



NORTH-HOLLAND

---

---

# Conceptualizing and Isolating Cultural Differences in Performance Data in International High-Tech Industrial Markets

Marcel van Birgelen  
Ko de Ruyter  
Martin Wetzels

---

Address correspondence to Marcel van Birgelen, Maastricht University, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Department of Marketing and Marketing Research, P.O. Box 616, 6200 MD Maastricht, The Netherlands. Tel.: +31-43-3883839; Fax: +31-43-3210265; E-mail: m.vanbirgelen@mw.unimaas.nl

*In high-technology industrial markets, a shift can be observed from the mere delivery of industrial products to a total-product-offering, including both products and accompanying services. Because of the heterogeneity in buyers' demands, the measurement of an organization's performance on such total-product-of-*

---

---

ferings becomes quite difficult. This problem gets even more serious when one is trying to compare the relative performance of international subsidiaries, since factors such as cultural differences and their influence on how customers report on performance have to be taken into account. This article attempts to conceptualize cultural differences and uses these for establishing international equivalence in customer survey data on the performance on a high-tech total-product-offering. The results of an empirical study reveal that cultural differences indeed influence international performance measurement. After correction for these differences, conclusions can be drawn on the relative performance of different subsidiaries. Furthermore, it is shown that intangible service elements in a high-tech total-product-offering have the strongest influence on customer satisfaction. © 2000 Elsevier Science Inc. All rights reserved.

## INTRODUCTION

Organizations operating in high-technology markets frequently face high levels of uncertainty and perceived risk [1]. On the one hand, sellers must attempt to over-

---

---

MARCEL VAN BIRGELEN is a Ph.D. Candidate at the Department of Marketing and Marketing Research at Maastricht University, the Netherlands. His main research interests include international marketing research, problems and challenges in the interaction between (international) marketing researchers and decision makers, services marketing, and relationship marketing. The journals he has published in include the *International Business Review*, the *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, the *European Journal of Marketing*, *Total Quality Management*, and various Dutch managerial journals.

KO DE RUYTER is an Associate Professor of Marketing and Marketing Research at Maastricht University, the Netherlands. His research interests include services marketing, customer information technology, customer complaining behavior, service innovations, and relationship marketing. His work has appeared in the *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, *Advances in Services Marketing and Management*, the *Journal of Economic Psychology*, and *Total Quality Management*.

MARTIN WETZELS is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Marketing and Marketing Research at Maastricht University, the Netherlands. His current research interests include the management of service organizations, services marketing, quantitative methods in marketing, and marketing channels. The journals he has published in include the *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, the *Journal of Economic Psychology*, the *European Journal of Marketing*, *Advances in Services Marketing and Management*, the *International Journal of Logistics Management*, the *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, and *Total Quality Management*.

---

---

come hesitations towards new technological products and services that their customers may have, while dealing with the continuous threat of competitors developing new technologies [2–4]. From a buyer perspective, it can be seen that buyers are confronted with high switching costs and asymmetrically dependent relationships, once they have adopted a technology from one specific seller [5–7]. To cope with the risks and uncertainties associated with high-technology industrial markets, sellers are attempting to find more effective ways of marketing their product offerings. In addition to providing buyers with quality products, sales persons' expertise, after-sales services, and effective communication are crucial factors for a supplier's success rate [8–11]. In other words, buyers of high-technology products are searching for more than just a good product. They also demand additional services and support in case some problem arises and, therefore, they are looking for a total-product-offering.

The demand for such a total-product-offering posits a number of challenges, both for marketing practitioners and marketing researchers. While both core product technology and a portion of accompanying services might be subject to a certain degree of standardization (e.g., delivery of additional supplies), it often remains difficult to achieve or guarantee uniformity in service levels. As customers are important participants in the service delivery process and no two customers are precisely equal, the service component of the total-product-offering (e.g., repair visit by a service engineer) may be heterogeneous [12]. This nonstandardization issue makes it difficult for practitioners and marketing researchers to assess, control, and measure both performance on service quality and buyers' satisfaction with these services.

This problem becomes even more serious when trying to study and compare customer evaluative judgements in international markets. To evaluate the relative performance of subsidiaries located in different countries, a multinational high-technology company inevitably has to take the cultural background of a country into account. To be able to make reliable inferences on the performance of international subsidiaries, it is necessary to separate or filter real subsidiary performance from cultural influences that might affect the way in which customers report on this perceived performance. In other words, international customer survey data on total-product-offering performance has to be made as much internationally equivalent as possible. In this article, we try to conceptualize and isolate cultural differences when studying the performance on a total-product-offering and its influence

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

**ISI**Articles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات