficult to exaggerate the extent to which feelings dictate beliefs and actions [20] p. 443.”

5.3 Focus groups & supplemental techniques

 “Over the past decade, focus groups and group interviews have reemerged as a popular technique for gathering qualitative data, both among sociologists and across a wide range of academic and applied research areas. **Focus groups** are currently used as both a self-contained method and in combination with surveys and other research methods, most notably individual, in-depth interviews. Comparisons between focus groups and both surveys and individual interviews help to show the specific advantages and disadvantages of group interviews, concentrating on the role of the group in producing interaction and the role of the moderator in guiding this interaction. The advantages of focus groups can be maximized through careful attention to research design issues at both the project and the group level. Important future directions include: the development of standards for reporting focus group research, more methodological research on focus groups, more attention to data analysis issues, and more engagement with the concerns of the research participant [21] p. 129.”

5.4 Focus group origins

 "The term ' **focus group** ' is a confusion of the focused interview, in which an interviewer keeps a respondent on a topic without the use of a structured questionnaire, and a group discussion, in which a relatively heterogeneous, but carefully selected group of people discuss a series of particular questions raised by a moderator. The original ' focus group interview ' was developed for the evaluation of radio shows and, in particular, US Army training and propaganda films during World War Two. The ' focus ' was a specific stimulus-such as movie, radio show or advertisement which the researcher had previously analysed and discussion was managed by a trained moderator working from a guide (Merton, Fiske and Kendall 1956). Focus group discussions are extensively used in marketing research which typically employs storyboards and other contrivances to focus the discussion and is primarily designed to evaluate the effectiveness of media messages (Morgan 1988, 10-12). […] focus groups have also drawn upon the principles of group therapy, in which individuals freely discuss their experiences and values while observers attempt to infer unconscious motivations from their interactions (Frey and Fontana 1993, 29). [22] p. 113."

5.5 Focus groups as foundational tool

 "Scholars writing about the use of **focus groups** in human geography have raised a number of important methodological issues including, but not limited to: the merits of using focus groups with only two participants (Longhurst 1996), the potential for focus groups to be empowering experiences for research participants (Goss 1996b; see also Johnson 1996) and the use of groups of people who know each other compared with groups comprised of relative strangers (Holbrook and Jackson 1996). The reasons why researchers might choose to use focus groups have been rehearsed on many occasions in research methods textbooks and guides (e.g. Barbour and Kitzinger 1999; Hoggart etal. 2002; Kitchin and Tate 2000; Morgan 1998). Some of the motivations of researchers using focus groups include the fact that, as Longhurst (2003, 120) notes, focus groups are useful for 'researchers wishing to orientate themselves to a new field' and can enhance the role of the research participants in regulating the research findings. Alongside this, they are often thought to work in ways which decrease, reshape or rework the power of the researcher (Pratt 2002). Certain qualities of focus groups, often used by the 'sellers of commodities', can also be used by social researchers for 'very different, radical purposes' (Johnson 1996, 521). Rather than simply soliciting opinions about products and merchandise, the use of radical focus groups opens up the possibility that the groups might assist the participants to have cathartic experiences, or they might transform or challenge their views, opinions and experiences of society (Chui 2003). Furthermore, focus groups could also potentially assist in galvanising political action as participants actively seek to change their social worlds.

Using focus groups can help in facilitating access to 'tacit, uncodified and experiential knowledge', as well as the opinions and meanings of the [23] p. 528."

5.6 Focus group structure

 "there are two types of group interview studies. One is nothing more than a question and answer session: the group moderator asks questions and the respondents give verbal or written answers. A second type is the **focus group** interview, where a group of people (generally eight to twelve) are led through an open, in-depth discussion by a group moderator. The moderator's objective is to focus the discussion on the relevant subject areas in a nondirective manner. Such interviews can be used to develop hypotheses in the planning or qualitative stage of the marketing research process. The interviews provide a basis in depth for the development of additional research, and they may be useful as a source of new and fresh ideas for new products and services, advertising themes, packaging evaluations, and the like. Marketing Applications Focus group interviews can be effective research tools in many types of marketing decision situations. The examples given here illustrate the usefulness of the technique in three distinct decision areas: (1) pricing and advertising, (2) a new product, and (3) packaging. [24] p. 77."

5.7 Focus group and social sciences

 "**Focus groups** can best be described as group interviews in which group interaction and discussion centers on a topic specified by the researcher (Morgan, 1988). The group interaction is expected to produce insights that would be difficult to obtain through individual interviews (Lengua etal., 1992; Morgan, 1988). Recently, there has been phenomenal growth in the use of focus groups in social science research (Morgan, 2002). This growth is likely due to the strengths of this method, which lends itself particularly well to social science research. Specifically, focus groups can be used for exploratory or confirmatory purposes (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). In addition, they are particularly useful for obtaining in-depth information in a relatively new and or understudied area, for generating hypotheses, and for evaluating new populations (Morgan, 1988; Stewart & Shamdasani). They also offer a means with which to obtain in-depth information from representatives of a target audience in a setting that encourages discussion (Crocket, Heller, Merkel, & Peterson, 1990). Finally, they provide an opportunity to gather large amounts of data in a relatively short time frame and typically at a lower cost than with other qualitative research methods (Morgan) [25] p. 261."

5.8 Exploratory review

 The focus group is another key strategy in market research that can serve as a "final filter" to separate good and bad strategies. Folch-Lyon & Trost (1981) says focus groups give insight into attitudes, opinions, motivations, and problems associated with human activity and are essential to understanding consumer behavior [20]. Morgan (1996)

says focus groups are used in two methods, self-contained and in combination with surveys and other research methods. Comparisons between the two methods help to reveal advantages and disadvantages of group interviews, which rely on the group to produce interaction and the moderator to guide this interaction [21]. Jon (1996) says the term focus group refers to a process in which an interviewer keeps a respondent on a topic without using structured questionnaires. A heterogeneous group of individuals is carefully selected. These individuals are focused on a particular topic using a particular media method/message that is being evaluated [22]. Hopkins (2007) raises questions about focus group methodologies, using a group with two participants, the effect that a group can have on an individual, and the potential of using the focus group setting to effect the individuals rather than to simply gather information about a product. [23]. Cox (1976) contends that the moderator's job in a focus group is to discretely drive the conversation of the group to topics that might help evaluate marketing hypothesis or reveal new ideas. [24]. Umaña-Taylor & Bámaca (2004) says that focus group interactions help individuals tap into insight that may otherwise be hidden from an interviewer. Focus groups also allows the researcher to gather a large amount of data in a relatively short time [25].

The idea of focus groups seems to already be well defined along with possible uses. When used with lessons learned from consumer behavior and survey research, focus groups can help develop new marketing strategies by helping researcher gain insight into more tacit motivations and rationales of the consumer as seen in Folch-Lyon [20]. There are multiple methods of implementing and learning from focus groups. Using multiple methods and later comparing the results helps validate the collected data and or offer new insight regarding focus group methodologies or target demographic as detailed by Morgan [21]. When focus groups work well researchers select appropriate group members and are able to steer the conversation so that data relevant to the marketing strategy is produced as seen in Jon [22]. Since questions regarding methodologies are likely, multiple methods should be used to compile robust data as alluded to by Morgan [21]. However, it is important that researchers try to identify and account for changes in individuals due to the group setting as mentioned by Hopkins [23]. Although it is important for a moderator to effectively steer the conversation great care should be taken to ensure that the moderator does not participate in the discussion. This might invalidate the data gathered by changing the opinions of group members as mentioned in Cox [24]. Focus groups have the potential to help individuals look at things in different ways and possibly gain new insight, because the group dynamics allow the interviewee to lower mental reservations as Umana& Taylor say [25].

6.   PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

6.2 Cultural influence & product development

"[…] each firm, whether consciously or not, chooses a culture. […] the searching firm may, for example, decide on a new research and development (R&D) site in Sweden over one in Taiwan, which represents a selection of the Swedish, rather than the Chinese, culture. Often the selection decision is based on traditional considerations, such as technical capabilities, financial resources, logistics, and market access. Yet, national culture, which is frequently overlooked, may have a potential bearing on the operation and outcomes of a new product program. Pertinently, then, what role if any does national culture have on new **product development**? To answer this question, an understanding of the possible link between two constructs, namely, national culture and new product development, is needed [26] p. 61."

6.3 Organization & product development

"In recent years a great deal of attention has been directed to new **product development**. The failure rate on new products is so high (four out of five) that management has been avidly searching for panaceas. One panacea frequently advanced is some kind of committee organization. This paper will argue that (1) organization is not a very important factor in new-product development and that (2), although organizational plans may facilitate successful product development, such plans will be fruitless unless accompanied by a dynamic innovating attitude on the part of both top management and the whole company organization. [27] p. 128."

6.4 Timing & product development

"Many technology-driven firms compete on new **product development** cycle time. Stalk (1988) coined the term time-based competition to highlight the importance of quick time-to-market in today's intensive competitive environment. Clark (1989) estimates that for a $10,000 car, each day of delay in introducing a new model represents a $1 million loss in profit. A recent McKinsey study reports that, on average, companies lose 33% of after-tax profit when they ship products six months late, as compared with losses of 3.5% when they overspend 50% on product development. In their book Developing Products in Half the Time, Smith and Reinertsen (1991) argue that it is necessary to adopt an incremental approach to product innovation in order to reduce time to market. This is because incremental product innovation reduces the amount of effort and learning that must be done and, consequently, the amount of time needed to invest in the new product prior to its launch. Such a perspective has led some companies (e.g., General Electric, Hewlett Packard) to adopt time-to-market as their principal product development metric. [28] p. 173."

6.5 Resource sharing & product development

"Scholars have examined how various kinds of inter organizational relationships enable firms to gain access to other organizations' knowledge bases and resources (Jarillo

1987; Varadarajan and Cunningham 1995) and have argued that such access can enable novel connections (Kogut and Zander 1992), stimulate broader perspectives and synthesis (Dewar and Dutton 1986), and spread out the risks and costs associated with innovation (Sivadas and Dwyer 2000). This translates into benefits for a firm's innovative capability, which is observable as outcomes such as a higher number of patents or new products (Ahuja 2000; Wuyts, Dutta, and Stremersch 2004), the perceived success of new product development (Sivadas and Dwyer 2000), creativity (Im and Workman 2004), new **product development** speed (Rindfleisch and Moorman 2001), and profitability (Wuyts, Dutta, and Stremersch 2004). External relationships have been thought to be of particular relevance for young firms with limited internal resources and experience (Jarillo 1989) and for those in technology-based industries, in which knowledge creation and application are key to achieving competitive advantage (Eisenhardt and Schoon hoven 1990; Sorensen and Stuart 2000). [29] p. 132."

6.6 Collaboration in product development

"In the continual search for competitive advantage, firms try to develop innovative new products as quickly as possible. The importance of new **product development** for long-term competitive success is widely recognized by the marketing community (for a review, see Hennart and Szy- manski 2001). In general, marketing has viewed the development of new products from the perspective of an isolated firm engaged in solo activity. Thus, the major thrust of extant new product development research has been on internal processes, such as the formation and coordination of new product development teams (e.g., Olson, Walker, and Reukert 1995; Sarin and Mahajan 2001) and the role of organizational culture in new product development success (e.g., Deshpande, Farley, and Webster 1993; Moorman 1995). Because of the growth of global competition, rapid technological advances, and increasing demands from customers, many firms realize that they need help from external organizations, such as customers, suppliers, and even competitors, to develop innovative and timely new products (Wind and Mahajan 1997). In response, an increasing number of marketing studies have begun to examine new product development alliances (Rindfleisch and Moorman 2001, 2003; Sivadas and Dwyer 2000). However, research suggests that formal alliances represent only a small fraction of inter organizational influence on new product development because much of this influence comes in the form of informal information sharing rather than formal agreements (Allen 1983; Von Hippel 1987). To date, the marketing literature has little to contribute to the nature or the impact of this informal information sharing on new product development activities. [30] p. 44."2."

6.7 New products vs. current state

"Firms pursue innovative products as part of their competitive strategies because of the products' potential to yield significant rewards in the marketplace (Damanpour,

1991; Henderson & Clark,1990). New **product development** projects, however, embody the traditional conflict in firms between interest in innovation and interest in efficiency (Leonard-Barton, 1992). Termination of a new product development project therefore presents a difficult and complex decision that has significant strategic implications for an organization (Brockhoff, 1994). Financial considerations, performance forecasts, uncertainties about technological development, and organizational politics all come together in this complex decision (Souder, 1987). As a consequence, failing projects may linger, consuming resources better used in other endeavors (Schmidt & Calantone, 1998). For all these reasons, managers and researchers have had a long-standing interest in understanding how such termination decisions are made. [31] p. 419."

6.8 Exploratory Review

The Product development process in itself can be a marketing strategy. Choices made in product development can affect a wide range of internal and external business issues. Nakata & Sivakumar (1996) says firms can sometimes unintentionally incorporate aspects of culture in to the development process by simply choosing a research and development site [26]. McCarthy (1959) says that new product developments are most likely to fail. An innovative attitude is needed thought the whole organization to overcome the statistic of failure [27]. Cohen (1996) says that new product development defines the cycle time of technology driven business. If new product roll outs don't meet this accelerated cycle time companies risk major losses in profit. So much so that it's worth over spending on the cost of new product development to ensure on time delivery. Incremental product development is a method for ensuring deliveries are on time [28]. Yli-Renko & Janakiraman (2008) says that sharing resources enables organizations to take advantage of a broader prospective and synthesis that will yield increased innovative capabilities, total number of new products, and result in successful new product developments [29]. Ganesan (2005) says that new product development is vital to the long term success of organizations. Although new product development has traditionally been isolated to a small group within a company, globalization and technology advancement, successful organizations need to get their customers and suppliers involved in the new product development process [30]. Green (2003) says new product development is vulnerable to traditional conflicts between innovation and efficiency. Because of this new product development sometimes gets terminated, resulting in political, financial, and strategic problems that are not always predictable [31]. Product development is important. Market researches should make an effort to be involved in the product development process in order to better serve the consumer. Information from surveys and focus groups can help new product developers identify and maintain a culture that is aligned with the business' strategic goals. This helps to

avoid incorporation of unintended cultural aspects into new product development as mentioned by Nakata [26]. Before attempting the process of creating a new product the entire organization from top management to hourly workers should agree to and accept the challenge of embracing innovation as detailed by McCarthy [27]. The consumer's attention span and the pace of innovation is dynamic and always changing. Any business that ignores this fact risks significant losses in growth and sustainability as Cohen mentions [28]. The speed of innovation, globalization, and consumer demand are so rapid that firms sometimes pursue resource sharing. In doing so a firm might gain access to ideas and practices that would otherwise take a lot of time to develop in an isolated setting as Yili-Renko [29], says. Similarly globalization and the speed of innovation require organizations to work with all aspects of their businesses in order to meet customer demand. Input from suppliers and customers is often needed to increase the effectiveness of new venture as Ganesan [30] says. Firms need to make strategic priorities. The future of an organization sometimes hinges on the effectiveness of new product development. However the current state of a business often hinges on high efficiency. New product development and high efficiency performance often affect each other negatively. There has to be a predetermined level of inefficiency that a firm is willing to absorb in order to help secure the future. This along with a commitment to innovation might be able to help overcome political and strategic problems associated with new product development as detailed by Green [31].

7. DISCUSSION

As mentioned before market research can be a difficult, it is a time intensive process used to leverage useful data which comes from comes from representatives (consumers) of the market that will be impacted [3] and there is no quick way to gather and review all relevant information. Understanding problems that consumers face, gathering/recording input, and analyze how the data collected affects goods and services all need to be accomplished [4]. Market research can be essential to the success of new products. Products developed and marketed without considering the problems and preferences of the consumer will have a hard time succeeding [2]. Although proprietary information might be divulged via marketing research methods, information gained can be vital to sustaining effective market research [5]. All relevant information is needed to make good marketing decisions [6] these decisions should primarily be based on consumer needs [7].

Consumer behavior deals with the motivations and circumstances that can influence a consumer's decision making. There have been questions regarding whether consumer behavior studies should be a field unto itself but without market research, consumer behavior becomes a vague topic of study that is hard to define. The debates

regarding consumer behavior helps to reaffirm the topic's importance to market research [10]. There are some similarities between **consumer and industrial market habits** [8] however researchers should take proper precautions when making predictions based on these similarities since industrial habits and consumer habits can have different drivers [9]. **Spatial and temporal segmentation** [11], as well as **psychological** drivers [12] for example are issues that can make consumer marketing strategies different from industrial marketing strategies. Studies of consumer behavior can help with immigrant assimilation [13] but the results are not easy to predict. Any benefits from marketing activities should happen naturally. Integrating sociological benefits into marketing activity is more an act of social policy making than a business activity.

Surveys of both private consumers and the industrial market are useful methods for getting the most out of market researching efforts. Although increased **complexity and data density** of surveys might reduce **efficacy**, as organizations continue to realize the usefulness of surveys it will continue to develop into better tools. These developments will naturally tend to mitigate the problems caused by increased complexity and be more useful in interpreting consumer/ market behavior while accounting for changes in the way consumers absorb information [14]. With this in mind **raw consumer data** can be supplemental [19], helping to develop pricing and promotional strategies. Today's markets are often strewn across nations [15], this raw data from surveys can help to highlight similarities and differences between national markets [16]. In addition surveys help to inform on the quality of service strategies [18] to help ensure successful product offerings. In this sense survey techniques can truly be a foundation for market research [17].

A focus group can be a data gathering tool on its own or it can utilize data gather from surveys and consumer behavior studies to better design marketing strategies. This marketing tool helps to uncover the more **tacit motivations** of consumers [20]. Using multiple approaches to implementing focus groups and then comparing results can be used as a validation method [21]. Using multiple approaches also helps to answer questions regarding methodologies during peer review. When focus groups work well, researchers select appropriate group members and make efforts to **steer the conversation** [22]. As well as identify and account for the changes in individuals due to the group interactions [23] and should ensure that the **moderator** does invalidate data by changing the opinions of group members [24]. One of the most difficult variables to control and is **group dynamics** since this can affect the mental reservations or even the overall opinion of the interviewee [25].

Product development is a lengthy and complex process aimed at delivering more value to the consumer. When marketing is involved in the product development process, the customer is better served. The process is a good forum for integrating ideas born from surveys, focus groups, and

other marketing tools. Conversely, surveys and focus groups can help shape the product **development process**, helping to avoid pitfalls to customer satisfaction [26]. The entire organization should be committed to this process. A culture that embraces **innovation** is especially desired [27] because of the rapid pace of global innovation and changes in **consumer interactions** [28]. This rapid growth has led to recent trends of **resource sharing** to tackle large product development problems [29]. Similarly organizations have started to rely on innovative contributions   from all aspects of the businesses to

effectively deliver new products [30]. There needs to be a balance between new product development which can be essential to an organization's survival and effective current product management. This is a balance between risk/innovation and consistency/efficiency. This balance along with a consistent commitment to innovation can help overcome problems associated with new product development [31].

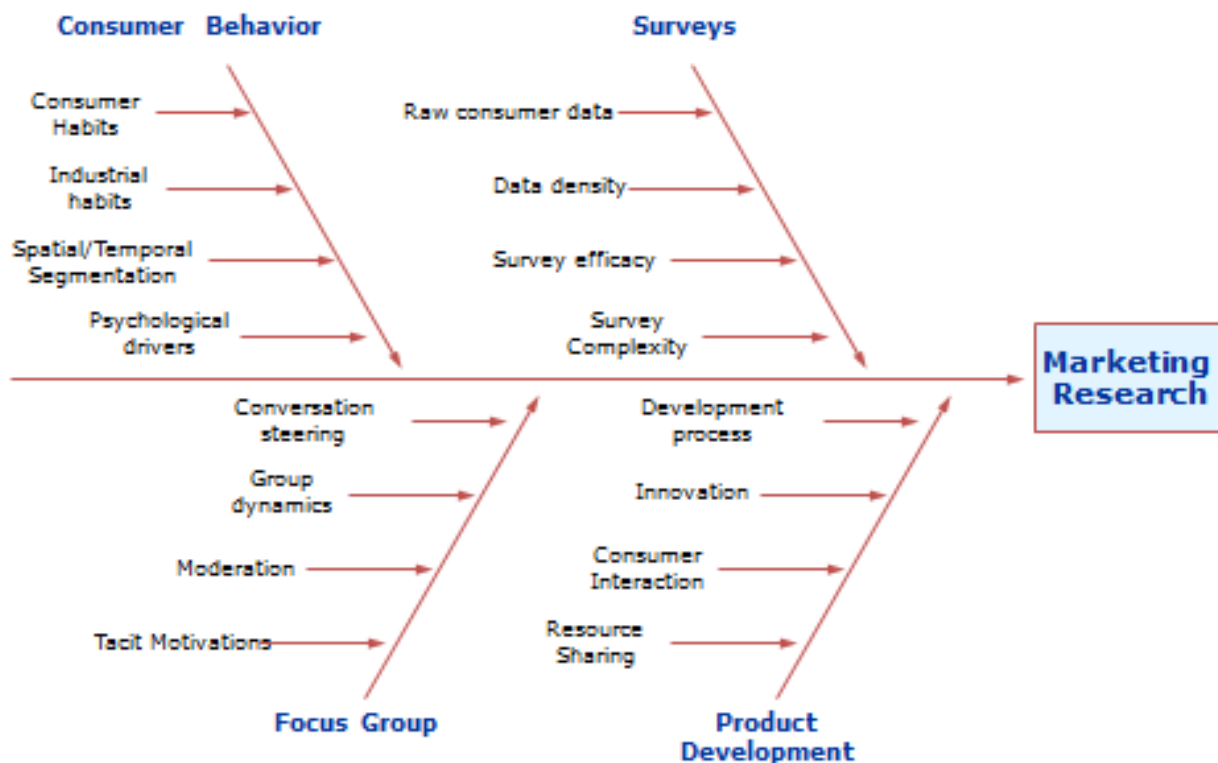**Revised Model of Lean Manufacturing and Implementation**

Figure 3: Expanded Model of Marketing Research based on findings

Figure 3 above shows an expanded model of marketing research strategies and factors that can have both positive and negative effects on marketing efforts. The research discussed above was used to expand the four original strategies of marketing research from Figure 2. All of the expanded components have potential for future research.

8.   CONTRIBUTION AND NEW INSIGHT

Market research is a time intensive process that has at a minimum four strategies. The first strategy identified by this research process is Consumer behavior. Motivations of consumer behavior include **consumer and industrial market habits,** [8] **Spatial and temporal segmentation** [11], as well as **psychological** drivers [12]. Having a good grasp of consumer behavior trends will make marketing efforts more successful. For example, research can be used

to analyze consumer reactions to systematic events and plan marketing activity accordingly. If research shows that sales of home generators increase following long power outages, this might be a marketing opportunity to increase generator sales.

The second strategy identified is consumer surveys. This strategy can be used to test hypothesis and benchmark current marketing strategies. Important elements are the **complexity** of the survey, the **data density** resulting from the survey design, the **efficacy** of the survey, that is to say do how well do the designed questions yield useful data [14], and determining the useful limit and purpose of **raw consumer data** [19] . Good survey use can help keep track of the vitality of specific marketing activities. For example surveys can be taken before and after the implementation of new marketing activities. If a strong correlation can be

identified between the marketing activity and change in survey response, a marketer can know what to change, what to continue, or whether the activities should be stopped.

The third strategy identified was the focus group. A strategy which can help show the effects of more **tacit motivations** [20]. This tool depends heavily on efforts to **steer the conversation** [22], having a good **moderator** [24], and paying attention to **group dynamics** [25]. The focus group is a good filter for the strategies mentioned previously as well as other strategies not mentioned in this paper. Surveys, behavior studies and new product development strategies can generate a lot of information for marketing purposes. However, without the proper context, this information cannot be fully utilized. For example behavior analysis might show you that consumers purchase home generators at a higher rate after severe power outages but a focus group might hypothetically show that consumers do this because the experience is fresh in their minds. With this information you would know that marketing efforts to increase generator sales might be more useful within the first week of an incident rather than a month after an incident when the impact has faded.

The final strategy which can affect market research is product development. This activity is governed by the product **development process**, [26], embracing **innovation,** [27], changes in **consumer interactions** [28] and in recent times **resource sharing** to tackle large problems [29]. Innovation and resource sharing efforts of product development drive innovation in marketing strategies. When introducing a new product it can be unclear as to how traditional marketing tools will work. The product development process can help with the evaluation and evolution of marketing tools. A good example of this is e-commerce. With the increase in internet shopping and digital offerings, traditional marketing needed to evolve to take advantage of new methods of reaching consumers such as web advertisement.

9. CONCLUSION

Due to today's dynamic business environment, sound methods of marketing are essential to a business' success. Figure 3 shows the strategies factors of market research identified in this research effort. The purpose of this article was to review marketing research strategies to gain further understand and help summarize available marketing research.

The approach laid out by [1] helped to summarize previous studies and inspired a model which identifies important strategies of market research. Exploration of findings resulted in a more detailed model of market research strategies; see figure 3. Market research can be time intensive; to help simplify this process for new market research students four strategies of marketing research were identified. Consumer behavior, surveys focus groups,

and product development. The articles reviewed indicate that these four can have positive effects on marketing research activities when used together. Surveys and focus groups can provide insight into consumer behavior which in turn can help guide product development. The consumer benefits greatly when the right balance between the four factors is obtained.

However a basis for further refinement of market research strategies was created, see figure 3. Further research to expand upon or eliminate the factors identified will be necessary. Further research on the effects of these factors upon each other is also needed. Since firms have limited resources it may not be efficient to dedicate an equal amount of resources to all four factors. For spending three quarters of available resources on consumer behavior, conducting surveys , and convening focus groups, might not be the best use of resources for a company that needs to launch a new product in a short amount of time.

Since this research is based on an assignment with a 1 semester deadline, time is a major limitation. Expanding upon the two aforementioned items was not possible. A more thorough exploration of the topic, strategies, and factor relations will be conducted in a follow up project. This follow up project will include "Real World" testing of the model sown in Figure 3 to evaluate a new product using focus groups, surveys, and data from consumer behavior analysis. It will also include analysis which will yield a "Strategy-factor hierarchy" or a method to rank the importance of different strategies, factors, and the proportion of resources that should be allocated.

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