A Three-Component Definition of Strategic Marketing

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Abstract

Conceptual frameworks for "marketing" and "strategy" were developed with the aim of finding common grounds to form a social theory framework for strategic marketing. This was carried out by reviewing and distilling relevant contributions in the marketing and strategy literatures. Models for the two disciplines were further developed which formed the basis for building the framework for strategic marketing. Finally, the resultant strategic marketing model was examined vis-à-vis definitions of strategic marketing in the literature. The review of the marketing literature revealed that the subject centres on relationship; while strategy is centred on environmental analysis for competitive advantage. The encompassing framework which emerged revealed that although strategic marketing begins with environmental analysis, it involves two other central elements: positioning and competitive advantage.

Keywords: definition, marketing, strategy, strategic marketing

1. Introduction

Building a construct for strategic marketing over time, has involved an integration of the apparent disciplines of strategy and marketing. From the early definitions of marketing by the American Marketing Association (AMA) such as its 1935 definition, to contributions of scholars and practitioners of the discipline, the conceptualization of the subject has been informed by the evolving philosophies and orientations which dominated the field at any given time. The same can be said of the strategy literature.

In the midst of the varying contributions between the 1960s and the 1980s, the first landmark conceptual framework which formed the basis for defining strategic marketing emerged (i.e. Greenley; 1989). His contribution has become a lasting principle in defining strategic marketing which he underlines as originating from the strategic planning process and which in itself, originates from the firm's vision and objectives. This conceptualization of strategic marketing has continued to remain relevant till date.

However, the question is whether the subject has evolved from the development of the two disciplines – from the publication of Greenley's work till date. It is therefore important to carry out an extensive review of the literatures; following the trajectories in the development of both disciplines: marketing and strategy. The purpose is to develop a social theory framework of strategic marketing by extensively reviewing the marketing literature and the strategy literature. The new theory will be juxtaposed against theories of strategic marketing established by leading scholars in the field starting with Greenley (1989). The result of this comparison will further advance the scope of knowledge in determining the viability of the new construct; that is whether it holds strength or whether there is need for further research in building a social theory framework for strategic marketing.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

As much as the definitions of marketing and strategy are necessary to aid the understanding of the concepts, it is of paramount importance to understand the theoretical foundations which informs the definition of the subjects. These foundations drive the development of the subject and explain the evolution of their discourse over time. In the extant literature, different approaches to the definition of both disciplines influence even the marketing orientation and strategic formulations propounded by scholars and adapted by experts in the industry. The

theories which inform the subjects are best delineated along both subjects by examining the theories of the respective subjects through their respective literatures. It is important to note that the thematic dimension which defines both subjects is overlapping; varying amongst authors. Therefore, they are not necessarily exquisitely specified.

2.2 Marketing Literature

The marketing literature unveils 32 themes between varied authors namely: management decision, customer-based, human need, environmental impact, profitable relationship enhancement, promise fulfillment, profitable customer relationship, stakeholder value, customer service, customer quality, customer retention, supplier-customer relationship, customer stimulation, customer equity, academic discipline, management process, firm-customer exchange, science, evolving lifecycles, critical process, culture (i.e. values and benefits), strategy, tactics, programme formulation, business activity performance, marketing mix, pervasive societal activity, planning and execution process, customer value delivery process and management activity.

On the basis of generic similarity, these themes/declensions are further grouped into categories with the exception of what may be considered "outliers" – which cannot be grouped under any category. Based on the groupings, six dominant categories were identified namely: relationship marketing, value creation, strategic management process, promotion, competitive strategy and profit maximization. Outlier definitions include: human need, environmental impact, academic discipline, business function, selling concept, marketing mix, pervasive societal activity (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. Categorization of marketing definitions in the literature

Theme/Declension	Definitions
1. *Relationship Marketing*	Marketing is to establish, maintain, and enhance relationships with customers and other partners, at a profit, so that the objectives of the parties involved are met. This is achieved by a mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises (Gronroos, 1990 in Gronroos, 1994, p. 9)
	[…] relationship marketing [is] a strategy to attract, maintain and enhance customer relationships…strategy to maintain customer relationship to create value for the main stakeholders (Berry, 1983)
	[…] the goals of relationship marketing are to create and maintain lasting relationships between the firm and its customers that are rewarding for both sides (Rapp & Collins, 1990)
	[…] an approach that aligns marketing, customer service and quality with emphasis on a focus on customer retention (Christopher *et al.*, 1991)
	relationship marketing is a strategy where the management of interactions, relationships and networks are fundamental issues (Gummesson, 1993)
	[…] relationship marketing is a process where the main activities are to create a database including existing and potential customers, to approach these customers using differentiated and customer-specific information about them, and to evaluate the life-term value of very single customer relationship and the costs of creating and maintaining them (Copulinsky & Wolf, 1990)
	Marketing is seen as the task of finding and stimulating buyers for the firm's output. It involves product development, pricing, distribution, and communication; and in the more progressive firms, continuous attention to the changing needs of customers and the development of new products, with product modifications and services to meet these needs. (Kotler & Levy, 1969, p. 10)
	Marketing is defined as relationships themselves and the elements involved in establishing and managing the relationships is the unit of analysis for marketing…Marketing is also defined as "promise fulfillment" and profitable customer relationship (Gronroos, 1994).
	Marketing is viewed as an investment (Srivastava, Shervani, & Fahey, 1998) that produces an improvement in a driver of customer equity (for simplicity of exposition, we refer to an improvement in only one driver, but our model also accommodates simultaneous improvement in multiple drivers (Rust, Lemon & Zeithaml, 2004)

2. *Value Creation*	Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.' The activity and processes are supposed to deliver value and in return benefit the company and its stakeholders. This current definition carries an instrumental view of marketing, as did the earlier definitions of marketing, where the exchange between parties was replaced by the transaction (more extensive) (AMA in Mattson, 2008, p. 180).
	Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders (AMA 2004 in Wilkie & Moore, 2007)
	[…] creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging market offerings that have value for stakeholders (AMA 2007 in Wilkie & Moore, 2007, p. 275)
	Marketing is seen as the task of finding and stimulating buyers for the firm's input. It involves product development, pricing, distribution, and communication; and in the more progressive firms, continuous attention to the changing needs of customers and the development of new products, with product modification and services to meet these needs (Kotler & Levy, 1969, p. 10)
3. *Strategic Management Process*	[…] set of management decisions which is concerned with what customers to focus on and what to offer them (Smith, 2003, p. 158)
	Marketing is a management process whereby the resources of the whole organisation are utilized to satisfy the needs of selected customer groups in order to achieve the objectives of both parties. Marketing, then, is first and foremost an attitude of mind rather than a series of functional activities (McDonald, 1989, p. 8)
	Marketing [is] a process whereby actions are defined (planned) and then performed (executed) in a way which leads to satisfactory exchanges in the marketplace (Ferrell & Lucas, 1987 in Meldrum, 1996, p. 29)
	Marketing is a science, although at times not an exact one. Different markets respond differently to various marketing vehicles, messages and offers. Franchises at different stages of development have varying needs. Marketing vehicles have lifecycles; what worked one time won't work the next. Be flexible. Create a range of marketing programs that considers these and other factors (Frith, 2010, p. 46)
	Many popular approaches address marketing as an issue of process, not function—for example, as the "process of going to market," which cuts across traditional functional and organizational boundaries…The implications of such marketing process models for the redundancy of traditional functional structures may be extreme, with the unintended side effect of further weakening the marketing paradigm in organizations (Piercy, 1998, p. 227).
	A seminal paper by Denison & McDonald (1995) on the role of marketing past, present and future, based on research into marketing in excellence conducted for the Chartered Institute of Marketing, showed that, excellent companies, marketing exists at three levels — the corporate level, the strategic or SBU level, and the functional/operating level. This results in three difference dimensions — marketing as a culture (values and benefits), as strategy (segmentation, positioning, branding, information, etc.) and as tactics (the four Ps). (Denison & McDonald, 1995 cited in McDonald, 1996, p. 10)
	critical process – marketing should be reasoned as a critical process and not simply as a functional specialization (Hooley, Piercy & Nicouland, 2008)
	marketing should be seen in three dimensions of culture, strategy (segmentation, positioning, branding) and tactics (the four Ps) (McDonald, 1995)
	Marketing for a number of years has been long on advice about what to do in a given competitive or market situation and short on useful recommendations for how to do it within company, competitor, and customer constraints . . . (Bonoma, 1985 in Piercy 1998, p. 223).
	Marketing is the devising of programs that successfully meet the forces of the market (Borden, 1984, p. 12)

	Marketing is) the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives (AMA 1985 in Wilkie & Moore, 2007; Aaker, Kumar & Day, 2001).
	(1) Marketing as a managerial activity, or what marketers do; (2) Marketing as a philosophy, as in market-driven organizations; and (3) Marketing as a field of study, or discipline (Wilkie & Moore, 2007, p. 274)
	Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organization objectives (Aaker, Kumar & Day, 2001, p. 1)
4. *Promotion*	Carson (1985), in a review of the marketing characteristics of small enterprises cites Cohn & Lindbore (1972) in identifying a number of areas in which small business owners and managers differ from professional marketing managers in large companies. They note that the former tend to have negative attitudes to marketing; perceive marketing as a cost; treat distribution and selling as uncontrollable problems; and, most significant, believe that each case is so specific that it cannot be approached using general rules (Carson, 1985 cited in Carson & Cromie, 1989, p. 35)
	Marketing is seen as the task of find and stimulating buyers for the firm's input. It involves product development, pricing, distribution, and communication; and in the more progressive firms, continuous attention to the changing needs of customers and the development of new products, with product modification and services to meet these needs (Kotler & Levy, 1969, p. 10)
5. *Competitive Strategy*	Marketing is a totally intellectual war in which you try to outmaneuver your competitors on a battleground that no one has ever seen.... it can only be imagined in the mind (Ries & Trout, 1986)
6. *Profit Maximization*	[…] the basic microeconomic paradigm, with its emphasis on profit maximization (Anderson 1982, cited in Webster Jr., 1992)
	American Marketing Association (1948, p. 210) defined marketing as: the performance of business activities directed toward, and incident to, the flow of goods and services from producer to consumer or user (AMA 1948 in Webster, 1992)
7. *Outliers*	Human need, consists of all activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchanges intended to satisfy human needs or wants, such that the satisfaction of these needs and wants occurs, with minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment (Stanton & Futrell, 1987 in Polonsky, 1995, p. 30)
	Marketing is a dynamic and rapidly growing discipline. It is a university discipline that aspires to be a professional discipline (Hunt, 1992 in Malhotra, 1999; Wilkie & Moore, 2007)
	[...] Marketing is a pervasive societal activity that goes beyond the selling of toothpaste, soap and steel. Political contests remind us that candidates are marketed as well as soap; student recruitment by colleges remind us that higher education is marketed; and fund raising reminds us that "causes" are marketed. Yet these areas of marketing are typically ignored by the student of marketing (Kotler & Levy, 1969, p. 10)
	Marketing should be defined as an "ethical concern" (Mattsson, 2008, p. 180)

The dominant theme/declension as building and enhancing relationships between a firm and its major stakeholders spans discussions of the subject from the early 1980s (Berry, 1983) to the mid-nineties (Gronroos, 1994; 1995). However, marketing has also been defined in terms of value creation, value delivery and a value system which oscillates between the major stakeholders of a firm (American Marketing Association, 2007) as reiterated in the American Marketing Association (AMA) 2008 definition:

Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society at large.

This value system continuum is integral to the relationship definitions of marketing with main proponents (e.g. Berry, 1983; Rapp & Collins, 1990; Gummesson, 1993) who define marketing in terms of a strategy for maintaining customer relationship and creating value for the main stakeholders of the firm. Creating value is

garnered by enhancing existing relationships and/or forming relationships with new customers. Hence, the basis for integrating both dimensions: 'value system' and 'relationship'.

One argument which may be offered against the relationship dimension in the literature is that it is limited to the services industry. However, this limitation is only a limitation of logic rather than a limitation in application. Gronroos (1995) for instance, observes that the strategy adopted by a firm may shift depending on the context of the situation and the applicability of the strategy to that context. A transactional strategy rather than a relational strategy, for instance, could be deployed in the case of a customer who does not wish to maintain a relationship with a firm or customers (e.g. a passing traveler) who may happen on a motel due to unusual circumstances. Such a customer is therefore very unlikely to have interactions with the firm in future. While this observation is well acknowledged, it is trite to note that the author's (Gronroos) observation borders on the strategy – and situating a strategy with context. The observation does not address the overall marketing orientation or the firm's approach in defining marketing which even in the case of the passing traveler, may still be informed by a dominant 'relationship' orientation; that is, the service experience the passing traveler may enjoy which is a function of relationship marketing efforts (Della, 2012). Marketing managers and executives are constantly aware that even for the passing traveler, an excellent service experience has the potential of contributing to the brand equity which may spiral through word-of-mouth advertising.

In addition to the above, the service-dominant logic (S-D logic) answers the question conceptually. Lusch & Vargo (2006) elaborate on value and exchange, and justify why it should be the dominant logic to product marketing. They argue that if a firm manufactures a product for the fulfillment of a particular demand, it is in fact providing a 'service' for a certain demand or need. This logic informs the authors' departure from traditional definitions of 'service' with the following offering:

the application of specialized competences (knowledge and skills), through deeds, processes, and performances for the benefit of another entity or the entity itself –   (Lusch & Vargo, 2006, p. 283)

Other definitions of marketing have viewed the subject in terms of a 'management function' dimension (Smith, 2003; McDonald, 1989; Piercy, 1998; Hooley, Piercy & Nicouland, 2008; McDonald, 1995; Borden, 1984; Aaker, Kumar & Day, 2001; Wilkie & Moore, 2007). The resonating terms in this set of definitions include, 'management decision' (Smith, 2003), 'process' (Piercy, 1998; Hooley, Piercy & Nicouland, 2008), 'strategy' (McDonald, 1995), 'programme formulation' (Borden, 1984), and 'planning and execution' (Aaker, Kumar & Day, 2001). Attempts to define marketing in terms of strategic management processes, decisions, functions, company policy formulation, planning etc, must be seen as attempts to describe the right place of marketing within the organizational structure. These authors acknowledge the place of strategy within marketing and dissociate marketing from the traditional orientation of mere promotional activities which other authors (e.g. Cohn & Lindbore, 1972; Kotler & Levy, 1969) rudimentarily define as "costs" – thereby adopting a functionalist philosophy in marketing.

Marketing should also not be conceptualized in terms of maximizing profit. The American Marketing Association's (1948) definition of marketing expresses another traditional view of the discipline in terms of 'performance of business activities'. The crucial question here, is what metrics will be considered in the measurement and determination of the business activities? Another criticism of the definition is, it places emphasis on sales output while lacking consideration of the strategic processes involved in (even) the promotional activities of the firm, and what factors/tools of the promotional mix should be deployed for a particular service.

Outlier definitions identified in the literature include definitions of marketing as general human activity (Stanton & Futrell, 1987 in Polonsky, 1995, p. 30); an academic discipline (Hunt, 1992 in Malhotra, 1999; Wilkie & Moore, 2007), and, Mattson's (2008) definition of marketing as an ethical concern. While it is accurate to identify that marketing as an academic discipline is taught in schools, the definition ought to stretch further to include the confluence between the taught discipline and industry experience (e.g. Wilkie & Moore, 2007). Mattsson (2008) emphasizes that all marketing activities should be characterized by ethical concerns. This includes concern for the (physical) environmental impact of such activities (Stanton & Futrell, 1987) cited in Polonsky (1995, p. 30).

2.2.1 The Emerging Marketing Social Theory Framework

The marketing social theory framework consists of four (4) levels of relationship; beginning with the strategic management process. Marketing should, first, be conceptualized (and should operate) at the level of management which is integral to management decisions and strategies formulated by the firm to achieve set out objectives (Hooley, Piercy & Nicoulaud, 2008). In other words, marketing should be positioned within the firm to shift

from the traditional definitions of promotions to a strategic function (McDonald, 1989). Otherwise, the definition of marketing will only continue to be limited in scope to promotional activities. However, even promotional activities need to be informed by a strategic direction for effective use of the firm's resources; hence, the concept of promotional strategies.

The second-order level of importance is involving the tenets of relationship marketing in aligning the firm's ideology and values with that of its main stakeholders (customers, B2B relationships, distributors, investors, etc). This position leans on the S-D logic of marketing earlier argued (Lusch & Vargo, 2006; Gronroos, 2006). Along with other scholars, (e.g. McKenna, 1991; Rapp & Collins, 1990), Gronroos (1995) has also observed that marketing should not only be concerned with campaigns. Rather, it should be focused on customer contacts where the interest of getting new customers does not dominate the crucial need to maintain existing customers. Gronroos' argument could be extended to embrace not only existing customers but also all stakeholders crucial to the success of the firm – towards the attainment of specified objectives.

Value creation must buttress the customer (and stakeholder) contact which Hooley, Piercy & Nicoulaud (2008) make reference to. It must be seen as a continuum of value exchange between the stakeholders and the organization. The determination of how the value system should operate differs between authors. Some scholars (e.g. Sheth et al., 1991) argue that the firm's offering must be of value to the customer. In other words, it is the customer who defines what value is and what it is not. Based on this customer-oriented definition of what values the firm offers, (or whether the firm offers values in the first place), the firm's intention should be to tune the product and service offering to suit the customer and win continuous patronage.
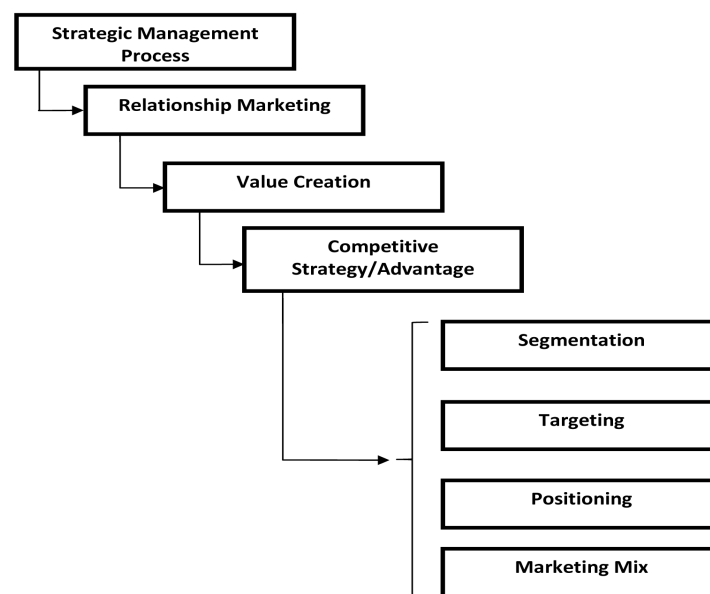

Figure 1. Conceptual framework for defining marketing

Having created value for the customer the next marketing intent is to pay attention to the competitive environment which the firm operates in. Competitive analysis (e.g. segmentation, targeting, positioning, marketing mix) implies environmental analysis. Hooley, Piercy & Nicouland (2008) rightly argue that the 'environment' implies a multiplicity of influencers. More so, firms must realize that the environment is not a constant variable. These multiple influencers are constantly changing thereby, changing the threats and opportunities of the firm at any given time (Wilson & Gilligan, 2005). The competitive analysis and strategies which may arise as a result, will be geared towards domination of the market through generic growth and internal development. These will lead to sustainable market growth and expansion.

2.3 Strategy Literature

The discussions in the strategy literature reveal a multi-dimensional pool of terms such as: competitive advantage, performance, management field mix, business function, mix of marketing sub-fields, business policy function, manager function, environmental analysis, policy perspective, system of shared meanings among

stakeholders, manager function, value exchange, marketing function integration, resource allocation, function of corporate factors mix, objective function, product of prevailing values, attitudes, organizational ideas, needs awareness, leaders' vision, corporate objectives, rational techniques, future projection, stream of decisions consistency, valuable positioning, company activities aggregate, business management problems function, company and competitive environment relationship, strategic positioning, hypotheses about cause and effect relationships, patterns of service provision, objectives mix, market selection, market segmentation, innovation via reformulation, objectives, political positioning and environmental benefit.

For the purpose of analysis, definitions conveying the above elements are further grouped into 8 themes/declensions namely: competition and competitive advantage, environmental analysis, resource allocation, SWOT analysis approach, policy formulation and planning process, rational thinking, (market and political) positioning and management decision pattern and process. Similar to the marketing literature, the result of the review of the strategy literature reveals outlier definitions which could not be grouped under any of the declensions above (e.g. Kaplan & Norton, 2007; McDonald, 1996; Porter, 2001). Notwithstanding the misfit with the established themes/declensions, the outliers are still included in the analysis due to the respective authors' insightful contributions to the development of strategy.

Table 2. Categorization of strategy definitions in the literature

Theme/Declension	Definitions
1. *Competition & Competitive Advantage*	"The strategy requirements of any business are ruled by the competitive environment and the potential for change in that environment" (Boston Consulting Group, 1981) in Brownlie (1985).
	Core strategy defines how the firm seeks to create a competitive advantage: how can customers be encouraged to choose its offer rather than those of rivals. It is about defining the appropriate skills to create and sustain customer preference. (Doyle, 1995, p. 37)
	the choice of target market segment which describes the customers a business will seek to serve and the choice of differential advantage which defines how it will compete with rivals in the segment. (Doyle, 1983, p. 10)
	Thomas (1993) cited in Whipp (1996, p. 263), for example, defines strategy as 'something an organization needs or uses to win, or establish its legitimacy in a world of competitive rivalry. It is what makes a firm unique, a winner, or a survivor. The military link is evident in the corporate development of the notion of strategic thinking (cited in Grandy & Mills, 2004, p. 1156)
	strategy seems more concerned with competition between firms, whereas business models are more concerned with the "core logic" Linder & Cantrell (2000) in Seddon & Lewis (2003)
	Strategy can be viewed as building defenses against the competitive forces or finding a position in the industry where the forces are weakest (Porter, 2008, p. 35).
	the relationship between the company and its competitive environment; the allocation of resources among competing investment opportunities; and a long term perspective in which "patient money" figures prominently. (Hamel & Prahalad, 1993).
	…the essence of strategy involves avoiding competition through an indirect approach. This indirect approach is entrepreneurial discovery, which these authors believe includes, for example, a reformulation of a product's function, the development of new manufacturing methods or distribution channels, or the discovery of dimensions of competition that competitors have overlooked. Gluck, Kaufman, & Walleck (1980) in Jacobson (1992, pp. 785-786).
	Strategy is more about dealing with these (eternally surprising) imperfections and turning them to an organization's advantage than about analyzing what is clearly understandable. (Brownlie & Spender, 1995, p. 49).
2. *Environmental Analysis*	… [the] firm's strategy not only reflects its expectations for forthcoming change in the external business environment, i.e., its planning assumptions, it also represents the firm's intentions (its commitment to particular resource deployments) which will prescribe its response and adaptation to change. Consequently, a firm's strategy will represent the match it hopes to achieve between the expected constraints and conditions imposed by the external business environment and the firm's internal structure,

	resources and distinctive competences (Brownlie, 1985, p. 44).
	the essence of the many definitions converges in the concept of strategy as ''the pattern in the stream of decisions and activities (Mintzberg & McHugh, 1985, p. 6) that characterizes the match an organization achieves with its environment and that is determinant for the attainment of its goals'' (Hofer & Schendel, 1978, p. 25). The emphasis is on the pattern of activities which has an impact on the achievement of the organizational goals in relation to its environment (cited in Hakansson & Snehota, 2006, p. 3).
	The prevailing interpretation of the process is that strategy is first conceived and formulated on a basis of an assessment of the current and projected state of the environment and of the organizational resource (Hakansson & Snehota, 2006).
	[strategy is the] fundamental pattern of present and planned resource deployments and environmental interactions that indicates how the organization will achieve its objectives (Hofer & Schendel, 1978) in Varadarajan & Yadav (2002, p. 299).
	Integration of all marketing functions by management…through analysis of environment (Piercy, 1991)
3. *Resource Allocation*	Barney (1996) cited in Varadarajan & Yadav (2002, p. 299) defined strategy as "a pattern of resource allocation that enables firms to maintain or improve their performance".
	the relationship between the company and its competitive environment; the allocation of resources among competing investment opportunities; and a long term perspective in which "patient money" figures prominently (Hamel & Prahalad, 1993).
	Organizational strategy . . . is a summary account of the principal characteristics and relationships of the organization and its environment— an account developed for the purpose of informing decisions affecting the organization's success and survival' (Winter, 1987, p. 160 cited in SubbaNarasimha, 2001).
	it is something to do with configuring the resources available within, or to, an organisation to achieve its future goals (Hutchinson, 2001, p. 268).
4. *SWOT Analysis approach*	In business organization contexts ''strategy'' has sometimes been defined with a certain degree of opportunism (Hakansson & Snehota, 2006)
5. *Policy Formulation & Planning Process*	Incorporating all activities that involve the monitoring, planning, and implementing of actions to strengthen the position of the firm relative to competitors (Alvesson & Wilmott, 1995) cited in Grandy & Mills (2004).
	A strategy is a plan of action designed to achieve certain defined objectives. In business firms, objectives may be stated in such terms as sales volume, rate of growth, profit percentages, market share, and return on investment (ROI), among others (Corey, 2003).
	The term strategy has been defined in a variety of ways, but almost always with a common theme, that of a deliberate conscious set of guidelines that determines decisions into the future (Mintzberg, 1978, p. 935).
	In common terminology, a strategy is a "plan" (Mintzberg, 1978, p. 935),
	fundamental pattern of present and planned resource deployments and environmental interactions that indicates how the organization will achieve its objectives (Hofer & Schendel, 1978) in Varadarajan & Yadav (2002, p. 299)
	a strategy is a set of objectives, policies, and plans that, taken together, define the scope of the enterprise and its approach to survival and success. Alternatively, we could say that the particular policies, plans, and objectives of a business express its strategy for coping with a complex competitive environment (Rumelt, 1993).
	strategy is primarily concerned with establishing broad parameters for the development of the enterprise with regard to 'domain selection' and 'domain navigation' (Bourgeois, 1980 cited in Grant, 2003).
	Strategy is essentially self-identification, a way of harnessing organizational potential to the policy (and to some extent political) tasks at hand (Stewart, 2004, p. 16).
	it is clear that the concept of strategy/strategizing, is accepted 'wisdom', an unquestioned phenomenon that is a part of the identity of managers and workers (Knights & Morgan, 1991 cited in Grandy & Mills, 2004, p. 1156).

6. *Rational Thinking*	Strategy is perceived as a set of rational techniques for managing complex business in a changing environment (Chaffee, 1985; Huff & Reger, 1987; Rajapopalan & Spreitizer, 1997 cited in Grandy & Mills, 2004, p. 1157)
	It is often presented as the embodiment of rational thinking that incorporates logic, planning, monitoring, technique, and leadership (Alvesson & Wilmott, 1995 cited in Grandy & Mills, 2004).
7. *Positioning (Market & Political)*	Strategy is the choice of markets the firm will attempt to serve, or a choice about the scope of the firm's domain, including decisions about expansion, defense, and contraction of that domain (Biggadike, 1981 p. 621)
	strategy involves defining a company's long-term position in the marketplace, making the hard trade-offs about what the company will and will not do to provide value to customers, and forging hard-to-replicate fit among parts of the "activity system" the firm constructs to deliver value to customers, all with a view to making a superior return on investment (Porter, 1996, p. 17).
	Strategy can be viewed as building defenses against the competitive forces or finding a position in the industry where the forces are weakest (Porter, 2008, p. 35).
	strategy is primarily concerned with establishing broad parameters for the development of the enterprise with regard to 'domain selection' and 'domain navigation' (Bourgeois, 1980 cited in Grant, 2003).
	'Strategy' as defined and applied by Mark Moore (and to a lesser extent, Bryson) covers both the political positioning of the agency in relation to stakeholders, as well as the management of internal relations (Moore 1995, cited in Stewart, 2004, p. 16).
8. *Management Decision Pattern & Process*	strategy is the set of decisions that makes an organization successful or strategy is what top managers do Bower's (1980) review of strategy in Hafsi & Thomas (2003)
	the definition of strategy as 'a pattern in a stream of decisions' (Mintzberg, 1972, 1978; Mintzberg & Waters, 1982, 1984; Mintzberg et al., 1986, Mintzberg & McHugh, 1985; Brunet, Mintzberg & Waters, 1986) cited in Mintzberg & Waters (1985).
	"Strategy involves continuity of direction" (Porter 2001, p.71).
	strategy is an interactive decision making process and is influenced by many corporative factors, especially marketing strategy. The traditional concept of strategy lacks multi-dimensional interaction (Chiu, Chen, Tzeng & Shyu, 2006, p. 152).
	Strategy in general, and realized strategy in particular, will be defined as a pattern in a stream of decisions.' In other words, when a sequence of decisions in some area exhibits a consistency over time, a strategy will be considered to have formed (Mintzberg, 1978, p. 935).
	Strategy content can be defined as the patterns of service provision that are selected and implemented by organizations… strategy can be interpreted more broadly as a means to improve public services, whether these are provided by one agency or whole networks of organizations (Boyne 2003) in Boyne & Walker (2004).
	Paul Cook argued that Strategy is made up of "messy, unsolved and perhaps undefined problems of importance characterizing business management." (in Hafsi & Thomas (2003))
9. *Outliers*	A business strategy can be viewed as a set of hypotheses about cause-and-effect relationships (Kaplan & Norton, 2007, p. 106)
	I do not claim that strategy is or can be a "science" in the sense of the physical sciences. It can and should be an intellectual discipline of the highest order, and the strategist should prepare himself to manage ideas with precision and clarity and imagination. . . . Thus, while strategy itself may not be a science, strategic judgment can be scientific to the extent that it is orderly, rational, objective, inclusive, discriminatory, and perceptive. (p. 3).
	strategy is the outcome of negotiation, bargaining and confrontation, those with the most power have the greatest influence (McDonald, 1996)
	Strategy emerges as the result of the leader's vision, enforced by his/her commitment to it, his/her personal credibility, and how he/she articulates it to others. - p. 7 McDonald, 1996)
	"Strategy defines how all the elements of what a company does fit together." (Porter 2001, p.71) in Seddon & Lewis (2003),

2.3.1 The Emerging Strategy Social Theory Framework

Despite categorizing the numerous themes in the literature into corresponding declensions, the dividing lines between definitions are not clearly cut. The literature reveals points of overlap between these themes/declensions. For instance, definitions in the "competition and competitive analysis" declension depict points of interception with definitions in the "environmental analysis" declension (e.g. BCG, 1981 connotes an appraisal of the environment – indeed, fuses competition with environment). Also, cf. Doyle (1983) and, Hamel & Prahalad (1993). This explains the appearance of Hamel & Prahalad (1993) in two declensions: "resource allocation" and "competition and competitive analysis".

It may be important to clarify the definition of environment since it has been identified as a central term in the strategy discourse. In this context, environment implies internal and external environment. The external environment extends beyond the environmental factors (e.g. technological, political, economic, legal, social) as enumerated by Biggadike (1981) and Jain (1999) to reflect the various aspects of the environment which has direct or indirect effect on the organization's activities (e.g. political climate, economic policies, legislation, political leadership, etc). An organization cannot exist outside the context of the political climate in which it operates. Therefore, its success may well be determined by insightful projections of governmental activities; and whenever possible, insights of intending shift(s) in the political climate.

Another instance of interception is found in the Winters' (1987) definition of strategy (cited in SubbaNarasimha, 2001) which emphasizes environmental analysis. In the author's explication of 'environmental analysis', he points to the need for a competitive edge (survival) for the continuous existence of the firm. The same finding occurs in the "policy formulation and planning process" declension with Wilmott's (1995) and Rumelt's (1993) explication of strategy which includes positioning the firm vis-à-vis its competitors. Hofer & Schendel (1978) similarly make reference to environmental analysis with their definition mainly bordering on the "policy formulation and planning process" declension. Based on the findings in the literature the declensions, "environmental analysis", "competitive advantage" and "policy formulation/planning process" appear to be interwoven to form a unified approach in the construction of a strategy.

Definitions of strategy as "rational thinking" techniques and the employment of logic (Chaffee, 1985; Huff & Reger, 1987; Rajapopalan & Spreitizer, 1997 cited in Grandy & Mills, 2004, p. 1157) and (Alvesson & Wilmott, 1995 cited in Grandy & Mills, 2004) must be seen as synonymous to "policy formulation and planning process" due to the interdependence of both declensions. The very exhaustive process of policy formulation is a highly intellectually demanding (rational) process; therefore, the position of the authors fails to make a significant contribution to the literature – only a reiteration. Policy formulation on the other hand, is dependent on the firm's positioning strategy; whereby, an inconsistency will be commensurate to the firm's (managerial) determination in one direction, whereas the activities of its personnel pull it in the opposite direction (i.e. failure of implementing the internal policy framework).

A significant number of the strategy definitions which fall under the "market and political positioning" declension (Biggadike, 1981; Porter, 2008; Bourgeois, 1980) also place a huge emphasis on competitive advantage. This finding is consonant with the general conceptualization of "positioning" in marketing as being primarily for competitive advantage. Porter's (1996) use of certain key words which includes "trade-offs" amongst others (i.e. position, fit, activity system and return on investment) points to an important element of strategy and encompasses much of what other authors refer to. That is, the firm must decide one or more markets against alternatives; a choice of a holistic strategy against alternatives which extend even to the tactical components of the holistic strategy.

Mintzberg's (1978, p. 935) observation seems appropriate in defining the strategy as a long-term determination and planning process. However, his definition does not explain how the "deliberate set of guidelines" or "plan" comes about or is put together. Hofer & Schendel's (1978) definition cited in Varadarajan & Yadav (2002, p. 299) incorporates this critical factor with their reference to "environmental interactions."

Moore (1995) reiterates an earlier position of this paper on the meaning of environment. The author applies the same concept to 'positioning' to wit that positioning goes beyond a firm's 'position' in its chosen market. It extends to political, legal, technological, social, economic positioning (Biggadike 1981; Jain, 1999) as it relates to all its stakeholders – some of which will be situated in the political landscape of the environment in which the firm operates. Herein, we find another confluence of declensions.

Based on the analyses of the literature above, the following social theory framework is hereby proposed for the definition of strategy: t*he firm's strategy is its long-term market and political positioning determined by*

extensive analysis of all effective (internal and external) environmental factors towards gaining competitive advantage and fulfilling promises to its main stakeholders.

The strategy literature suggests that the discipline is mainly centered on a relationship between the long term business objective(s) and analyses of the internal and external environment towards the fulfillment of those objectives. External environmental analysis is further delineated to form a framework consisting of: market and political positioning, competitive positioning. The framework identifies the connection between "market and political positioning" on the one hand, and "competitive positioning on the other hand through the observation that the general purpose of strategy is for competitive advantage through competitive positioning. Competitive positioning in itself, occurs on two levels: "political" (i.e. favourably aligning the firm with the political agenda of the operating environment, and through the deployment of "market forces" (i.e. market positioning).
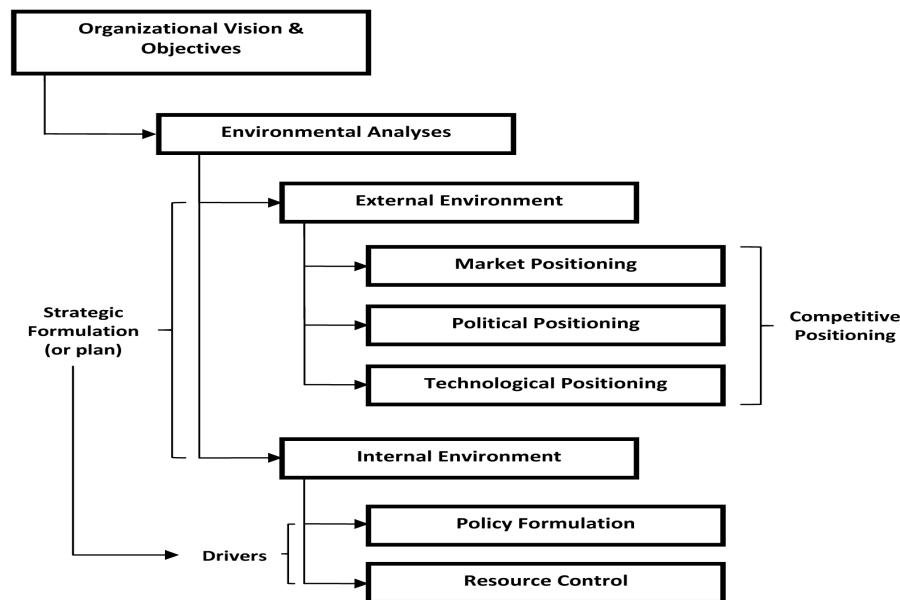

Figure 2. Conceptual framework for defining strategy

The internal environment is made up of factors within the organization responsible for driving the "strategic formulation" or plan (Mintzberg, 1987, p. 20) – which arises from the external market analyses and positioning. These factors include: employees (and personnel talent), organizational culture, innovation. The planning process and policy formulation of the firm will also be suited to the strategic formulation. Just as important, is the need for the firm's policy to define the organizational culture and in-house policies towards the attainment of its overall objectives. The deployment of its resources will also be guided by its policy formulation and the strategic formulation – as informed by the result of the analyses of its external environment.

3. Discussion

3.1 Theory Integration: A Social Theory Framework of Strategic Marketing

Drawing from the review of the literature on 'marketing' and 'strategy', five main points of interception of both disciplines are realized. These interceptions are grouped as follows:

   i. "strategic management process" (marketing); "organizational objectives" (strategy);

   ii. "relationship marketing" (marketing); "market and political positioning" (strategy);

   iii. "competitive strategy/analysis" (marketing); and "environmental analysis" (strategy);

   iv. "competitive strategy or advantage" (marketing); "competitive analysis or advantage" (strategy), and,

   v. "segmentation, targeting, positioning, and marketing mix" (marketing); "resource allocation" (strategy).

The "strategic management process" in marketing implies that real marketing operates at the level of management and is not simply a functional or executioner tool (i.e. defined only in terms of promotion activities). This corresponds with the literature on strategy which states that the firm's strategy originates from the long-term

objectives of the firm. Indeed, without well defined long-term objectives, there can be no strategy. As a result, the term "strategic management" repeated in the literature continues to be relevant.

From the review of the marketing literature, it is difficult to clearly identify a category which corresponds with the "environmental analysis" categorization in the strategy literature. However, there is a significant level of relevance between "competitive advantage" in the marketing literature and "environmental analysis" in the strategy literature which is concerned with technological, economic, social analysis as well as political alignment for long-term benefits. Competitive analysis in marketing, on the other hand, takes into consideration these factors mentioned above – given that a firm has a competitive advantage not (only) necessarily when it has a better product or service offering but also when it is has control over (or better access to) certain factors (e.g. resources, political advantage) which its competitors may not have. Another example could be a firm's affiliations with reputable, international organizations which could help build a positive (even mythical) image of the brand; therefore, setting it apart from competitors in a local, restrictive Third World market. Simply put, image building plays a crucial role in competitive advantage.

The integration of "competitive advantage" with "environmental analysis" in the marketing and strategy literatures, respectively, does not necessarily diminish the apparent relevance of competitive advantage found in the literature of both subjects. The literature does not reveal any significant difference – except that in the strategy literature, competitive advantage appears to be an aspect of the broader "environmental analysis" whereas in the marketing literature, competitive analysis and advantage implies easier access to resources and means of production which will deliver the value(s) stakeholders demand. It also includes tactical and intellectual warfare (Ries & Trout, 1986) in terms of segmentation, positioning, and the deployment strategy of the marketing mix.

Similarly, "value creation" or value system (in marketing) is consonant with "organizational objectives" and "environmental analysis" in the strategy literature – as long as value continues to be determined and defined by the major stakeholders of the firm – more importantly, by the typical customer who funds the firm's offering as co-creators of value (Gronroos, 2008; Vargo & Lusch, 2008). The basis of environmental analyses, on the other hand, is towards the fulfillment of certain values defined by the organization and embedded in the organization's objectives – which in turn, informs the direction of environmental analyses.

Relationship marketing, as defined by its proponents is concerned with maintaining and enhancing contact and relationship with customers towards creating value for the firm's stakeholders (Gronroos, 1990; Berry, 1983). Positioning (in the strategy literature) on the other hand, cannot fully exist without building and enhancing relationships - especially as it relates to political alignment (Moore 1995, cited in Stewart, 2004, p. 16). This aspect of positioning is different from market positioning where the firm decides which market(s) it wants to operate (Biggadike, 1981; Porter, 1996; Bourgeois, 1980 cited in Grant, 2003).

Based on the above points of interaction and the review of the literatures the following definition of strategic marketing is hereby proposed: strategic marketing refers to the firm's market positioning based on its vision and long-term objectives as well as its comprehensive analyses of multivariate environmental factors designed to deliver the required value-offerings to its stakeholders through policy formulation and effective deployment of its resources to maintain competitive advantage.
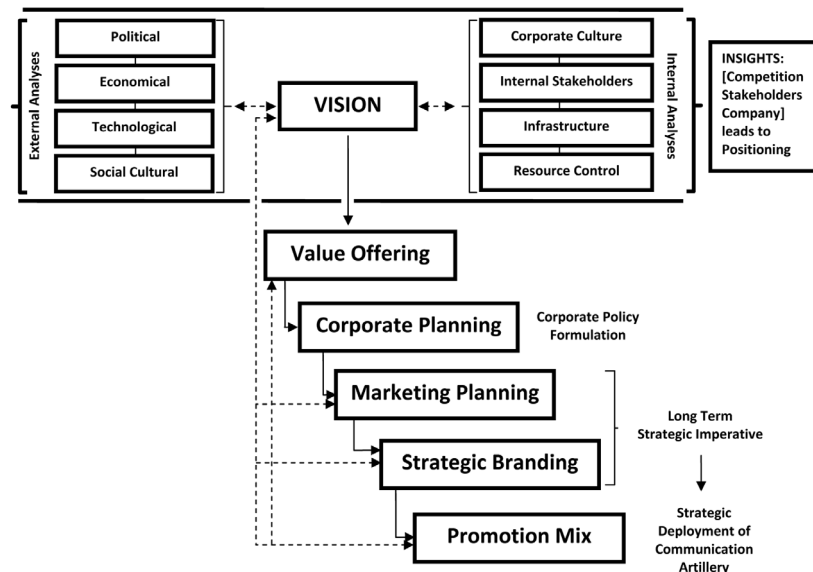
Figure 3. Conceptual framework for strategic marketing

3.2 Strategic Marketing Literature: The Existing Literature versus the New Construct

Wind & Robertson's (1983) observation that strategic marketing is the "quest for long-run competitive and consumer advantage" thereby having an overlap with business strategy points to the relationship between marketing and strategic planning which Greenley (1989) also makes reference to. The correlation of this contribution to the framework developed above is the determination of a corporate vision and sets out objectives as the foundation of the marketing strategy.

Their observation further states that the difference between strategic marketing and business strategy is that the former "serves a boundary role function between the firm and its customers, competitors and other stakeholders". Hence, though marketing is concerned with the analyses of these factors (customers, competitors and company), it requires the integration of other business inputs (e.g. financial, research and development, and human resources) to arrive at an integrated business strategy. In other words, business strategy cannot exist without a marketing perspective and vice versa.

Wind & Robertson (1983) trace their conceptual framework of strategic marketing to the identification of market opportunities which is followed by the analyses of opportunities and possible threats. This contribution (identification of market opportunities) as illustrated in Figure 3 is not covered in Greenley's (1989) definition of strategic marketing. Yet it seems relevant to both new and existing firms operating in a given market. Greenley (1989) only mentions 'strategic marketing' which is derived from 'strategic planning' and which in turn, is derived from 'corporate planning'. However, it seems that identification of market opportunities is the precursor to the company's objectives (i.e. strategic planning according to Greenley, 1989) and inspires the corporate vision.

Greenley's (1989) social theory framework of strategic marketing states that the marketing strategy is informed by the 'corporate mission' and the 'corporate strategy'. The third level of treatment consists of a five-level framework: 'market positioning', 'product positioning', 'marketing mix', market entry', and 'timing'. An evaluation of Greenley's social theory framework identifies 'market entry' and 'timing' as factors not included in the social theory framework previously developed. It is acknowledged that the timing and market entry strategy is just as crucial as other factors. However, they are not included in the model above since they are all constituent parts of the strategy itself.

What appears to be more important, however, is the orientation adopted by the above model (Figure 3) bordering on a marketing-branding debate evidenced in the literature (Urde, 1994; Urde, 1999). Although without describing it thus, it seems the approach favoured by these scholars (e.g. Greenley, 1989; Mintzberg, 1978; Chiu, Chen, Tzeng & Shyu, 2006) advocates internal-generic growth which flows with a consistency from the corporate vision to the communication tools the firm chooses to relay its (brand) message and enforce its identity.

Following the "marketing-oriented" growth of the discipline, the planning process has been articulated by industry in a "marketing plan" document. But that orientation now needs to be re-evaluated given the current approach of value systems, value propositions and value offerings (particular to the branding literature) in delivering any service and/or product to the market place. Hence, the "strategic branding" processes in Figure 3 above, forms the basis of long-term planning and deploying specific (promotional) tactics to achieving the long-term objective by meeting short-term targets. This also operates as a cyclic process between the strategic branding process and the corporate vision and value offerings to ensure continuous relevance as environmental changes occur.

Finally, Cook's (1985) definition of strategic marketing as 'the manner in which company resources are put at risk in the search for differential advantage' appears to be limited to the social exchange theory of cost-benefit analysis (Emerson, 1976; Cook & Rice, 2006). His definition is built around the worth of the company's shares, level of capital investment and financial evaluation. The social theory framework enumerated by Cook consists of: 'strategic ambition', 'investment variables', 'strategic cost ambition', 'differential advantage', and 'market response'. Cook's framework of strategic marketing seems to be connected with the view that marketing should be defined only in terms of financial benefits. Hence, his framework of strategic marketing focuses on the resource base of the company and the deployment of these resources to gain competitive advantage for the firm. What appears to be missing in this approach to strategic marketing is the relationship management of stakeholders which borders on the psychosocial values of these stakeholders. Again, the approach only speaks for the cost-benefit analysis of the firm's financial statements and does not clearly articulate how this strategic management approach values the life-time worth of the customer by appealing to their emotional values.

4. Summary

From the review of the strategic marketing literature, three factors have been identified which is lacking in the framework developed in the previous chapters: "market opportunities identification", "market entry" and "timing". However, on other levels of treatment, the framework developed above, supports the findings in the literature conceptually. On the other hand, the developed framework suggests a more integrated definition of strategic marketing than most of the definitions in the literature with a few exceptions (Hooley, Piercy & Nicouland, 2008). This position (of fulfillment of an integrated definition) is based on the premise that all the elements of a conceptual framework may not necessarily be incorporated in a definition of strategic marketing. Therefore, while the framework developed above may not incorporate the elements suggested by other scholars (Wind & Robertson, 1983; Greenley, 1989), the definition of strategic marketing developed above, is all encompassing of the core factors of strategic marketing.

The above definition and framework was developed from an extensive review of the literature on marketing on one hand, and the literature on strategy, on the other hand. Following the collation and distillation of the definitions of marketing and strategy, each of the definitions were scrutinized and evaluated vis-à-vis other contributions in the literature. Based on the evaluation of these definitions, some of the definitions were dropped due to lack of sufficient evidence. The definitions filtered for further analyses were categorized to build the social theory framework for each of the disciplines (cf. Figure 3).

From the result of the analyses, the conceptualization of both disciplines begins at the level of corporate vision, which informs the corporate objectives. Both disciplines also identify that positioning for competitive advantage is the crux of strategy and marketing. True positioning cannot be achieved without thorough analyses of the continuously changing and evolving environment. Therefore, a firm's positioning is a function of environmental analyses. Positioning also suggests competitive advantage. Therefore, following the suggestion of Greenley (1989), the central factor in building a construct of strategic marketing is analyses of the multivariate environment. However, this theory should be extended to include positioning in line with the result of the multivariate environmental analyses; hence, the creation of a competitive advantage which fulfills the corporate objectives and creates value for major stakeholders.

5. Conclusion

The literature has revealed that the landmark discussion for a theory of strategic marketing has focused on environmental analysis (Greenley, 1989). Analysis of the environment has also been defined as more than the broad descriptions of 'internal' and 'external' factors (Biggadike, 1981). Relationship as it is defined in the marketing literature, is an aspect of 'environmental analysis' which is detailed in the strategy literature (Moore 1995, cited in Stewart, 2004, p. 16). The logic is derived from the relationship building necessary to establish B2B, B2C, and socio-political alignments for the firm which must exist in order to survive in a politically motivated world. McQuail's (2010, p. 163) observation from the perspective of media firms establishes that

firms will always have some self interest in aligning themselves with the views of the political systems in which they operate. This accounts for a critical aspect of environmental analysis and alignment for the achievement of the corporate objective through competitive advantage.

Beyond this level of interpreting environmental analysis, are other environmental factors such as the enabling technology, expertise, etc. Therefore, the environment remains crucial in defining strategic marketing. The firm's positioning drives this definition further with its varying levels of meaning. In addition to choice of markets in which the firm operates, positioning includes hard decisions or "trade-offs" which in effect, determines whether or not the firm will achieve the desired competitive advantage (Porter, 1996). This points to the essence of strategy in almost all disciplines where the definition of the term can be found; bringing the discourse to the highest level of its definition: competitive advantage. All of marketing and strategy is for the attainment of competitive advantage(s) against other players in the firm's chosen industry. It is important to note however, that competitive advantage cannot be short-lived. It must be a continuous, long-term achievement which the firm's managers must conceive as having an infinite lifespan. The attainment of this advantage may be a mix of several strategies at different levels in the strategic planning process. Nonetheless, it is the bedrock of strategic thinking (Porter, 2008).

The literature does not reveal definitions of strategic marketing which radically fall outside this three-component level: environmental analysis, positioning and competitive advantage. The suggestions of several scholars (e.g. Wind & Robertson, 1983; Cook, 1985) attest to this. On the other hand, there are definitions of strategic marketing (e.g. Drucker, 1974; Mintzberg, 2000) cited in Smith (2003) which tend to focus on "resource allocation decisions". This refers to the hard "trade-offs" Porter (1996) identifies, except that such definitions do not seem to give priority to what end the allocation of resources are. Therefore, the proposition that competitive advantage, operating through an interaction with environmental analyses which informs the firm's positioning, remains the basis for defining strategic marketing.

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