B2B marketing strategies for the apparel industry
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The paper presented is a part of an ongoing research project to propose B2B marketing solutions to facilitate the Garment Industry in Bangladesh to adapt to the new era of digitalization and service domination.

B2B marketing, despite of the economic relevance, has not developed adequate academic interest (Mora Cortez, 2019). Following the development of a paradigm shift from a transactional to a behavioral and relationship focus, this is seen as a business strategy paradigm, focusing on systematic development of ongoing, collaborative business relationships as essential for sustainable competitive advantage (Wengler, 2006). Other contemporary concepts as innovation emerged, which from an organization’s perspective, is a performance-maximizing strategy with emphasis on technology, product development resulting in cost-minimizing strategy (Dziallas and Blind, 2019). On the same note, digitalization includes a better perspective on competition, improved R&D efforts and reduced costs (Pandey et al, 2020) and in B2B, enhances flow of information and trust among customers (Krishna and Singh, 2018), key to relationship sustainability. Sustainability is to ensure long-term business success while contributing to economic and social development, a healthy environment, and a stable society (Lim, 2016), organizations are expected to engage and take responsibility. The digital age is not only about selling a product, but managing the customer journey by engaging in automation, personalization, contextual interaction and journey innovation (Pandey et al, 2020).

This new era of Industry 4.0 is expected to create a manufacturing environment composed of product, intelligence, communication and networking (Oztemel and Gursev, 2018) thus, emphasizing the importance of relationship marketing and value co-creation for sustainability. These assumptions are in line with the concept of service dominant logic that states customers are always co-creators where value exchange does not end in the act of consumption and is negotiated through resources exchanged between entities (Vargo and Lusch, 2017). With the changing landscape in how businesses operate, the garment industry may be looking at survival by altering their thought and behaviour toward a service-focused
understanding of the customer (Prajogo, 2011) and not solely rely on their advantage of low labour costs to address barriers of supply chain, design and product development, infrastructure and marketing skills (Shibley et al, 2018) for their survival in the global competition.

The research question proposed is, what are the key B2B marketing strategies that garment factories in Bangladesh need to adapt to in order to survive in the global market that is faced with digitalization and service dominance?

Qualitative research will be undertaken to determine the Retailer/Distributer’s expectations of their business partners’ (Garment Manufacturer) marketing efforts and quantitative research methods to determine the supplier’s (business partner) initiatives for becoming order winners (Hill, 2000), considering the limitations of their infrastructure and keeping in line with the future Industry expectations. Frameworks for measuring value co-creation (Tommasetti, 2017) and competitive priorities for the industry will be used to formulate the basis of the questions. The data will be analyzed with systems of Envivo and SPSS to map the strategies and derive at the strategy sweet spot (Mohr et al, 2010).
Bibliography:


