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THE INFLUENCING SECTORS IMPACTING THE CONTRIBUTION OF PRIMARY ACTIVITIES OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN IN THE GEMS & JEWWELLERY SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

Primary activities have always been the point of value addition and improving the supply chain. The supply chain directly affect the effectiveness and value addition in the overall management process. The same concept is applicable in all sectors. Thus this study focuses the same concept and its influence over the quality of supply chains with the contribution of the value addition by the primary activities in the gems & jewellery industry.

Key Words: Gems, Jewellery, Primary Activities, Marketing, Value Chain.

1. INTRODUCTION

Markets are driven by -- more demanding & informative customers, free trade economies with global competition, industries downtrend etc., because of which many organizations search for new ways to achieve and retain a competitive advantage. In the past, attempts have largely looked internally within the organization for improvement i.e., implementation of TQM - Total Quality Management, BPR - Reengineering, Downsizing, and Restructuring. The other major source for competitive advantage will come from more outward orientation toward customers, as indicated by the many organizations to compete on superior customer value delivery. Managing of the organizations in today's more dynamic and turbulent environment can be done only thinking about customer value, customer value delivery and the skills required by the managers to create and implement superior customer value strategies.

The functional area of marketing involves satisfying customers' needs and wants. The latest philosophy of marketing teaches the organizations regarding the most important task of any business as to deliver customer value at a profit while being socially responsible. In a hypercompetitive economy with increasingly rational buyers faced with abundant choices, a company can win only by fine-tuning the value chain of Michael Porter with primary & support activities.

1.1 THE CONCEPT OF VALUE CHAIN

Modern customers of today don't want products but they demand solutions for the problems which they face in the market. And these solutions must be designed, fashioned to meet the customer's specific needs. For example, if Revlon manufacturers see themselves as a producer of either Nail polish or Lipstick, definitely they would have failed in the market. The success of Revlon is because of the definition of their business as "We enhance the beauty" which is in terms of Customer's Value. When we look at the customer's point of view, companies exist only to generate value & provide the value to the customers, through the solutions for the problems in the form of products. In the rapidly changing new economy the nature of value is changing, involving new ways to price the goods, innovation and using of emotional appeals in communication. The **value chain** represented below has been proposed by Michael Porter of Harvard Business School as a tool for identifying ways to create more customer value. According to this model, every firm is a combination of activities performed to design the product, produce it, market, deliver to customer, and support its product. There are nine strategically relevant activities identified by

the value chain that are categorized into five primary and four support activities that create value to the customers and involves cost in a specified business.

Primary activities relate directly to the physical creation, sale, maintenance and support of a product or service. **Primary Activities** consist of the following:

- **Inbound logistics** – These are all the processes related to receiving materials from suppliers into the business, storing, and distributing inputs internally. Supplier relationships are a key factor in creating value here.
- **Operations** –These are the transformation activities that convert the materials into final products that are sold to customers. Here, operational systems create value.
- **Outbound logistics** – These activities include shipping out the final products to the customers. These are things like collection, storage, and distribution systems, and they may be internal or external to organization.
- **Marketing and sales** – These are the processes of creating the awareness & sale of the products; the benefits offered, and how well company communicated, are sources of value here.
- **Service** – This encourages to solve customer queries & fix the problems with the product.

The support activities are procurement, technology development, human resource management, and firm infrastructure that were handled in specialized departments. The costs of general management, planning, accounting, finance, government and legal affairs falls into the firm's infrastructure.

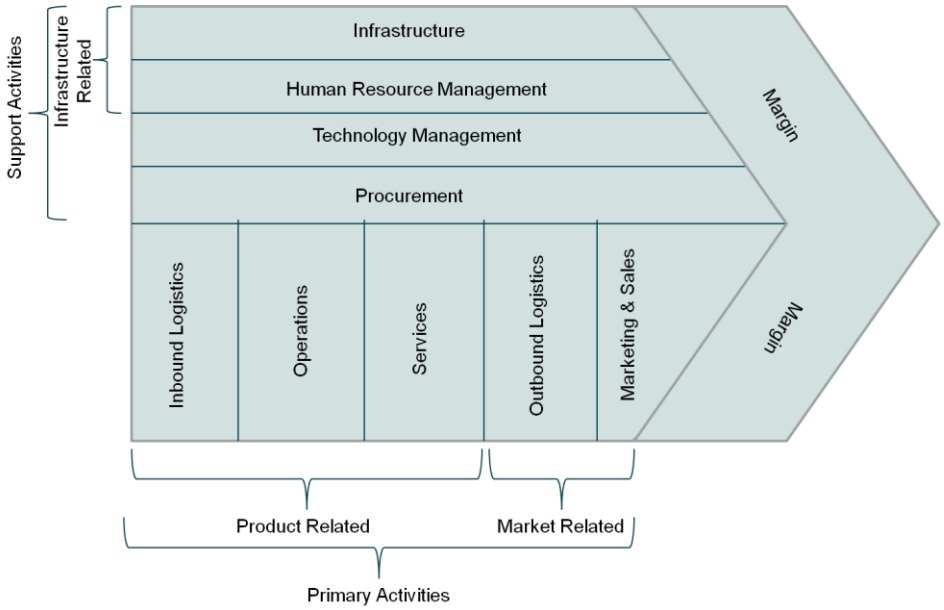

Fig 1.3

Source:http://www.managementexchange.com/hack/mapping-porter%E2%80%99s-value-chain-activities-business-functional-units

To examine costs involved and performance in each value- creating activity and to look for ways to improve it is the firm's main task. Managers should estimate their competitor's costs and performances so as to keep them as benchmarks against which to compare their own costs and performance. And firms should go further and study the "best of class" practices of the world's companies within the industry as well as outside the industry.

1.2 CUSTOMER VALUE DEFINITIONS

The most beautiful terms for the organizations and industrial analysts of competitive environment of today are "Customer Focus" and "Customer Value". Many in the market use these terms frequently; certainly, no one could argue against such a concept. But what does customer value actually mean? More essentially, what does it imply for that organization which seeks

to be genuinely "customer focused" and what does it mean to understand "customer value"?

"Perceived value is a customer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given."

Zeithaml (1988)

"Customer value is market perceived quality adjusted for the relative price of your product. [It is] your customer's opinion of your products (or services) as compared to that of your Competitor."

Gale (1994)

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rajesh Kumar, (2007) has conducted a study entitled "Consumer behavior with reference to selected durables in Kurnool District of Andhra Pradesh". This study reveals the purchase potential and consumer decision making with regard to durables.

Jacqui Daly; Stuart Gronow; Dave jenkins; Frances Plimmer, (2003) in their study on "Consumer behavior in the valuation of residential property: A comparative study in the UK, Ireland and Australia". This paper reports the results of empirical investigations that examine behavioral aspects of residential property valuations.

Sanjay K Jain & Kavita Sharma (2000) in their study on "Product related antecedents of consumer involvement- An empirical investigation" found that differences in consumer involvement with the products have been stated to be dependent on various product and brand related factors namely consumer's risk perceptions, products hedonic value, product familiarity, brand awareness, dissimilarity and difficulty of choice termed as antecedents of involvement. **Knight, Susan J (1999)** in his study titled "Characterizing the habitual dimension of consumer behavior. The formation and persistence of habitual behavior patterns" provided a deep understanding of habitual consumption patterns, including the role of products and social norms in their formation and persistence. It was concluded that products serve as vehicles of recognition, practically and unconscious meaning in habitual behavior patterns. Brands, product design, and other product attributes become embedded in habitual schemes and serve as cues for automatic behaviors. Brand loyalty was found to be a special case of habitual consumption.

3. NEED FOR THE STUDY

Consistence development in Jewellery designing, growth of Jewellery markets in terms of manufacturers, brands and customers, consistence growth in advertisements and sales promotion with sole aim of withstanding the competition collectively offer a contemporary platform/background/ focal point for the present study attempting to identify the level of customer acquisition as a result of manufacturer's orientation towards customer value. The present effort at review of the past studies thus establishes an imminent need for the research topic **"CUSTOMER VALUE THROUGH VALUE CHAIN OF PRIMARY ACTIVITIES IN JEWELLERY INDUSTRY - INTENSITY OF CUSTOMER CONCEPTION"** (With special reference to Hyderabad and Secunderabad).

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess the intensity of customer conception under the 'Customer Value' concept through 'Value Chain'
- To measure the customer opinions on primary activities i.e., inbound, outbound, operations of branded jewellery manufacturers
- To assess the opinions of customers about marketing & sales as well as after sale services of branded jewellery manufacturers
- To assess the performance of branded jewellers based on Value chain concepts

5. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

- **H_0**: 'Customer Value' Through 'Value Chain of Primary activities' in Branded jewellery does not influence customer conception
- **H_1:** 'Customer Value' Through 'Value Chain of Primary activities' in Branded jewellery influences customer conception

6. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Appropriate determination of the Scope for a research of present nature certainly enhance the effectiveness of the research, identifying the scope for any study is like hitting bulls' eye. Since the scope is always limited and should

always be limited by the efforts of the researcher so as to enhance the effectiveness in accomplishment of objectives. The present study handpicks the sole factor *'customer value through the Value Chain'* is an effort to establish its influence on '*Customer Conception Intensity Approach'* as against the convention of choosing multiple factors, In an effort to derive the best possible, relevant and applicable results for academics, industry and society. The present study purposefully restricts its scope to *'value Chain - customer value'* in academics of marketing, in Indian Jewellery Industry, in the cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad.

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research study strictly abides by the conceptual frame work enunciated by the subject Research Methodology for the design and conduct of the research, this part of the study aims at presenting all the components of the research in a descriptive style which includes Data gathering, sampling plan & Data processing, interpretation or Description, finally followed by presenting the Findings and Conclusions of the study.

7.1 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The main sources for data collection include primary as well as secondary. The primary sources of information include the fresh hand information collected for the purpose of the research or the problem that need to be studied. A questionnaire has been developed in order to know the impact of Value Chain of Primary activities in providing customer value that result into the customer conception.

The secondary sources are recorded information for the purpose of some other problem by someone else in the market. Major contributions are from Books, Journals, Magazines, various websites and daily Newspapers.

7.2 SAMPLING PLAN

The sample Jewellery organizations selected for the study is confined to the geographical region to Hyderabad and Secunderabad cities. Further, the Male and Female customers of the Jewellery industry are drawn as sample respondents.

7.2.1 SAMPLE SIZE

The research study confirms a majority of Jewellery industry location representation for Hyderabad and Secunderabad respectively. The above studies form the base for fixing the sample size of 328 & 237 for Hyderabad & Secunderabad respectively.

7.2.2 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The process of drawing sample respondents from the sample universe is known as sampling technique, among many techniques available, Clustered sampling is employed for the purpose since it is more appropriate as the sample respondents are distributed in different locations of Hyderabad & Secunderabad as clusters.

7.3 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

In the first stage the data collected through questionnaire offers individual weightages awarded by respondents for each element of the model in the questionnaire, the weightages are thus tabulated on the five points of the scale against classification of demographic profile, like age, Gender, education, occupation, income. Further, Statistical tools are applied to arrive at Cumulated Weighted Averages, providing a clear picture of total weightages for each classification of demographic profile. **Cumulative Weighted Average** is used to describe the profile of the respondents and their behavior in the Value Chain of Primary activity.

Chi-Square Test is used for the purpose of testing the influence of one variable on the other. The test has been administered to study the influence of the demographic variables on the value chain primary activities in providing the customer value.

8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A research study of this nature could not be carried out without any limitations. Hence this research study is limited to principally the population, target population and sample population as their opinions, attitudes there on the findings of the study. Second factor is the time factor which exerts magnificent influence on the opinion of sample population. In spite of the meticulous care exercised by the researcher, a study of this magnitude is prone to be affected by the following factors

- A few respondents were evasive to disclose exact details.
- There is always a chance for bias in the responses of the respondents.

Despite the above limitations, the researcher attempted to come up with her best efforts in overcoming the limitations and completing the study successfully.

9. DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

The Value Chain - Primary Activities - Age wise CWA Table					
Age	***<30***	***31-40***	***41-50***	***51-60***	***CWA***
Inbound logistics	*3.52*	*3.76*	*3.67*	*3.56*	***3.63***
Operations	*3.49*	*3.62*	*3.22*	*3.82*	***3.54***
Outbound logistics	*3.43*	*3.66*	*3.22*	*3.82*	***3.53***
Marketing and Sales	*3.47*	*3.73*	*3.14*	*3.56*	***3.47***
Customer Service	*3.54*	*3.74*	*3.16*	*3.65*	***3.52***
Average	***3.49***	***3.70***	***3.28***	***3.68***	***3.54***

Source: Questionnaire

Status

The CWA Table exemplifies the opinions of the selected respondents for the concept of 'Value Chain' with strategically relevant primary activities viz., *Inbound logistics, Operations, Outbound logistics, Marketing & sales and Customer Service* . An evaluation of the final columns indicates high acceptance for the reliability and execution of the above elements with CWA of > 3 value collectively for all age groups. The CWA values of > 3 for distinct age groups at bottom row reinforce the same by respondents.

Interpretation

Primary activities of 'Value Chain' will add more value to the product and services, than the sum of added cost of these activities resulting into gain of marginal value on product or service for the organization. If these activities run efficiently, the company gains competitive advantage on the product or service. Indian jewellery market with its special features of unorganized, labour- working capital - raw material intensive demands significance of the elements addressed in the table. A high rank represents the acceptance of branded jewellery manufacturers on the grounds of the primary activities.

Chi square table

The Value Chain - Primary Activities - Age wise				
Age Element	***Chi Square computed Value***	***Table Value***	***Significance Level***	***Degree of Freedom***
Inbound logistics	23.799	21.026	5	12
Operations	10.142	21.026	5	12
Outbound logistics	13.915	21.026	5	12
Marketing and Sales	21.721	21.026	5	12
Customer Service	18.908	21.026	5	12

Source: Statistical Analysis

Chi-square test is applied for research data to further emphasize the meaningful interpretation, against the demographic factor of Age. From the above table x^2 cal is greater than

x^2 table value, at 12 d o f and 5% level of significance for Inbound & Marketing and sales, where H_0 is rejected and for others it is accepted. Inbound and marketing & sales under the

➢ Primary activities of 'Value Chain' do influences customer conception of Branded jewellery manufacturers.

The Value Chain - Primary Activities– Gender wise CWA Table			
Gender Element	***Male***	***Female***	***CWA***
Inbound logistics	3.78	3.76	***3.77***
Operations	3.81	3.65	***3.73***
Outbound logistics	3.67	3.68	***3.68***
Marketing and Sales	3.53	3.71	***3.62***
Customer Service	4.05	4.08	***4.06***
Average	***3.77***	***3.77***	***3.77***

Source: Questionnaire

Status

The CWA table demonstrates the opinions of the selected respondents for primary activities of 'value chain', which is a source for competitive advantage. An assessment of the final columns & rows with CWA of > 3 value for both the genders indicate high acceptance for the prevalence and practice of the above elements as well as CWA value of > 4 for customer service reinforce the very high acceptance by respondents classified gender wise on these parameters.

Interpretation

Primary activities of 'Value Chain' being the source for competitive advantage on the product and service must be administered efficiently to gain marginal value. Indian jewellery market though dominated by women, a high rank for the tabulated elements by male & female depicts similar perception of significance attached to these elements & a very high rank only for *Customer Service* reinforce the same.

Chi Square Table

The Value Chain - Primary Activities– Gender wise				
Gender Element	***Chi Square computed Value***	***Table Value***	***Significance Level***	***Degree of Freedom***
Inbound logistics	17.260	9.488	**5**	4
Operations	19.191	9.488	**5**	4
Outbound logistics	38.617	9.488	**5**	4
Marketing and Sales	50.937	9.488	**5**	4

Customer Service	10.555	9.488	**5**	4

Source: Statistical Analysis

From the above table x^2 cal is greater than x^2 table value, at 4 d o f and 5% level of significance for all elements represented. Hence H_0 is rejected & H_1 is accepted i.e., irrespective of gender, all the respondents felt that primary activities of Value Chain influences the conception of customer value of branded jewellery manufacturers.

The Value Chain -Primary Activities- Education wise; CWA Table					
Education	***SSC & Inter***	***Graduate***	***Post Graduate***	***Professional***	***CWA***
Inbound logistics	*3.49*	*3.97*	*3.19*	*3.38*	***3.51***
Operations	*3.58*	*3.53*	*3.16*	*3.38*	***3.41***
Outbound logistics	*3.59*	*3.30*	*3.15*	*3.27*	***3.33***
Marketing and Sales	*3.44*	*3.12*	*3.13*	*3.32*	***3.25***
Customer Service	*3.46*	*3.04*	*3.19*	*3.25*	***3.24***
Average	***3.51***	***3.39***	***3.17***	***3.32***	***3.35***

Source: Questionnaire

Status

The CWA Table epitomizes the opinions of the selected respondents & an evaluation of the final columns indicate high acceptance for the consistent and completing of the above elements with CWA of > 3 value collectively for all educational groups. The CWA values of > 3 for different educational groups at bottom row reinforce the same by respondents.

Increased education levels of Indian customers, insist extensive treatment to primary activities of value chain, offering enhanced opportunities to manufacturers of branded jewellery which is confirmed by sample respondents' high ranking in the research. With different educational backgrounds, respondents assigned high rank for the elements of 'Value Chain' representing its significance.

Interpretation

Chi Square test

The Value Chain -Primary Activities- Education wise				
Education Element	***Chi Square computed Value***	***Table Value***	***Significance Level***	***Degree of Freedom***
Inbound logistics	38.069	21.026	5	12
Operations	23.554	21.026	5	12
Outbound logistics	21.994	21.026	5	12
Marketing and Sales	25.915	21.026	5	12

Customer Service	30.280	21.026	5	12

Source: Statistical Analysis

Chi-square test is applied for research data to further reinforce the meaningful interpretation against the demographic factor of education. From the above table x^2 cal is greater than x^2 table value, at 12 d o f and 5% level of significance for all elements represented. Hence H_o is rejected for all the elements. Thus the study reinforces the influence of all elements of *The Value Chain - Primary Activities.*

The Value Chain - Primary Activities-Occupation wise CWA Table					
Occupation Element	***Salaried***	***Self employed***	***Professionals***	***House wife***	***CWA***
Inbound logistics	*3.86*	*3.91*	*3.41*	*3.84*	***3.75***
Operations	*3.63*	*3.80*	*3.35*	*3.84*	***3.66***
Outbound logistics	*3.66*	*3.51*	*3.54*	*3.59*	***3.55***
Marketing and Sales	*3.62*	*3.46*	*3.56*	*3.50*	***3.52***
Customer Service	*3.66*	*3.43*	*3.55*	*3.28*	***3.48***
Average	***3.69***	***3.62***	***3.48***	***3.61***	***3.59***

Source: Questionnaire

Status

The CWA Table illustrates CWA value of > 3 for the columns of different occupational groups validating high acceptance for the dominance and practice of the above said activities. An evaluation of the bottom row reiterates the same with a CWA of > 3 by the sample respondents when asked to rank the activities on a 5 point rated scale.

Interpretation

High rank for Indian jewellery market with its high growth, high quality, exquisite and intricate designs to covet customer acceptance since decades, thus, indicating and reinforcing the significance attached to the elements addressed in the above table. The high respondent rankings from the research are indicative of the above facts for primary activities of 'Value Chain' under occupational wise classification.

Chi Square Table

The Value Chain - Primary Activities-Occupation wise				
Occupation Element	***Chi Square computed Value***	***Table Value***	***Significance Level***	***Degree of Freedom***
Inbound logistics	41.602	21.026	5	12
Operations	37.830	21.026	5	12
Outbound logistics	15.451	21.026	5	12
Marketing and Sales	17.907	21.026	5	12
Customer Service	26.780	21.026	5	12

Source: Statistical Analysis

Chi-square test is applied for research data to further emphasize the meaningful interpretation against the demographic factor of occupation. From the above table x^2 cal is greater than x^2 table value, at 12 d o f and 5% level of significance for all elements represented except

for, outbound logistics and Marketing and Sales. Hence H_o is rejected for all and accepted for outbound logistics and Marketing and Sales.

The Value Chain -Primary Activities- Income wise CWA Table					
Occupation Element	***40-60***	***61-80***	***81-1 lakh***	***>1 Lakh***	***CWA***
Inbound logistics	*3.84*	*4.04*	*3.47*	*2.82*	***3.54***
Operations	*3.89*	*3.97*	*3.54*	*2.80*	***3.55***
Outbound logistics	*3.91*	*3.82*	*3.27*	*2.73*	***3.43***
Marketing and Sales	*3.53*	*3.83*	*3.29*	*3.00*	***3.41***
Customer Service	*3.42*	*3.85*	*3.21*	*3.07*	***3.39***
Average	***3.72***	***3.90***	***3.36***	***2.88***	***3.47***

Source: Questionnaire

Status

The CWA Table communicates the opinions of the selected sample respondents for primary activities & An evaluation of final columns with CWA value of > 3 under dissimilar income groups authenticate high acceptance for the dominance and practice of the above said activities. An evaluation of the bottom row reiterates the same with a CWA of > 3 by the sample respondent except of customers with > 1 Lakh income where their perception is neutral for the same primary activities of 'Value Chain'.

Gold jewellery in India is a store of value, a symbol of wealth and status and a fundamental part of many rituals. Gold is auspicious, particularly in Hindu and Jain cultures and is central to more personal life events such as marriages and festivals. Demand for gold is increasing on a regular pace; customers expect high quality, exquisite and intricate designs since decades. The high respondent rankings from the research are indicative of significance attached to the elements addressed in the above table except for high income group with neutral response for the above said elements.

Interpretation

Chi Square Table

The Value Chain -Primary Activities- Income wise				
Occupation Element	***Chi Square computed Value***	***Table Value***	***Significance Level***	***Degree of Freedom***
Inbound logistics	73.856	21.026	5	12
Operations	56.991	21.026	5	12
Outbound logistics	78.209	21.026	5	12
Marketing and Sales	35.876	21.026	5	12
Customer Service	39.594	21.026	5	12

Source: Statistical Analysis

From the above table x^2 cal is greater than x^2 table value, at 12 d o f and 5% level of significance for all elements represented. Hence H_o is rejected for all the elements. Thus the study reinforces the influence of all elements of *The Value Chain - Primary Activities* on customer conception by the branded jewellery manufacturers.

10. FINDINGS

With the cumulated weighted averages, it was found that customers have assigned a high rank for the 'Value Chain' primary activities representing the importance of these in customer conception by branded jewellery manufacturers. The Chi square table further represents the significance of Inbound, outbound, operations, marketing & sales and service elements in providing the customer value. The null hypothesis of -'Customer Value' Through 'Value Chain of Primary activities' in Branded jewellery does not influence customer conception is rejected in many cases representing the importance of primary activities.

11. SUGGESTIONS

- Organizations need to understand the importance of Value chain activities to have a competitive advantage in dynamic environment.
- Branded jewellery firms must effectively utilize the functions of Inbound, Outbound etc., of value chain to provide customer value.
- Marketing & sales of Primary activities received high response representing a weapon for Branded Jewellery manufacturers to attract as well as to retain the customers.

12. CONCLUSION

Research concludes intense application of 'Value Chain' Primary activities viz.,*Inbound activities, operations, outbound activities, marketing & sales and services* to denote high significance to the various phases under demographic segmentation variables of Age, Gender, Education, Occupation and Income. The branded jewellery manufacturers of today are practicing the 'Value Chain' as a weapon to create 'customer value' to sustain the present competitive & ever changing environment.

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