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An Exploratory Study of the Strategic Marketing Practices of
ICT Firms in India

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of
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in
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New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Even though the economic growth rate is attributed to tremendous progress across all industries, the information and communication sector (ICT) in particular holds significant promise. The rapid developments in this sector coupled with the country’s efforts to capitalise on the ICT revolution have propelled India into the global arena as a leader in this sector.

Marketing is a crucial element for the success of all high technology firms, including ICT firms. Given the importance of ICT firms to the Indian economy and the importance of marketing for the success of these firms, there is a need to examine the marketing practices adopted by these firms and their influence on firm performance. In view of the limited research in this area, this study aims to address the gap in literature and intends to enhance the understanding of the marketing practices of the ICT firms in India.

This research seeks to answer the question: how do the marketing practices adopted by the ICT firms in India contribute to firm performance? In order to answer this question, a conceptual framework was developed based on extant review of related literature. An integrated approach was employed to develop this framework in which the marketing management perspective, relationship marketing perspective and social media were integrated. Data was collected through Web survey using structured questionnaires from the marketing decision makers in these ICT firms. Then the data was analysed using a range of statistical methods.

The analysis revealed a wide variety of marketing practices that are adopted by the ICT firms in India. Empirical evidence supports the emergence of social media as a new construct and the use of social media for marketing purposes. Social media has been embraced by the ICT firms in India as it is intertwined with relationship marketing and market research practices thereby supporting the marketing activities of these ICT firms. The results also brought to light unique product practices that appear to be exclusive to these firms.

An examination of the influence of the identified marketing practices on customer satisfaction and firm performance yielded significant results. Relationship marketing practices, product practices positioning practices and promotional practices significantly
influences firm performance; Relationship marketing practices, product practices positioning practices, targeting practices, social media practices and pricing practices have significant influence on customer satisfaction in the ICT firms in India. It is also evident that relationship marketing practices, product practices, targeting practices and social media practices have an indirect effect on firm performance through customer satisfaction in these firms.

The findings of this study contribute to theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of marketing in the ICT sector in India. The research is significant in that it identifies and documents industry-specific marketing practices that influence firm performance. It makes a contribution to the existing social media literature by enhancing the understanding of the use of social media by the ICT firms and clarifies the role of social media in relationship marketing and market research. The research also provides a framework that can guide an examination of the marketing practices of ICT firms in the context of other economies in the world.
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