

# Using Qualitative and Quantitative Methods to Investigate Patterns in Marketing Channels and International Marketing Strategies

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## Abstract

Changed agenda and paradigms require marketing's research methods and tools of enquiry to reflect fully the need to intensify theory-building programmes. We examine the evolution of the case research strategy in the context of business markets and inter-organisational relations, and submit that there is marked convergence of its underlying methodological and philosophical perspectives. Given that marrying qualitative and quantitative is a strategy endorsed by several eminent researchers, we apply mixed method approach to studying two significant phenomena viz. marketing channels and international marketing strategies.

We adopt a **mix of case research, grounded theoretic research methodologies and multivariate multidimensional mapping techniques for exploring both the subject areas.** The first study offers a classification scheme for grouping marketing channels observed across thirteen industries into five homogenous clusters. The second study investigates the international marketing strategies adopted in twelve different business sectors in India. This study identifies several elements of international marketing strategies that may have the potential to affect business outcomes across sectors. In this paper, a case is made to promote the use of innovative and novel combinations of research methodologies to derive new insights of business phenomena.

## Introduction and organisation of the paper

The new millennium signals changes in the marketing discipline. The marketing literature in the last two to three decades has increasingly reflected the need for building bonds with suppliers, consumers and other related constituents. Most writings now emphasise and endorse relationship-building approaches, undoubtedly as the consequence and result of the paradigm shift. In the last decade, a number of leading marketing scholars attempted to re-examine fundamentally the marketing agenda, and to set new research directions that focus on *theory building*. In our view, what is urgently required is a matching commitment to changing the ways in which research is conducted (Oburai and Baker 1999a). In this paper, we attempt to outline our arguments for adopting theory-building approaches with a focus on *case research strategy*. The paper begins with an outline of a variety of empirical strategies in order to make a case for "case research". Here we are fully conscious of not only the plethora of the available alternatives but also of their expanding nature. We move next to tracing the roots of the case research tradition, highlight its evolution to the current time period and attempt to demonstrate the *converging nature of the methodological approaches* in general and those of case research in particular. The two studies that examined marketing channels and international strategies to identify patterns and explain them are reported in the next two sections. The final section outlines contributions, further research avenues and a few concluding remarks.

## Case Research in Business Markets: History and Evolution

Case research approach had been used widely in organisational research in Europe with great success (Hakansson 1982; Baker et al. 1986). Although in many instances case research methods are used in qualitative traditions, for example in the field of education (Merriam 1988), quantitative data and techniques could be incorporated into case research with equal facility. One of the most referred to texts on case research advocates a more scientific and quasi-experimental approach (Yin 1994). Case research can encompass a wide range of basic methods of data collection, incorporate information from a variety of sources and enrich our analysis of issues. Case research is an appropriate strategy

that is 'well suited to aspects of marketing where there is a relatively thin theoretical base or complex observational task' and when the context of the object of study cannot easily be separated from the focal object (Bonoma 1985 p.203). Gummesson argues that the case study method allows in-depth and holistic understanding of multiple aspects of a phenomenon and the interrelationships between different aspects (1988 p.76-77).

There has been in the recent past a great acceleration in formalising case research strategy. Yin advocated a quasi-experimental version of case research. Indeed, his book remains the most influential one for case researchers. Yin argued that there is a 'frequent confusion regarding types of evidence (e.g., qualitative data), types of data collection methods (e.g., ethnography), and research strategies (e.g., case studies)' (Yin 1981 p.58). Case studies are best equipped to deal with situations when a holistic perspective of both the context and object of study is required. Because of its rather unique ability to address complex phenomena, case research always has "too many variables (V)" compared to the number of observations (O) to be made (Yin 1981). This  $V \gg O$  inequality (number of variables far exceeds number of data points) is precisely what makes the case study method singularly appropriate and most other methods including standard experimental and mail survey designs totally unsuitable. In the last two decades, there have been some significant methodological developments in the area of case research. The case research processes are by now rather well established (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Bonoma 1985; Gummesson 1988; Eisenhardt 1989; Yin 1994) and recent papers (Donnellan 1995; Perry 1998) draw together different strands of writings and provide detailed guidance on why, how, when and where to implement the research strategy. Indeed the case of methodological rigour has been made very clear in the new genre of writings (Eisenhardt 1991; Dyer and Wilkins 1991).

In general the acceptance of alternative research methodologies has been in ascendancy in the recent times owing to the greater methodological rigour displayed in both the adoption and implementation of these research strategies. In case research, scholars agree that the versatile nature of the tool allows both *theory building and theory testing*, although it is generally the former that it is known for. Both Yin (1994) and Eisenhardt (1989) suggest that multiple cases can be compared to one another with a view to establish either "literal replication" or "theoretical replication" leading respectively to confirmation and disconfirmation of results. In effect the process of multiple cases could be used for both building and testing theories through the application of comparative logic.

In the context of this paper, we may not the similarity between and among various writings on case research. A common thread that can be seen to be running across the range of papers that focus on case research is the emphasis on methodological rigour. While we cannot deny the need for rigour, it is to be noted that these writings focus more on the issues of sampling, data collection and analysis and less on theory building issues. While the formalisation and prescription in the former areas are necessary, they are far from sufficient in a rapidly changing academic and business scenario. Prescription might in some cases lower flexibility and one can readily discern that the formalisation process appears to utilise in its methodology and philosophy too many shades altogether recognisably drawn from familiar and linear logic and statistical techniques. While this helps in gaining more acceptance through the incorporation of demonstrated successful elements, what we miss out may perhaps be the most crucial aspects that aid and guide theory building.

The case research strategy has the ability to incorporate such disparate and diverse sources of information as well as flexibility to allow the researcher to *improvise and innovate* in employing the same for theory building purposes. Resulting cases are likely to be illustrative and improve both discussion and refinement leading to further research.

All research methods have their inherent strengths and weaknesses. Qualitative methods yield data that are 'rich, full, earthy, holistic, "real"; their face validity seems unimpeachable; they preserve chronological flow where that is important, and suffer minimally from retrospective distortion... Furthermore their collection requires minimal front-end instrumentation (Miles 1979 p.590).' While the attractions are many, Miles also notes that 'Qualitative data tend to overload the researcher badly at almost every point: the sheer range of phenomena to be observed, the recorded volume of notes, the time required for write-up, coding, and analysis can all be overwhelming. But the most serious and

central difficulty in the use of qualitative data is that methods of analysis are not well formulated' (Miles 1979 p.590). On the other hand, quantitative data are generally considered to be more objective, the collection process easier, and analytical techniques more advanced and user-friendly.

Qualitative and quantitative methodologies are often portrayed and perceived in some circles as opposing and mutually exclusive methodologies, if not ideologies. However, most academics and practitioners know this to be a false dichotomy. Systemic (holistic) and component (reductionist) level perspectives are 'both natural and complementary features of human cognition' (Kay 1997 p.99). While qualitative techniques can often provide holistic understanding, quantitative tools afford us deeper view of a chosen issue. However, it is important to note that it is integration of methodologies and balanced usage that helps in building new theories is our main argument. The next two sections focus on the two studies that used mixed method approaches.

### **Study One: Analysis of marketing channel structures**

This study investigated the sales and distribution channel structures in thirteen different industries in India in an attempt to explore and explain the similarities and differences found in the varied set of industries. Our study offers a classification scheme using case research methodology (Oburai and Baker, 1999a; Oburai and Baker 1999b), grounded theory approach (Glaser 1998), and modelling techniques. We employ case and grounded research in a descriptive way in data collection and organisation, and modelling for analysing the rich and varied data obtained. We hope that researchers feel encouraged to adopt hybrid and varied methodologies in innovative and novel ways in their theory generating attempts.

The "pure" grounded theory approach may be an ideal, for all researchers have some degree of understating of the phenomenon that they choose to investigate. The current endeavour is not the most rigorous in its adherence to the principles of grounded theoretic research methodologies; however, we believe we have taken adequate care to abide by the spirit and approach intrinsic to the method. Grounded theory method and case research method are *complementary* and when employed in **combination** with the power that modern modelling techniques and associated software afford can lead to new insights. In using the combination of case research, grounded theoretic approach and modelling techniques, we hope to lend rigor to the application of methodological pluralism, data analysis and inference drawing process (Brownlie and Saren 1997; Yin 1994).

The setting of the data for this paper is in India. This study is exploratory and qualitative. A brief mention of the process adopted may be in order to help readers in understanding both the paper and the research process employed in arriving at the reported findings and conclusions. Using both field studies that involved in depth interviewing of managers and published sources (e.g. periodicals, annual reports etc.), descriptive case studies were first written up for 13 firms in different industries. The aim here is on capturing the channel structure of the industry as a whole. In a few cases the write up captures the dominant firm's channel structure. This is done to paint a rich picture and to enhance readability. Our view is that the chosen firms' structures represent industry structures. The 13 industries are Cars, Paints, Newspaper, Credit Cards, Tobacco, Cell Phones, Footwear, Motorbikes, Ice Cream, Chocolate, Fertilisers, Toothpaste, and Detergents\_Shampoos. A minimum of two different managers were interviewed for each of the organisations contacted. Several of the managers were also contacted subsequently for clarifications and further information obtained as and when needed. This first phase was guided by a protocol that established guidelines to ensure uniformity in coverage and depth. These extensive long accounts were later turned into short précis that contained the *essence and substance* of the earlier mentioned case studies. These short summaries/accounts still had a lot of contextual detail. We decided to convert text into numerical format so as to make the case data amenable to further analysis.

This is presented in a tabular form below and has ten key variables and our assessment of the degree of importance for each of the 10 variables for each of the 13 chosen industries. These ten variables fall into two broad categories namely industry related ones and channel member related ones. This table was subjected to multivariate analysis using multidimensional mapping analysis (MDS). The resulting

two dimensional solution that maps the 13 different industry channels is presented next and is followed by a discussion of the findings and implications thereof. We outline several limitations of the present study and also offer directions for future research.

The following is a summary of 13 different industries’ sales and distribution channel structures. We have employed a mix of case research (Yin 1994) and grounded theoretic methodology (Glaser & Strauss 1967) in capturing the **essence and substance of the structures of the various marketing channels** of the sectors studied. Ten variables have been extracted from the detailed case studies and case summaries. This necessarily is subjective and a selective process. As one may observe, this set is limited and can easily be expanded by including consumer related variables (e.g. frequency of purchase) and several others. However, our purpose is to highlight a research process and its application, and the chosen variables and their measurement are both subject to improvement as we argue in this paper later but serve the illustration purpose as an embodiment of infusing rigour into qualitative research methodologies. The summary is presented below in tabular form and has in columns the ten key variables and our assessment of the degree of importance (measured on a likert scale of 1-5) for each of the 10 variables for each of the 13 chosen industries.

Sales and distribution structures of different industries: A Comparison											
	Industry	Competition	Unit Value	Volume	Unit Margins	Seasonality	Number of Retailers	Retailer Investment		Retailer Sales	Manufacturer Retailer Relationship
								Capital Investment	Working Capital		
1	Passenger Cars	High	High	Low	High	Medium	Low	High	High	High	High
2	Household Paints	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
3	Newspaper Industry	High	Low	High	Low	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low
4	Credit Cards	High	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Medium
5	Tobacco	Medium	Low	High	Low	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low
6	Mobile Phones	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
7	Footwear market	High	Medium	High	Low	Low	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
8	Two Wheeler Industry	High	High	Medium	High	Medium	Low	High	High	High	High
9	Ice Cream Market	Medium	Low	High	Low	High	High	Medium	Low	Low	Low
10	Chocolate Industry	Medium	Low	High	Low	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low
11	Fertiliser Industry	Medium	Medium	High	Low	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
12	Toothpaste Market	High	Low	High	Low	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low
13	Detergents & Personal Products	High	Low	High	Low	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low

**Table 1: Sales and distribution structures of different industries - A comparison**

The ten variables in Table 1 above may be categorised into two distinct variable groups. The ten variables fall into two broad categories namely industry related ones and channel member related ones.

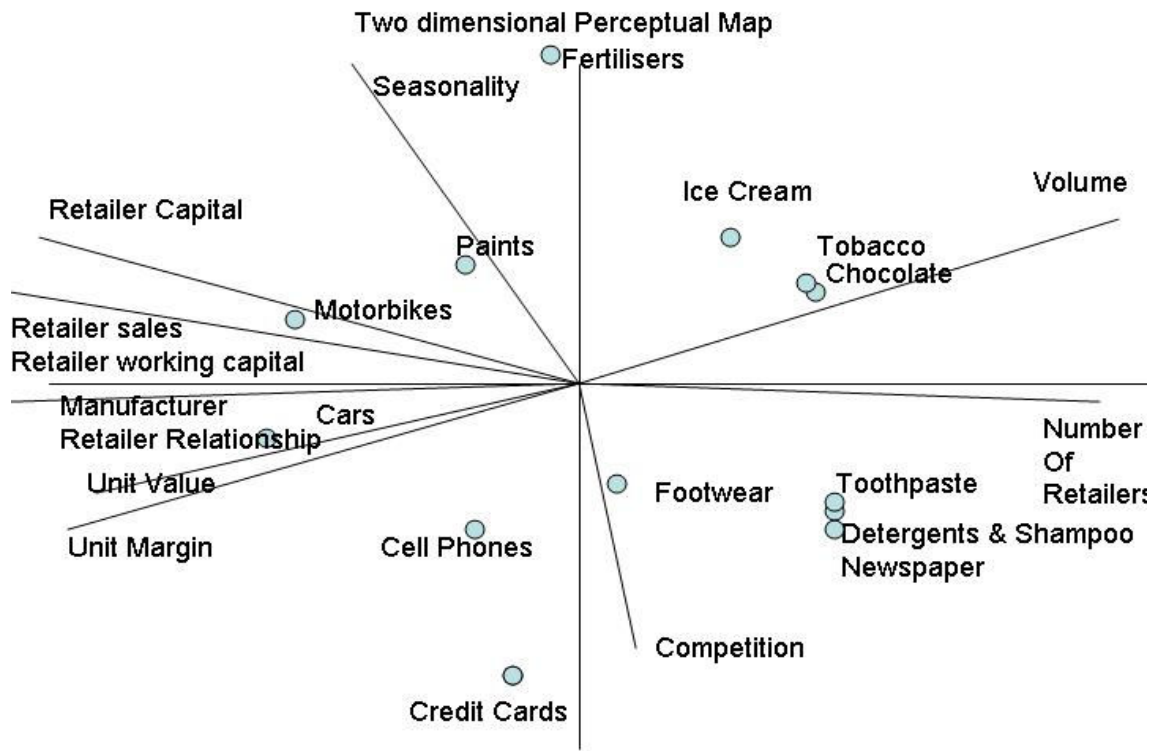
- Industry related variables: Competition, Unit Value, Volume, Unit Margin and Seasonality.
- Retailer related variables: Number of Retailers, Retailer Capital investment, Retailer Working Capital requirements, Retailer Sales Value, and Manufacturer Retailer relationship.

The degree of importance that appears in the table is a *subjective assessment* on the part of researchers and appears in the table as High (5), Medium (3) or Low (1) representing the variables’ nature and strength. This measurement is relative to the set of the chosen industries. This subjective assessment is

commonly referred to as judgemental data, and can easily be the average of multiple data points across a set of managers or even across several sample strata. As long as we understand that the purpose is the exercise is theory generation, not verification, one need only to think of both *validity and reliability* as suited to the context of theory building. The conversion of qualitative data into quantitative data is an important step as this step, in our view, is a key link to making qualitative accounts more amenable to analysis, interpretation and verification. Elements of rigor and reliability and by extension validity are introduced into the research process through this critical act. This, we argue, is a key contribution of the paper in addressing a lacuna in the analysis and interpretation of qualitative data, and in increasing reliability and validity of qualitative research process.

**Study One: Discussion of findings and conclusions**

The data in the table in the preceding section was analysed using multidimensional mapping technique (Hair et al 1998) and (Lilien and Rangaswamy, 2002). The resulting map is presented below for ready reference. Associated diagnostics are not reported for space reasons.



Based on the above output and diagnostics, we may classify marketing channel structures into several different clusters. An illustration of a five cluster grouping is presented below:

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cluster 1: Cars and Motorbikes</li> <li>Cluster 2: Credit Cards, Cell Phones, Footwear</li> <li>Cluster 3: Tobacco, Chocolate, Ice cream</li> <li>Cluster 4: Toothpaste, Detergents &amp; Shampoos and Newspapers</li> <li>Cluster 5: Fertilisers and paints</li> </ul> |
|--|

This is a visual map classification. The clusters and their composition can change depending upon researcher perspective and/or practitioner aims. For instance the seasonality variable appears to bring fertilises, ice cream and paints somewhat close to one another. However, the volume dimension makes ice cream a part of the cluster made up of chocolate and tobacco.

This classification may prove to be very useful in many strategic and tactical ways. This classification or typology scheme can influence both the design and management of marketing channel structures. We feel that this typology/classification has several applications and offers explanations for hitherto unexplained phenomena. This schema may also offer empirical support to strategic management theories that focus on diversification into related businesses downstream. Diversified firms also may find strategic and operational rationales for portfolio of product-markets that they may be operating in or intend to enter into. Yet another key contribution of the paper is the application a *combination of methodologies* that yields new insights concerning a phenomenon which is as old as the practice of marketing itself, and a subject matter that has been under the lens of marketing academia since the very early period of the advent of the marketing discipline. A third contribution is the *formulation of a link to quantification and modelling* to enable qualitative researchers to lend analytical rigor in their attempts at theory generation.

### **Study One: Limitations of the study and further research avenues**

This investigation is exploratory given the qualitative methodology employed in exploring the subject under scrutiny. This study is focused on one single nation viz., India and also is limited to 13 different businesses/sectors. It would be useful to extend the number of industries covered to include others and test the mapping solution both for stability and comprehension. It may also be worthwhile to add more variables and constructs in addition to the ten used in this study. Theoretical extensions and comparing the findings of this study with existing theories is another possible avenue for future research.

### **Study Two: Analysis of international marketing strategies**

Internationalisation is a varied process and allows multiple strategies (Baker 1985) and a variety of associated operational capabilities. We investigate the international marketing strategies adopted in *twelve* different business sectors in India in an attempt to explore and explain the similarities and differences found in this varied set of industries. The examples span the old economy industries such as the assembly and manufacturing enterprises that are both skill and capital intensive, and also the new economy sectors that are information intensive. The business sectors examined are Automobiles, CDs, Cement, Paints, Pharmaceuticals, Socks, Software, Syringes, Tea exports, Textiles, Two wheeler tyres, and Watch components. The examples span the old economy industries such as the assembly and manufacturing enterprises that are both skill and capital intensive, and also the new economy sectors that are information intensive.

This study adopts an approach that is identical to the research approach outlined in the earlier study that explored marketing channel structures. The summary that resulted from case research that examined twelve business sectors is presented below. This is presented in a tabular form and has twelve key variables and our assessment of the degree of importance for each of the 12 variables for each of the 12 chosen industries. These twelve variables fall into three broad categories. As was the case with the earlier study, this table was subjected to multivariate analysis using multidimensional mapping analysis (MDS). The resulting two-dimensional solution that maps the 12 different industries' international marketing strategies is presented below and is followed by a discussion of the findings and implications thereof. We outline several limitations of the present study and also offer directions for future research. Explanation of the extracted twelve variables follows the presentation of a table that captures the relevance of these variables across the 12 sectors examined.

This necessarily is subjective and a selective process. As one may observe, this set is limited and can easily be expanded by including consumer related variables (e.g. frequency of purchase), importing nation characteristics and several others. However, our purpose is to highlight a research process and its application, and the chosen variables and their measurement are both subject to improvement as we argue in this paper later but serve the illustration purpose as an embodiment of infusing rigour into qualitative research methodologies. The summary is presented in Table 2 and has in columns the twelve key variables and our assessment of the degree of importance (measured on a likert scale of 1-5) for each of the 10 variables for each of the 12 chosen industries.

A comparison of international marketing strategies across twelve industries in India													
S.No.	Industry	Business Characteristics					Product Characteristics			Market & Transaction characteristics			
		Capital Requirement	Technology Requirement	Process Skill	Value addition prospects	Need for Supplier Network	Export Volume	Unit Value	Durability	Freight Cost	Market sophistication	Direct Contact with Customers	Competition
1	Automobiles	High	High	Medium	High	High	Medium	High	High	High	High	High	High
2	CDs	High	High	Medium	Medium	Low	High	Low	Medium	Low	High	Low	High
3	Cement	High	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High	Low	High	High	Low	Low	High
4	Paints	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	High
5	Pharmaceutical	High	High	High	High	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	High	Low	High
6	Socks manufac	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	High
7	Software	Low	High	Medium	High	Low	Low	High	Medium	Low	High	High	Medium
8	Syringes	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	High	Low	Medium
9	Tea exports	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Medium
10	Textile sector	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	High
11	Two wheeler Ty	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
12	Watch parts	Medium	High	High	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	medium	Low	High	Medium	Low

**Table 2: International marketing in India - A comparison of twelve industries/business sectors**

The twelve variables in Table 2 above may be categorised into three distinct variable groups. The twelve variables fall into three broad categories namely Business/sector characteristics, product characteristics and market/transaction characteristics.

- **Business/sector characteristics:** Capital requirement, Technology requirement, Process skill requirement, Value addition prospects, Need for supplier network, and Export volumes.

A number of the businesses studied require high capital and technology investments. Process skill requirements are also very high in pharmaceutical and watch components making. Several of the industries (e.g. cars) need strong and extensive supplier networks. Value addition prospects in cars, software, and pharmaceuticals businesses may be more substantial than in a few other sectors such as socks and cement. Export volumes need to be high in several of the sectors examined. Software sector is an exception as is the automobile business.

- **Product characteristics:** Unit value, Durability and Freight cost.

Cars have high unit value as do customised software solutions. Both cars and software programs are durable with medium to long life cycles. Most services are considered to be highly perishable. However, this is not the case with software or with many products that use embedded software. For example, cars and other durables including washing machines, TVs and mobile phones increasingly use electronic chips. However, products have transferability issue to deal with. Cars incur fairly high shipping freight as does a cement bag or paint can. Software and other services do not have this transport problem.

- **Market/Transaction characteristics:**

Market sophistication, Direct contact with customers and competition. Competition in several sectors is high, and markets for a few products such as cars and watch parts can be very sophisticated. Contact with customers is crucial in many ways and managing with customer relationships and nurturing the same can be argued to be a crucial competence. In a number of international business situations, exporters may only be in contact with OEMs and hence may not have a direct contact with the end consumer.

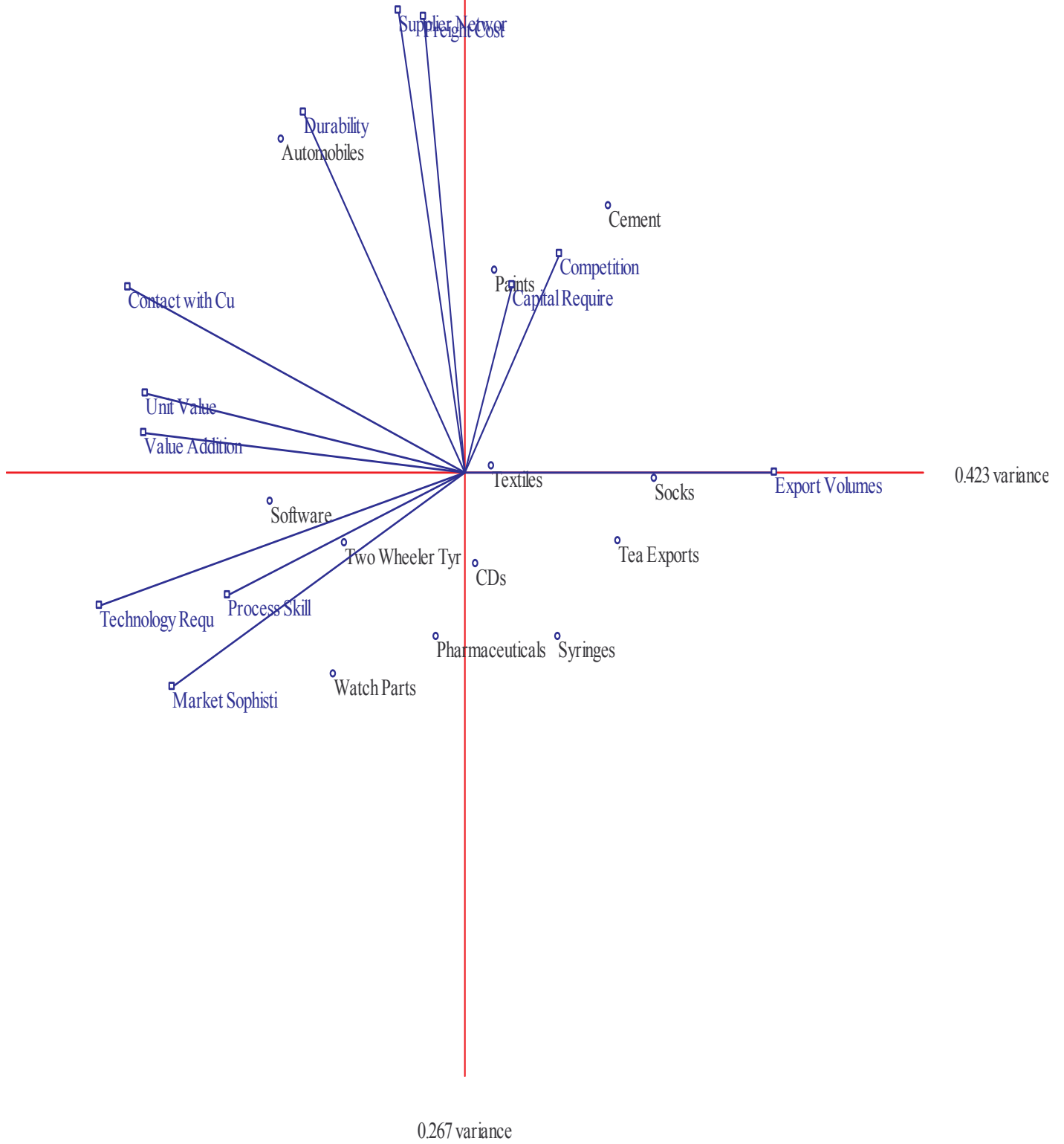


The degree of importance that appears in the table is a *subjective assessment* on the part of researchers and appears in the table as High (5), Medium (3) or Low (1) representing the variables' nature and strength. This measurement is relative to the set of the chosen industries. This subjective assessment is commonly referred to as judgemental data, and can easily be the average of multiple data points across a set of managers or even across several sample strata. As long as we understand that the purpose is the exercise is theory generation, not verification, one need only to think of both *validity and reliability* as suited to the context of theory building. The conversion of qualitative data into quantitative data is an important step as this step, in our view, is a key link to making qualitative accounts more amenable to analysis, interpretation and verification. Elements of rigor and reliability and by extension validity are introduced into the research process through this critical act. This, we argue, is a key contribution of the paper in addressing a lacuna in the analysis and interpretation of qualitative data, and in increasing reliability and validity of qualitative research process.

### **Study Two: Discussion of findings and conclusions**

The data in the table in the preceding section was analysed using multidimensional mapping technique (Hair et al 1998) and (Lilien and Rangaswamy, 2002). The resulting map and associated diagnostics are presented below for ready reference.

# Perceptual Map (Dim I : Dim II)



Based on the above data and output, we may classify the sectors studied into several different clusters in order to identify the main elements of the international marketing strategies adopted by these sector clusters. An illustration of a five cluster grouping is presented below:

Cluster 1: Automobiles
Cluster 2: Cement and Paints
Cluster 3: CDs, Socks, Syringes, Textiles and Tea exports
Cluster 4: Pharmaceuticals, Two wheeler tyres and Watch parts
Cluster 5: Software

This is a visual map classification. The clusters and their composition can change depending upon researcher perspective and/or practitioner aims. The business sectors in clusters 1 and 2 are bulky and their volume/weight among other characteristics makes them sensitive to the freight element. Logistics and related infrastructure is critical to the Cluster 1 sectors (cement and paints).

Automobile sector is a unique sector and is all by itself reflecting its business nature. Unlike the businesses in cluster 2, the auto sector has significant *value addition possibilities*. Marketing of cars may necessitate a more *direct relationship with customers* for prolonged periods of time post-sale. Logistics capability is also crucial here but not as much as it is so with the businesses in Cluster 1.

Export volume variable is a key variable that appears to drive the formation of the business sectors in cluster 3 (Textiles, socks, CDs, Tea exports and Syringes). Each of these businesses requires relatively high volume to be a viable international business operation. The main challenge for these business sectors is moving from being generic goods to being branded and value added products.

Cluster 4 businesses, two wheeler tyres, watch parts and pharmaceuticals require process skills. Watch parts are supplied to OEMs as are two wheeler tyres, and bulk pharmaceutical drugs. Generic or branded formulations may be supplied directly for end consumer use.

Software is the only business in cluster 5. While this reflects the somewhat unique and idiosyncratic features of this business, it is possible to see commonalities between the software and the auto sectors. Both businesses need direct and prolonged contact with customers and have high value addition possibilities/avenues open to them. Although the auto business is capital intensive and needs a strong supply network, both the sectors' output is relatively more durable and more valuable (high unit value) than that of many of the other sectors studied in this paper. Managing customer relationships is a crucial competence required in this sector.

This classification (visual map) may prove to be very useful in many strategic and tactical ways. This classification or typology scheme can influence both the design and execution of international marketing strategies. We feel that this typology/classification has several applications and offers explanations for hitherto unexplained phenomena. This schema may also offer empirical support to strategic management theories that focus on diversification into related businesses downstream. Diversified firms also may find strategic and operational rationales for portfolio of product-markets that they may be operating in or intend to enter into. Yet another key contribution of the paper is the application a *combination of methodologies* that yields new insights concerning a subject matter that has been under the lens of marketing academia for a long time. A third contribution is the *formulation of a link to quantification and modelling* to enable qualitative researchers to lend analytical rigor in their attempts at theory generation.

**The twelve variables identified should be examined to look for harmonious balance and their ability to continue to provide competitive edge.** Most sectors and businesses may require strategies tailored for their specific needs and situations (Baker 1985). This means that those firms that have vast advantages, say in logistics or in managing customer contact, may think of enlarging their product portfolios or the number of markets that they serve. *Thinking in terms of the twelve dimensions* individually and collectively while formulating and implementing international marketing

strategies can help managers uncover the similarities and differences across business sectors. This is just a way of moving away from having focus solely on products, markets or business requirements. Our map allows ready ways of revealing connections that bind businesses across very disparate sectors using a *holistic approach* that encompasses different aspects that make up international marketing strategies.

### **Study Two: Limitations of the second study and further research avenues**

This investigation is exploratory given the qualitative methodology employed in exploring the subject under scrutiny. This study is focused on one single nation viz., India and also is limited to 12 different businesses/sectors. It would be useful to extend the number of industries covered to include others and test the mapping solution both for stability and comprehension. It may also be worthwhile to add more variables and constructs in addition to the twelve used in this study. Theoretical extensions and comparing the findings of this study with existing theories is another possible avenue for future research.

### **Conclusions and Final Remarks**

“Science is a journey and the existing is not its destination”. In this light new data are never discomfoting, they never “destroy” existing theory, they expand and improve it’ (Gummesson 1988 p.79). ‘Most empirical studies lead from theory to data. Yet, the accumulation of knowledge involves a continual cycling between theory and data’ (Eisenhardt 1989 p.549) which requires enhanced theory building programmes. Several organisational researchers have argued that there is a paucity of ‘strong theorists’ and that ‘researchers are primarily trained in data collection techniques and the latest analytical tools, not the nuances of theory building’. (Sutton and Staw 1995 p. 378). Weick (1995 p.386) informs that theory is continuum and asks researchers not to save ‘theory to label their ultimate triumph, but use it as well to label their interim struggles’. Altogether, theory building has essentially remained an idiosyncratic procedure as opposed to the great sophistication that verification techniques have acquired.

Paradigm shift(s) lead not only to *the reconfiguration of existing ideas and additions of theories* but also to the modification of extant research tools or even to the adoption of entirely new methodologies. In this light, we put forth our view that at this stage of case research evolution and acceptance as a viable mechanism for theory building/testing, the marked convergence of both methodological and philosophical views place emphasis on “greater rigour”. The possibility that convergence is a necessary phase of evolution can indeed be entertained. Indeed, what theory building needs is a boost through meta-theoretical developments that outline and *formalise techniques that both provide easier, quicker and more accurate routes* for arriving at empirically testable theories. As a preliminary attempt, we outlined in this paper a mixed method approach that may aid and accelerate theorists’ efforts.

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