

International Journal of Research in Marketing Management and Sales



E-ISSN: 2663-3337

P-ISSN: 2663-3329

www.marketingjournal.net

IJRMMS 2025; 7(1): 68-78

Received: 10-11-2024

Accepted: 18-12-2024

Dr. Abdullah Mahmoud

Abdullah

Assistant Professor, College of

Administration and

Economics, Tikrit University,

Iraq

Causes of the marketing gap in the general company for the manufacture of medicines and medical supplies in Samarra

Abdullah Mahmoud Abdullah

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33545/26633329.2025.v7.i1a.214>

Abstract

The marketing gap for companies in general and the General Company for Medicines in Samarra represents a major challenge that may affect the company's strategic positions and its survival in the market. The research aimed to identify and diagnose the causes of the marketing gap in the General Company for the Manufacture of Medicines and Medical Supplies in Samarra. The research community was represented by (82) individuals from department managers and specialists in the marketing department. A random (intentional) sample of (74) individuals was chosen to represent the research community correctly. Data from (69) valid questionnaires were analyzed for analysis, using the structural equation modeling with its standard and structural models within the program (SMART PLS, 4) to analyze the data. The research reached the most important results: The availability of the causes of the marketing gap in the researched company with varying degrees of convergence, but the absolute importance was due to the reason for competition, which represented the main factor in the occurrence of the marketing gap, followed by the dimensions of value and Innovation in terms of causing the marketing gap, while the reason for customer defection represented less importance, and this may be attributed to The exclusive agent of the researched company was approved, and thus the research presented a set of recommendations, the most important of which was to focus on enhancing the company's competitive capabilities by providing national protection for its products, as well as enhancing the aspects of research and development that represent the essence of the creative process to create superior value for the customer. This represents the axis of the process of addressing the marketing gap in the pharmaceutical company. The research also recommends addressing variables that have a significant impact on creating the marketing gap, including conflict of interest, weak decision-making and vision in the researched management.

Keywords: Marketing gap, innovation, value, competition and customer defection

Introduction

Companies realize the importance of knowing their marketing environment and understanding the market needs, which puts them in a better position than those companies that do not know, understand and adapt to their marketing environment. Failure to understand market requirements and variables is the main cause of the marketing gap in these companies and their distancing from achieving their main goals that they aspire to. The marketing gap is one of the things that need great care, especially in markets that witness intense competition. It is necessary to pay attention to the causes of this gap, diagnose it and then treat it to ensure survival and obtain a large market share, which is reflected in the company's profitability and growth, which improves its ability to serve its customers and provide superior value, which is reflected in customer satisfaction and gaining their loyalty to maximize the company's value.

Perhaps the main reason that enters into the formation of the marketing gap, as indicated by ((Thiruchanuru & Bharana, 2018: 56) ^[6] is the lack of understanding of customers' perceptions and assumptions about the achieved value, which causes a state of dissonance among customers that is reflected in the future on the achieved value of the company and its profits, and the failure to reach that value is the result of a set of causes that will ultimately lead to the achievement of a marketing gap for the company. The question in its content (Hull, 1999: 38) ^[17] comes to ask about what makes companies suffer from a marketing gap? How are its causes distinguished? Does this gap vary from one company to another according to its capabilities? From these questions comes this research as a serious

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Abdullah Mahmoud

Abdullah

Assistant Professor, College of

Administration and

Economics, Tikrit University,

Iraq

intellectual attempt to philosophically insight into the causes of that gap, diagnose its availability, and determine methods of addressing it, specifically in the General Company for Pharmaceutical Industries and Medical Supplies in Samarra (SDI).

The first axis: the methodological framework

First: the research problem

A review of the previous literature to analyze the phenomenon of interest and research, represented by the causes of the marketing gap in pharmaceutical companies, shows specialists and researchers that it has become a fundamental focus and has in turn taken a large part of theoretical and applied interest, whether in the academic or applied field, on the one hand. On the other hand, the follower of the early indications of (Hull, 1999: 38) ^[17] and the study of Savvides, 2000: 34) ^[44], in addition to recent studies (Panteleval & Oyner, 2012: 4) ^[36] that gave a gradation and accumulation of knowledge about the knowledge gap and the extent of its connection to multiple causes, including value, competition, Innovation, customer dissonance or defection. The blending and interconnection of ideas with the field reality of the General Company for Pharmaceutical Industries and Medical Supplies in Samarra, which operates in highly competitive and complex markets, including the Iraqi markets, which witness highly complex competition and the absence of strict regulatory systems on local and imported pharmaceutical products, made it face major marketing challenges, especially since the pressures of price competition from international companies put it in a very difficult position, in addition to the value achieved by customers. This was greatly reflected in the emergence of real marketing quality faced by local companies, including the pharmaceutical company under study. These justifications made the research seek to identify the causes of this gap and work to find appropriate solutions for it.

Hence, the research problem emerges in a main question: "To what extent are the causes of the marketing gap available in the pharmaceutical company under study? And what is the importance of each cause if it is available?" Because what the organization of the company under study appears to be, and from our follow-up and repeated visits to it, makes it a fertile field for such trends.

Second: The importance of the research

The importance of the research is evident in addressing a very important topic that represents a real challenge facing most of our local companies, many of which have become a thing of the past and the few remaining are in their last gasp because they are unable to confront the challenges and main causes of such marketing gaps suffered by large and leading companies, so how about our emerging companies? The research has diagnosed real and realistic manifestations of the marketing gap, whether directly or indirectly, measured or unmeasured, in the General Pharmaceutical Company in Samarra, similar to international organizations, but it differs from other local companies, especially private companies.

Third: Research objectives

The research aims to determine its objectives and philosophical and standard orientations in knowing the availability of the causes of the marketing gap in the pharmaceutical company under study, and the extent of the availability of those causes, in addition to knowing which of these causes has gained the utmost importance and been given attention in the company, unlike other causes.

Fourth: The hypothetical research plan

The research plan represents the foundation of the research and the method of its path in determining its objectives. Therefore, a research plan was determined that is consistent with its objectives and hypotheses, as in Figure (1):

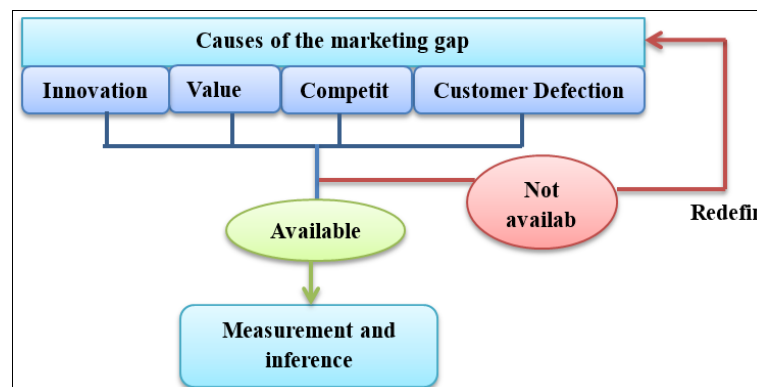


Fig 1: Hypothetical research plan

Fifth: Research methodology and philosophy

The research is based on determining its research orientations on the positivist and quantitative philosophy (The descriptive analytical method) that seeks to determine the hypotheses between the studied variables and determine the relationships through the application of non-parametric tests based on the deductive approach to deduce and derive its hypotheses (Admas *et al*, 2007:30) ^[2], and the questionnaire was relied upon to collect data according to the level scale (Likert, 5).

Sixth: The research community and its sample

The General Company for the Manufacture of Medicines

and Medical Supplies in Samarra represented the field of the current research. The research community was represented by the managers and specialists in the marketing department, numbering (82) individuals, while the research sample was represented by (74) individuals to represent the research community correctly according to Stephen Thompson's equation, from which (69) were analyzed.

Seventh: Research limits

The spatial limits of the research were represented by the General Company for the Manufacture of Medicines and Medical Supplies in Samarra, while its temporal limits were limited to 4/15/2024 - 1/1/2025, while its human limits were

represented by department managers and specialized workers in the marketing department in the company under study.

The second axis: The theoretical framework

First: The marketing gap

The concept

The marketing gap is one of the things that needs to be taken care of greatly, especially in markets that witness intense competition between organizations in order to gain the largest possible market share and the desire of each of them to outperform its competitors in the market. Perhaps the main reason that enters into the formation of the marketing gap is the failure to interpret customer perceptions correctly (Thiruchanuru & Bharana, 2018: 56)^[6], as it is a disappointment that affects the customer and prevents him from continuing to communicate with the company in the future. This situation occurs with organizations in the absence of a strategic vision and through ignoring the customer's needs and ending with errors derived from poor external communications with customers (Oyner & Panteleval, 2012: 4)^[36]. When an organization's products cannot meet the needs of its customers, it is evidence of the existence of a gap in the marketing mix of that company (Hull, 1999: 38)^[7]. Because the relationship between the customer and the company is a reciprocal relationship, each party works to calculate the value of the purchase deal in its favor. The company calculates it through the cost and price of the product, and the customer studies it through the benefits gained versus the potential costs. Therefore, one of the reasons for the emergence of the gap is the realization of the existence of a gap in the received value (Bakutyte & Grundey, 2012, 101)^[5].

The company that seeks to obtain an advanced competitive position in the market is constantly working to narrow the gap between the value embedded in its products and the constantly renewed expectations of its customers (Savvides, 2000: 34)^[44]. When the performance of a product is less than the customer's expectations, this leads to customer dissatisfaction and vice versa, and these feelings cause a shift in the customer as to whether he will repeat the purchase process again and speak about the company and its products in a positive way or whether he will take a negative position towards the company and its products (Keller & Kotler, 2006: 198)^[20]. We see that the marketing gap is represented in the case of customers' reluctance to deal with the company's products completely or partially, due to internal problems related to the company itself or external problems that emerge as a result of competition and the markets in which the company operates, which leads to a decline in marketing activities and the inability to complete the drawn plans and achieve the desired goals.

2. Relationships and derivation of hypotheses

The marketing gap has been referred to in the marketing management literature, either directly or indirectly, according to (Hull, 1999: 38)^[17] and (Bakutyte & Grundey, 2012, 101)^[5] (198: 2006 (Keller & Kotler, as a dissonance and disappointment that afflicts the customer and prevents continued communication with the company in the future. When an organization's products cannot meet the needs of its customers, this indicates a weakness in its marketing mix, and the occurrence of this gap has a set of causes: creative activities, value provided to customers, customer

defection, as well as the strength of competition. It is not possible to identify a cause in itself to judge the marketing gap, but there may be more than one cause in talking about this gap. (Lumpkin & Dess, 2001: 431)^[24] indicated that Innovation sheds light on the tendency to experiment to support new ideas and depart from established practices. In addition, a group of researchers wondered about the possibility of realizing the understanding of the marketing gap through two perspectives: the internal perspective, which represents the internal reasons for the occurrence of this gap, including the cause of Innovation and value, which is related to the capabilities and potential of the company, and the external perspective, which is in contact with the market and customer needs, namely customer defection and competition, which is also based primarily on the adaptive perspective of the organization, which is based primarily on the resources and capabilities that the company also possesses. According to what was mentioned, the marketing management literature that emphasizes the marketing gap has begun to mature more recently, especially after the major transformations in the field of progress in the technology adopted in marketing activities, in addition to the major changes in customer behaviors that have developed and changed greatly after Covid 20. This maturity began with an attempt to modify the model of the five main satisfaction gaps that organizations must address in pursuit of meeting customer expectations. (Mobilizer, 2020: 21)^[29] indicated that the process of controlling the causes of the marketing gap is no longer optional, but rather a necessary matter that requires everyone to diagnose and address it. (Abbas and Al-Hamdani, 2022: 70)^[1] indicated a model that identifies the causes of the marketing gap from four reasons (structural flexibility, Innovation, competition, long-term planning). While in his model (Al-Khadiri, 2003: 49)^[23] he identified two main causes, which are (weak vision and weak administrative decision), which was supported by (Al-Kubaisi, 2010), (Al-Ruwaili, 2011), (Al-Saud, 2012)^[54], and (Al-Shahrani, 2013)^[55]. Suggested that the marketing gaps are (Customer gap, product provider gap which includes (Listening gap, product design gap, product performance gap (Value) and communication gap) (Sanskriti, 2019). Therefore, identifying the causes of the marketing gap can be formulated through the theoretical models presented by the researchers and divided into internal and external causes and projected onto the researched field and verifying their suitability. When visiting the researched field and interviewing the specialized individuals in the marketing departments and senior management, the theoretical models were presented to them and compared with the real field problem that the company suffers from in its marketing activities. The following dimensions were identified:

Innovation: Innovation is an essential element of competitiveness. It is a vital and effective part of organizations, whether at the level of their outputs, operations, or organizational practices. It helps organizations overcome the status quo in which they operate (Boabeng & Li, 2018: 67)^[7]. And equipping markets with new technologies and products that benefit consumers, producers, and society as a whole (Kang, 2020: 2)^[19], especially after trade barriers became very low, which sparked competition increasingly in a way that led to increasing innovation rather than limiting it (Lim *et al*, 2018: 2)^[23]. Innovation means the company's tendency to

adopt new ideas, creative processes and experimentation that result in new products or services, as mentioned by (Kropp *et al*, 2008: 104) ^[21] (Urban & Barreria, 2010: 332) ^[48] or new technological processes according to (Miller, 1987) ^[52] (Morgan *et al*, 2014: 6) ^[30]. (Zehir *et al*, 2015: 360) ^[51] adds that Innovation reflects the constant readiness to support innovation and Innovation in providing new products or services, in addition to research and development efforts, without which the company cannot continue or survive (Chen *et al*, 2011: 2) ^[9]. The market is a competitive field, so all organizations operating in it are forced to escalate their performance (Qadir, 2017: 199) ^[38]. Innovation plays a major and effective role in leading organizations towards success and growth (Okeyo, *et al*, 2016: 199) ^[33]. It helps them enter new markets, increase their market share and provide them with a competitive advantage (Boabeng & Li, 2018: 67) ^[7]. This enables organizations to overcome competitors in the market (Qureshi, 2018: 59) ^[39] and break the constraints of competition and achieve distinction (Wallet & Torre, 2013: 1) ^[46].

The financial performance of organizations is affected by marketing performance through sales growth, market share, creation of new products, and increased sales activities (Ngamsutti, 2016: 342) ^[31]. Innovation is a key factor in improving profits and keeping pace with market dynamics, affecting marketing performance (Rosmayani *et al*, 2016: 532) ^[41]. Innovation helps organizations improve their performance and at the same time leads to a decline in the performance of their competitors. It has a good face that pleases the creative company and its customers in the market, and a bad face that annoys competitors (Qadir, 2017: 58) ^[38]. Therefore, we find that organizations that are able to achieve success from Innovation lead them to be market leaders and can replace the previous market leader (Parra & Marshall, 2019: 3) ^[27].

In highly competitive markets, organizations operating in them must continue to innovate in order to be able to overcome competitors (Kang, 2020: 4) ^[19]. Protect the company and its business from external threats and transform its strengths into an effective competitive advantage that paves the way for its success in the market (Khakimov & Valitov, 2015: 716) ^[49]. Innovation provides benefits and advantages to the organization that adopts it and a threatening message to competitors (Qadir, 2017: 58) ^[38]. This is what makes it the leader in the market, and creates a gap between the leader and its competitors in the market through the profits that the leader achieves at the expense of competitors in the market (Parra & Marshall, 2019: 3) ^[27]. Innovation is a positive factor whose outputs are welcomed and accepted by customers. A company that achieves some Innovation will achieve positive progress at the expense of its competitors. Therefore, if a competitor brings a new creative approach to the market, this will lead to the emergence of a gap between the creative person and the rest of the organizations in the market. This gap will confuse the rest of the organizations from reaching the desired goals.

B. Value: It is the true value that hides within it the secret of the relationship that links the customer to the company. Although value represents a wide-ranging field, what concerns us is the extent to which poor attention to it affects the emergence of the marketing gap. It can be said that the reason for the existence of organizations is the outputs they

provide (Wright, 2004: 204) ^[50]. The customer is the person or entity that interacts with those outputs after they reach the market (Rosmayani *et al*, 2016: 525) ^[41]. The company's horizons of interaction with its customers should be based on the past and present in order to be able to provide increasing value in the eyes of its customers (Savolainen, 2010: 38) ^[43]. Value for the customer is the relationship between the sacrifices necessary to obtain certain benefits (Lamb *et al*, 2011: 7) ^[22]. Organizations aspire to repeat purchases and achieve high profits only through building and advantages that carry high value for the customer (Kotler & Keller, 2006: 150) ^[20]. However, operating in a competitive environment and working to provide better value to the customer than competitors in the market has never been an easy task (Grundy & Bakutyte, 2012: 100) ^[5], especially since today we are dealing with a more rational customer in dealing and choosing, in addition to the availability of available options (Kotler & Keller, 2006: 150) ^[20]. Organizations must realize that the relationship that the customer accepts to establish with the company has a goal that the latter seeks to achieve behind it (Hollmann, 2014: 274) ^[16].

Parasuraman, & Bere indicated in the GAP model that ignoring customer needs or misunderstanding them by the company in general leads to the emergence of gaps that disappoint the customer (Panteleeva & Oyner, 2012: 4) ^[36]. Many organizations that failed were due to giving the issue of profit great importance in most of their actions, while value and its creation processes were given very little attention (Reichheld, 1996: 57) ^[40]. Presenting poor value propositions to the market that are not relevant to the needs of the market target is the result of not accurately defining the needs and skipping the required feasibility studies (Mazambani & Mutambara, 2017: 44) ^[28]. Many organizations that face gaps in the value they provide to customers are the result of their failure to align the value creation for the customer and what he aspires to obtain on the one hand and the value of the brand that it owns on the other hand (Kotler & Keller, 2006: 143) ^[20]. If there is a gap and mismatch between the company's orientations and the customer's needs, the latter's relationship with the company is threatened with extinction (Jain, 2000: 23) ^[18]. The basis of the buying and selling process between the company and the customer is the exchange of value in order to meet a need. If the value provided by the company does not rise to the level of meeting that need or provides better value offers in the market, then choosing it becomes very difficult, and puts the company in a position that prevents it from achieving its goals.

C. Competition: The concept of competition refers to the existence of two or more parties working separately and independently to secure the needs of a third party by providing the best value for it (Tes, 2009: 265) ^[47]. The space occupied by each competitor in the market, and the extent of its proximity or distance from the customer, is based on the value of its products and the benefits that the customer can gain from dealing with it (Savvides, 2000: 34) ^[44]. As for the distance separating the competitors and the extent of their proximity or distance, it is based on the offers presented by them and the capabilities they possess to satisfy the same customer (Keller & Kotler, 2006: 366) ^[20]. The issue of competition is not a coincidence, but rather it is rooted in the foundation of the economic structure (Porter, 1980: 3) ^[37]. Every competitor in the market strives to

overcome its competitors (Jain, 2000: 73) ^[18]. This aggressiveness by competitors reduces the opportunities and response possibilities, even though the market represents a full opportunity for doing business (Eriksson & Hilletoft, 2011: 3) ^[15].

All marketing activities revolve around a basic pillar, which is the customer (Alghamdi, 2016: 144) ^[4]. Every competitor seeks to make various changes in order to enhance customer expectations (Vafaie & Mahdi, 2016: 2376) ^[26]. Many strategic moves that were well prepared became faltering and prevented achieving success and reaching their basic goals due to the bad reactions adopted by competitors in the market (Porter, 1980: 88) ^[37]. This is very clear in existing markets with active commercial activity that encourage competitors in the market to quickly retaliate (Chen *et al.*, 2010: 1538) ^[8]. The competitive alternatives offered directly affect customer expectations (Savolainen, 2010: 28) ^[43]. Therefore, switching from one competitor to another is not difficult for the customer, especially if this switch achieves the same or more satisfaction than previous dealings (Sethapan, 2004: 56) ^[45]. What increases the customer's desire to deal with one competitor over another is the attractiveness of its competitive moves (Luoma *et al.*, 2017: 11) ^[25].

As a result, there is a downward spiral experienced by competitors in the market in order to maintain their position and market share (Porter, 1980: 101) ^[37]. The more intense this competition is, the lower the rates of profits planned to be achieved (Parra & Marshall, 2019: 8) ^[27]. Each organization moves to satisfy the needs of its customers and satisfy their desires, which makes it close to them and keep pace with the changes they desire, but the dilemma is that competitors consider these same moves to be directed against them or at their expense, which is what sparks competitive movement and ignites it. If an organization succeeds in moving towards its customers and is able to be close to them, it will be a reason for introducing a gap in the marketing plans of other organizations, and will leave a great distance between it and its competitors in the market. The two dimensions (Innovation and value) are integrated in a successive and overlapping manner that achieves offensive competitiveness, which expresses the offensive position of how the company competes against its competitors, which is the logical basis for the competitive strategies (Low-cost leadership, differentiation, focus) proposed by (Porter, 1980) ^[37]. Because the business world is in constant change, this requires either maintaining the status quo, which is difficult, or continuous movement towards gaining or acquiring new markets, and thus it becomes the effort that the company makes in order to outperform competitors by maneuvering with them.

D. Customer churn: is often considered the core of a company's business and focus of its interest, but it is often modern in temperament, has renewed tastes, has developed needs, loves change, and is supported by the presence of various required and renewed alternatives in the market. Therefore, expectations of customer churn from the company are an existing condition as long as the conditions that serve that churn are present, and organizations must be prepared to deal with that condition if it occurs and becomes a reality. Customer churn means that the company loses its customer completely or partially (Ngcobo, 2002: 10) ^[32]. This may happen as a result of the obsolescence of the company's products and failure to win the initiatives of its

customers (Savolainen, 2010: 38) ^[43]. It is therefore a process through which the customer aims to reduce the size of the business relationship with the company (Hollmann *et al.*, 2014: 258) ^[16] or it is a decision taken by the customer to make his business relationship with the company prevent continuation (Gualco, 2014: 8) ^[12]. Regardless of the reason that led to the enlightenment of the idea of customer defection, defection is a negative situation facing business organizations and means that the customer is no longer a customer of the organization and has been acquired by a competitor in the market. It is worth noting that maintaining a certain position in the market is not an easy matter for a company, especially in the contemporary environment (Rujbr, 2016: 7) ^[42].

Perhaps one of the most important reasons that led to the defection of many customers from dealing with many organizations is the latter's focus on profit (Reichheld, 1996: 57) ^[40]. And not realizing the fact that cash flows and profits cannot appear and increase without customer loyalty (Ngcobo, 2002: 7) ^[32]. And the customer's cessation of dealing with the company represents a clear indication of the loss of the customer from the company's hands and permanently (Donkers *et al.*, 2007: 172) ^[11]. Therefore, it can be said that the existence of a loyal customer to the organization is not a random case that happened by chance, but rather a positive result of previous initiatives by the company towards its customers, and one of the most important of these initiatives is the value that the customer receives from dealing with the company (Reichheld, 1996: 57) ^[40]. The company must understand well the goal that the customer seeks to achieve from dealing with the company (Hollmann *et al.*, 2014: 274) ^[16]. The company must realize that customer defection has causes and if those causes are left unaddressed, defection will affect other customers (Okyerere, 2018: 49) ^[34]. At the same time, the company must understand that its move to gain new customers provokes competitors to move to defend their market shares (Ngcobo, 2002: 9) ^[32]. Today's organizations must be entrepreneurial and work to realize the opportunity from the problem they face in their environment. That is, they make customer defection a guide to reveal existing points of failure and an early warning to identify areas that need improvement (Oliveira, 2019: 120) ^[35].

The three dimensions (Innovation, value and competitiveness) are integrated in a successive and overlapping manner that will help reduce customer defection, as confirmed by (Ngcobo, 2002: 9) ^[32]. Because the nature of the business environment is constantly changing and developing, this requires providing more Innovation and new values that keep pace with the development and change in its environment, which makes the company keep pace with the changes and developments related to the tastes of its customers. The customer is a free state that cannot be controlled directly, and if he feels that there is a better opportunity in dealing, his defection from the company will be immediate and without hesitation, and organizations must expect this to happen at any moment, and that their goals will not be achieved as planned.

However, the absolute truth dictates that each of these dimensions gives the company or provides it with unique capabilities to enhance its products and trends in general and reduce its marketing gap. Adopting Innovation means that the company will be more creative by allowing the presentation and implementation of new ideas. This does not mean confusion in its trends, but on the contrary, it ensures

maintaining its position and overcoming its competitors. Value also means providing new products that meet and exceed customer expectations, unlike what competitors offer, and this makes the company more distinguished than others in meeting the desires and needs of the customer (Morgan *et al.*, 2014: 4) ^[30]. Adopting the principle of competition and maintaining the company's position and market share by moving to attract new customers instead of customers who defected from the company will provoke competitors in the market, according to what was mentioned above, based on the strategic position, which is represented by making quick decisions to confront uncertainty (Cong *et al.*, 2017: 22) ^[10]. It provides a deeper philosophy within the trends of determining the causes of the marketing gap at the external and internal levels, and thus the possibility of deriving the main hypothesis of the research is achieved (A set of causes of the marketing crisis are available in SDI). In addition, the second research hypothesis can be derived, which states (The causes of the marketing gap in SDI vary according to their importance).

Second: The philosophy of the causes of the marketing gap in SDI:

First, the factors causing the marketing gap for the pharmaceutical company under study (SDI) are based on several reasons and formulas, including the practical causes of some constructive ideas specific to the company and the obstacles related to political, economic, logistical, marketing and other factors. However, these factors or causes can be divided into internal and external causes for the purpose of clarifying the problem in more detail and accuracy.

The company has recently witnessed an increase in the production of new types of medicines within the company, which opens the way for broader relations and developing the company's capabilities in terms of dealing with new types and trends that serve the company and citizens alike. Entering a new world of competition opens horizons for information and a new world of dealing with what the company needs in order to develop its internal and external dealings and build towards progress and expansion in the work that serves its public and private interest. However, there are some factors that affect the process of marketing the company's products and hinder its ability to market its multiple and diverse products that it produces. The factors that cause the marketing gap in the company under study were identified through interviews with a group of department managers and specialists in the marketing department. They were summarized as follows:

1. Lack of referrals from the Ministry of Health.
2. Lack of protection for the national product.
3. Lack of consumer protection.
4. Delay in receiving the results of the drug control examination of preparations.
5. Increased competition in the local market.
6. Reliance on the exclusive agent who imposes his marketing policy on the company.

Therefore, there are causes of the marketing gap that we have observed in (SDI) according to what was indicated by (Porter, 1980) ^[37] and (Miller, 1983) and (Hull, 1999) in their studies, and they were agreed upon by (Bakutyte & Grundey, 2012, 101) (198:2006(Keller & Kotler, Savvides, 2000: 34) ^[5] and (Panteleval & Oyner, 2012: 4) ^[36] and (Kotler *et al.*, 2024), while the study of (Lumpkin & Dess, 2001: 431) ^[24] (Hai- qiong, 2010: 2) ^[13] (Chen *et al.*, 2011: 1) ^[9] (Zehir *et al.*, 2015: 360) ^[51] was satisfied with

emphasizing the cause of competition. It can be concluded from the above that the existence of the marketing gap is based on the existence of a deficiency in the Innovation aspects, as it can be defined as (The company's orientation to find and generate new ideas and support Innovation, modernity, research and development efforts and finding innovative solutions to provide superior value to the customer). As for Samarra Pharmaceutical Company (SDI), Innovation is represented in the work of the research and development department in presenting ideas and proposals for new products that meet the current and future needs and desires of customers before reaching the stage of customer defection.

As for Samarra Pharmaceutical Company (SDI), after the field visits conducted by the researcher, value is defined as the set of procedures, decisions and benefits achieved from the company's products for its customers as a result of identifying the current and future needs of customers, then producing and presenting a set of new pharmaceutical preparations that the company has provided to its customers in the market.

As for competitiveness, according to the perspective of the company (SDI), it is represented by marketing activities that all revolve around a basic pillar, which is the customer. Which seeks to make changes and competitive alternatives offered that directly and positively affect the customer's expectations in order to enhance and gain customer loyalty, which increases the customer's desire to deal with the company rather than others. This is the attraction that the company's movements carry before its competitors.

As for customer defection, according to the perspective of the company (SDI), it means that the company loses its customer completely or partially when they deal with other competing companies, and this happens when the company's products become obsolete and unable to provide superior value to the customer, which makes it fail to win the initiatives of its customers.

The third axis: The practical framework

The systematic treatment requires that we analyze the data collected from the researched field using the questionnaire, and following the previous theory requires the use of a set of statistical methods that are consistent with the available data. Accordingly, we will test the data through two methods: The first method is represented by using the statistical program (SPSS. V23) and (SMART PLS, 4), which is one of the statistical programs that analyzes the data according to the partial squares method, through which we will evaluate the standard model and then test the structural model of the research, and then we will work to confirm the results through the program (SPSS, V23).

First: Evaluating the standard model: One of the basic requirements for research at the beginning is testing the standard model of the research, which is represented by the tests of validity and reliability of the research questions and ensuring the ability of the data to measure the phenomenon for which it was built (validity), as well as the ability to rely on it under several circumstances, by relying on two measurement methods, which are (Convergent Validity) and (Discriminant Validity):

1. Convergent Validity: Convergent Validity analysis requires following three methods to reveal the validity and reliability that the standard model enjoys in interpreting

what is intended from it, and these methods are (Factor loading, Composite Reliability, and Average variance

extracted). After conducting the analysis within the program (SMART PLS, 4), the results appeared as in Table (1):

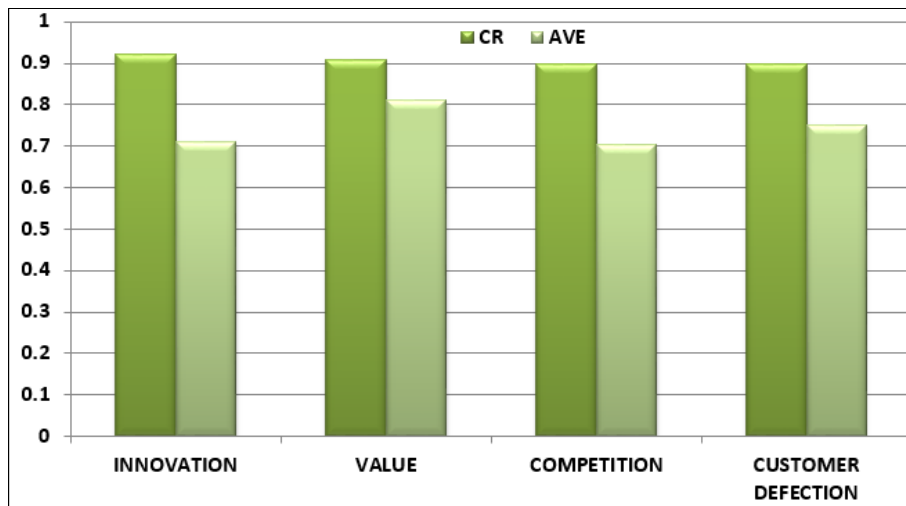
Table 1: Convergent validity of the research model

Variables	Indicators	Factor loading	Composite Reliability	AVE
Comparison criteria			0.70>	0.50>
Innovation	X1	0.909	0.922	0.712
	X2	0.787		
	X3	0.875		
	X4	0.835		
	X5	0.908		
Value	X6	0.891	0.909	0.811
	X7	0.894		
	X8	0.870		
	X9	0.897		
	X10	0.912		
Competition	X11	0.817	0.897	0.703
	X12	0.889		
	X13	0.792		
	X14	0.842		
	X15	0.895		
Customer churn	X16	0.872	0.899	0.752
	X17	0.501		
	X18	0.801		
	X19	0.861		
	X20	0.692		

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of (SMART PLS, 4)

By following the table above, it is clear that the model obtained high convergent validity from the three scales, as the questions accurately expressed what they were built for. As for the composite stability and the extracted variance rate

for the model, it was within excellent limits. This means that the research model is characterized by high validity and stability within this test, as shown in the figure (2).



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of (SMART PLS, 4)

Fig 2: Composite stability chart and extracted coefficient of variation

2. Discriminant Validity: which indicates that the questions do not overlap for a variable and do not repeat or overlap with other variables. It can be obtained through two tests, the first of which is (Cross loading), which measures that the specific question measures the variable for which it

was built only and does not measure other variables. Its results were all positive, while the second is the correlation between the latent variables (Variable Correlation), which can be obtained according to the criterion (Fornell & Larker, 1981) [53] as follows:

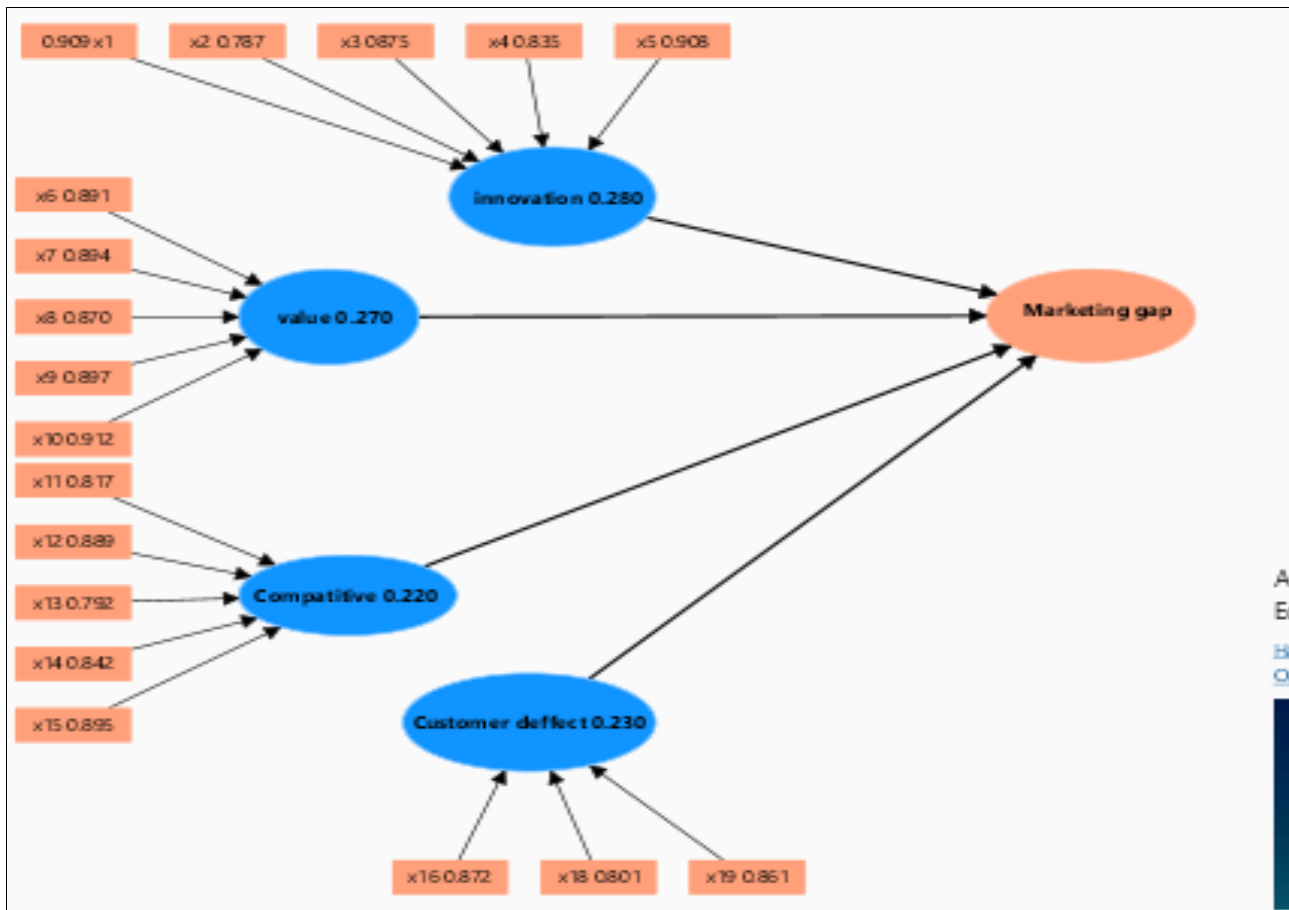
Table 2: Correlation matrix between latent variables

Variables	Innovation	Value	Competition	Customer Defection
Innovation	0.881			
	0.810	0.902		
Competition	0.871	0.892	0.921	
Customer Defection	0.556	0.665	0.566	0.688

Source: Prepared by researchers based on the results of (SMART PLS, 4)

According to the rules of this scale, each variable must have a higher correlation with itself than with other variables, in order to be stable. For example, the Innovation dimension had a correlation with itself of (88%), which is higher than all correlation values with other variables, in addition to other variables that were highly correlated with themselves,

as shown in the table above. Therefore, after completing the standard model of the research, it can be said that the research model is characterized by validity and stability, and it can be displayed in Figure (3), which explains and provides the answer to the first question and achieves the first goal of the research.



Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the results of (SMART PLS, 4)

Fig 3: Standard Model Tests

Second: Test of Structural Model

After the research model has been evaluated in its standard way, it is now time to test the research hypotheses by testing the structural model of the research, and based on the same program (SMART PLS, 4), the structural model is tested according to five methods:

1. Path Coefficients: This is a test that shows the contribution of each cause of the causes in the occurrence of

the marketing gap, and as indicated by (Hair *et al*, 2014: 223), the (Bootstrapping) test is the best in terms of statistical power, as Table (3) shows the path coefficients, which are all significant by following the value (P value) to achieve the acceptance of the first main hypothesis of the availability of the causes of the marketing gap in the company under study and achieve the second objective of the research objectives:

Table 3: Bootstrapping test to evaluate the significance of relationships

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Innovation >>> MG	0.280	0.279	0.029	11.631	0.001
Value>>> MG	0.270	0.269	0.031	11.988	0.000
Competition>>> MG	0.220	0.216	0.042	13.364	0.000
Customer Defection>>> MG	0.230	0.227	0.041	8.987	0.002

Source: SMART PLS, 4 outputs.

2. To show the predictive importance of the causes of the marketing gap in the company under study, the Blindfolding test is used for this and is symbolized by (Q2) and the critical value (Q2) is (0.02 weak), (0.15 medium) and (0.35 strong) according to (Hair *et al*, 2014), and thus the predictive importance of the causes of the marketing gap

reached (0.522), which means that the availability of the causes of the marketing gap in the company under study represents a strong (High) level in the occurrence of the marketing gap in the company under study. Therefore, it can be concluded that the causes of the marketing gap are available in the General Company for the Manufacture of

Medicines and Medical Supplies in Samarra (SDI) and that these causes depend on a group of reasons in varying proportions, but the biggest reason is due to competition, value and Innovation and then customer defection, and this result supports the propositions emphasized by researchers (Porter, 1980) and (Miller, 1987) ^[52] and (Hull, 1999) ^[17]

(198: 2006 (Keller & Kotler, and Savvides, 2000: 34) ^[44] and (Bakutyte & Grundey, 2012, 101) ^[5] and (Panteleval & Oyner, 2012: 4) ^[36] and (Kotler *et al*, 2024). To achieve the main objectives of the research. Figure (4) shows the comprehensive model:

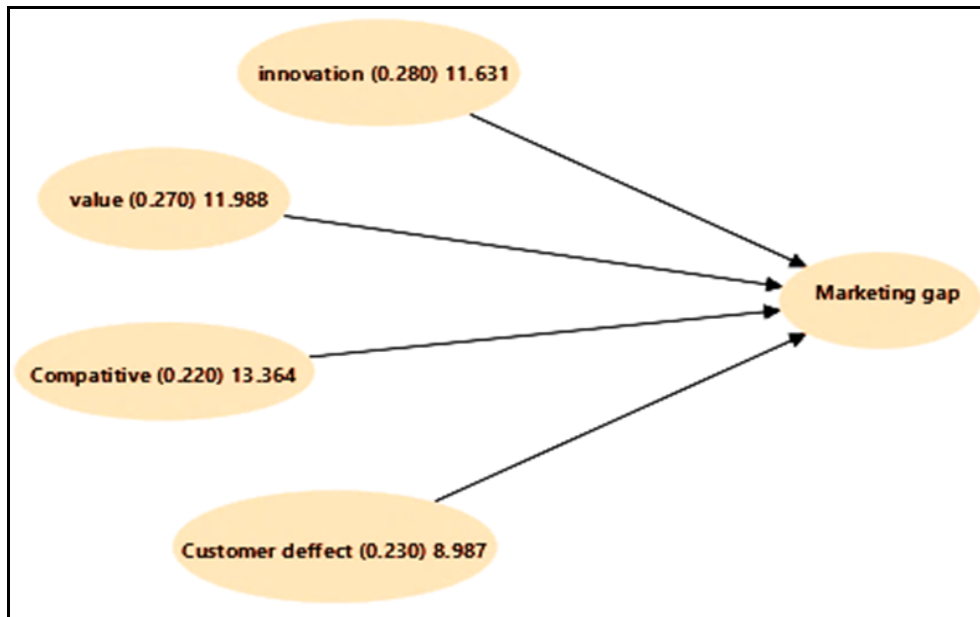


Fig 4: Comprehensive search model

Conclusions and Recommendations

First: Conclusions

This paragraph represents the intellectual and practical conclusion of the research field by presenting a set of conclusions reached by the research:

1. It was found that the General Company for the Manufacture of Medicines and Medical Supplies in Samarra suffers from a marketing gap through the results that were indicated.
2. It was found that the causes of the marketing gap in the researched company vary in terms of their importance and perception by the individuals of the researched sample, and the reason for this is that the causes of the marketing gap represented by Innovation, value, competition and customer defection to the company vary according to their connection to the surrounding environmental changes.
3. The results showed that the competition dimension represents the main reason for the occurrence of the marketing gap in the researched company due to the importance that the individuals of the research sample gave to this dimension, in addition to the nature of the company's work in highly competitive markets and the lack of adequate protection for its products, which makes it face major challenges and difficulty in marketing its products.
4. It was found that the sample members of the company paid great attention to the competitiveness dimension and the value and Innovation dimensions alike. This is logical for the company's survival and continuity in the market, especially since these products are fundamentally related to human life, in addition to the competitive prices prevailing in the markets.
5. The results showed that the company under study does not pay much attention to the reason for customer

defection, and this may be attributed to the nature of the pharmaceutical products and the presence of an exclusive agent for the company who purchases the company's products according to market needs.

6. The results showed that there is a large marketing gap that the company suffers from in terms of production and marketing volume by comparing planned marketing with actual marketing. This is due to many reasons, some of which have been identified and some of which are due to other reasons represented by the conflict of interests and external goals of the beneficiary parties, which represent pressure groups, and the weakness of the decision and vision of the management in the company under study.

Second: Recommendations

The company under investigation should pay increased attention to the competitive aspect in its local market by:

- Withdrawing the privileges granted to companies operating in the same market.
 - Increasing the protection of the national product by the regulatory authorities.
 - Working to reduce all activities that do not add value, which increases costs and complicates its competitive ability.
1. Working to enhance the value delivered to the customer through its products as the cornerstone, especially since these products have a certain specificity because they are related to human health and well-being.
 2. The necessity of focusing on the dimension of Innovation because it is the key to the success of the company's business and its reputation, especially since diseases and epidemics are developing significantly, which requires new generations capable of treating

these diseases, and this depends largely on enhancing research and development activities and supporting them significantly, which leads to more Innovation and innovation for new pharmaceutical products.

3. The company should be more aware of the importance of customers and their defection, although the company realizes this, its reliance on the exclusive agent does not mean ignoring its customers and their requirements, which contributes to enhancing its competitive capabilities and creating a competitive climate among its customers, which makes them more generous in providing appropriate offers.
4. It requires intervention from the government administration and limiting interventions that weaken administrative decisions within the company, its vision and ability to plan and estimate environmental developments and changes to improve and develop the company's performance and market position to support the local market and provide it with the pharmaceutical requirements it needs, which improves the economic level of the company and the citizen alike.

References

1. Abbas S, Al-Hamdani AA. Diagnosing the availability of dimensions of marketing chaos in the General Company for Car and Machinery Trade: a survey study of the opinions of a sample of workers. *Rafidain Dev J.* 2022;40(132):169-184.
2. Adams J, Khan HTA, Raeside R, White D. Research methods for graduate business and social science students. New Delhi: SAGE Publications Ltd; c2007.
3. Al-Khadiri MA. Crisis management: an economic and administrative approach to resolving crises at the level of the national economy and economic unit. 2nd ed. Cairo: Madbouly Library; c2003.
4. Alghamdi AA. Market knowledge, blue ocean strategy, and competitive advantage: direct and indirect relationships and impact. *Universal J Manag.* 2016;4(4):133-143.
5. Bakutyte S, Grundey D. Identifying the gap in value creation at universities: The consumers perspective. *Econ Sociol.* 2012;5(1):59-70.
6. Bhavana A, Thiruchanuru S. Green marketing: gap analysis in the decision-making process of a green consumer. *JBM&SSR.* 2018;7(3):35-44.
7. Boabeng FO, Li C. Entrepreneurial innovation and risk taking on firm performance: empirical evidence from entrepreneurial enterprises in Ghana. *Int J Bus Manag Invent.* 2018;7(12):8-17.
8. Chen EL, Katila R, McDonald R, Eisenhardt KM. Life in the fast lane: origins of competitive interaction in new vs. established markets. *Strat Manag J.* 2010;31(12):1527-1547.
9. Chen G, Du H, Chen Y. Research on entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurial behavior: an empirical study. Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China. 2011. Available from: gorki@zju.edu.cn.
10. Cong C, Dempsey M, Xie HM. Political skill, entrepreneurial organizational justice: a study of entrepreneurial enterprises in China. *Int. J Entrepreneurial Behav Res.* 2017;23(1):20-34.
11. Donkers B, Verhoef PC, Jong MG. Modeling CLV: A test of competing models in the insurance industry. *Springer Sci Bus Media.* 2007;5:163-190.
12. Gualco DJ. A systemic analysis of the defection process in the small parcel logistic industry. Doctoral Thesis. University of San Francisco; c2014.
13. Wu HQ. Research on resource integration competence, entrepreneurial orientation, and entrepreneurial performance. *IEEE;* c2010.
14. Hair JR, Hult GTM, Ringle CM, Sarstedt M. A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Inc.; c2014.
15. Hilletoft P, Eriksson D. Coordinating new product development with supply chain management. Available from: <http://www.divaportal.se/smash>.
16. Hollmann T, Jarvis CB, Bitner MJ. Reaching the breaking point: a dynamic process theory of business-to-business customer defection. *J Acad Mark Sci.* 2014;43(2):257-278.
17. Hull JA. The identification of gaps and overlaps in the product portfolio. Master's Thesis. University of Pennsylvania; c1999.
18. Jain SC. Marketing planning and strategy. 6th ed. South-Western College; c2000.
19. Kang H. How does competition affect innovation? Evidence from U.S. antitrust cases. Available from: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3516974>.
20. Kotler P, Keller KL. Marketing management. 12th ed. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Edition Inc.; c2006.
21. Kropp F, Lindsay NJ, Shoham A. Entrepreneurial orientation and international entrepreneurial business venture startup. *Int. J Entrepreneurial Behav Res.* 2008;14(2):102-117.
22. Lamb CW, Hair JF, McDaniel C. Marketing. USA: South-Western, Cengage Learning; c2011.
23. Lim K, Trefler D, Yu M. Trade and innovation: the role of scale and competition effects. Available from: https://ies.princeton.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2018/06/LTY_061118.pdf.
24. Lumpkin GT, Dess GG. Linking two dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation to firm performance: the moderating role of environment and industry life cycle. *J Bus Venturing.* 2001;16(5):429-451.
25. Luoma J, Ruutu S, King AW, Tikkanen H. Time Delays, Competitive Interdependence and Firm Performance [Internet]. 2017. Available from: <https://aaltodoc.aalto.fi/bitstream/handle/123456789/35587/Article5>
26. Mahdi KN, Vafaie N. Codification of Marketing Strategies, with Emphasis on Electronic Banking Agricultural Bank. *Int. J Humanities Cult Stud.* 2016; ISSN 2356-5926.
27. Marshall G, Parra A. Innovation and Competition: The Role of the Product Market [Internet]. 2019. Available from: http://blogs.ubc.ca/alvaroparra/files/2017/05/D-MII_N_M.pdf
28. Mazambani L, Mutambara E. Mobile Money Failure – Can The Balanced Scorecard be of any Help. *Risk Gov Control: Financ Mark Inst.* 2017, 7(1).
29. Mobilizer A. Taking Control of Marketing Chaos: The Benefits of Work Management. *Plan Perform Work Manag.* 2020 Mar 25.
30. Morgan T, Anokhin S, Kretinin A, Frishammar J. The dark side of the entrepreneurial orientation and market orientation interplay: A new product development perspective. *Int. Small Bus J.* 2014, 1-21.
31. Ngamsutti S. Marketing Innovation Capability and Marketing Performance: An Empirical Study of

- Electrical and Electronic Appliances in Thailand. *Bus Manag Rev.* 2016, 7(5).
32. Ngcobo PD. An Investigation of Customer Switching/Defection Behaviour in a Selected Segment of Standard Bank Retail Division [master's thesis]. University of Wales; c2002.
 33. Okeyo WO, Gathungu JM, Obonyo PK. Entrepreneurial Orientation, Business Development Services, Business Environment and Performance: A Critical Literature Review. *Eur Sci J.* 2016, 12(28).
 34. Okyere O. An Investigation why Customers Defect and The Role Played by Freight Transport Business in Adopting Customer Retention Management Strategies: An Evidence from The Freight Transport Service Industry in Ghana. *Br J Multidiscip Adv Stud.* 2018, 2(1).
 35. Oliveira SAD, Mesquita JMC, Oliveira RR. Factors that Influence Customer Defection: Analysis of The Banking Sector. *REBRAE.* 2019, 12(2).
 36. Panteleva E, Oyner O. Corporate Brand Value Perception Gap Analysis as an Internal Marketing Management System Assessment Tool [Internet]. National Research University Higher School of Economics; c2012.
 37. Porter ME. *Competitive Strategy.* The Free Press, Simon & Schuster Inc.; c1980.
 38. Qadir RMH. The Effect of the Strategic Leadership and Marketing Intelligence in Adopting the Entrepreneurship Marketing Behaviors [doctoral thesis]. University of Mosul; c2017.
 39. Qureshi NA. How Entrepreneurs are Managing Open Innovation in SMEs [master's thesis]. Halmstad University; c2018.
 40. Reichheld FF. Learning from Customer Defections: The Customers You Lose Hold Information You Need to Succeed [Internet]. *Harvard Business Review*; c1996. Available from: <http://innar.com/IDN0100/3.pdf>
 41. Rosmayani SY, Suwawihardja S, Helmi RA. Influence of Market Orientation and Innovation on Marketing Performance in Small Industry of Malay Woven Textile, Riau Province, Indonesia. *Int. J Econ Commer Manag.* 2016, 4(2).
 42. Rujbr V. On Customer Retention and Prediction Techniques [master's thesis]. Masaryk University; c2016.
 43. Savolainen T. Improving Customer Loyalty Through a Regular Customer Program [thesis]. University of Applied Sciences; c2010.
 44. Savvides SC. Market Analysis and Competitiveness in Project Appraisal [Internet]. Harvard Institute for International Development, Harvard University; c2000. Available from: <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/9796/>
 45. Sethapan W. The Study of Customer Share Marketing [master's thesis]. California State University; 2004.
 46. Torre A, Wallet F. Innovation and Governance of Rural Territories [Internet]. 2013. Available from: <file:///C:/Users/M/Downloads/PDFpub248N1.pdf>
 47. Tse SM. Forces Shaping the Trends and Patterns of China's Outbound International Tourist Flows [doctoral thesis]. Southern Cross University; 2009.
 48. Urban B, Barreria J. Empirical Investigations into Firm Technology Orientation and Entrepreneurial. *Int. J Innov Technol Manag.* 2010;7(4):329-351.
 49. Valitov SM, Khakimov AK. Innovation Potential as a Framework of Innovation Strategy for Enterprise Development. *Int. Conf Appl Econ.* 2015.
 50. Wright R. *Business-to-Business Marketing.* British Library Cataloguing-in-publication Data; c2004.
 51. Zehir C, Can E, Karaboga T. Linking entrepreneurial orientation to firm performance: the role of differentiation strategy and innovation performance. *Procedia - Soc Behav Sci.* 2015;210:358-367.
 52. Miller D. The structural and environmental correlates of business strategy. *Strategic Manag J.* 1987 Jan;8(1):55-76.
 53. Fornell C, Larcker DF. Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *J Mark Res.* 1981 Feb;18(1):39-50.
 54. Al-Saud LM, Al-Nahedh HN. Occluding effect of Nd: YAG laser and different dentin desensitizing agents on human dentinal tubules *in vitro*: A scanning electron microscopy investigation. *Operative dentistry.* 2012 Jul 1;37(4):340-355.
 55. Al-Shahrani SM, Al-Sudani D, Almalik M, Gambarini G, AlRumaihi FA. Microcomputed tomographic analysis of the furcation grooves of maxillary first premolars. *Annali di stomatologia.* 2013 Jan;4(1):142.