



Port Industry Related Relationship Marketing Applications

Aylin ÇALIŞKAN¹, Soner ESMER²

¹Yaşar University, Faculty of Business, aylin.caliskan@yasar.edu.tr

²Dokuz Eylül University, Maritime Faculty, soner.esmer@deu.edu.tr

Abstract

The changing dynamics of the port industry such as intense competition, more homogeneous services, technological developments, and changes occurred in the needs, wants, and expectations of customers have been raising the pressure for differentiation on port businesses. In these circumstances to develop competitive advantage, the importance of relationship marketing shows up for port businesses. Relationship marketing lies in adding the value that makes difference, especially when services and prices are similar among the competitors. In this exploratory research, the current relationship marketing (RM) applications of ports in Turkey were explored. Because the focal point of relationship marketing is to build strong relationships with special customer, the main question that is tried to be answered with this study is "How ports develop and sustain relationships with special customers?". Open ended questions were asked to the 32 port marketing managers and answers were analyzed with content analysis.

Keywords: Marketing in Port Industry, Relationship Marketing.

Liman Sektörü Özelinde İlişkisel Pazarlama Uygulamaları

Öz

Yoğun rekabet, homojen hizmetler, teknolojik gelişmeler ve müşterilerin ihtiyaç, istek ve beklentilerindeki değişimler liman işletmeleri üzerindeki değişmeye yönelik olan baskıyı artırmaktadır. Bu durumlarda limanların rekabetçi avantaj elde edebilmesi için ilişkisel pazarlama stratejisinin önemi ortaya çıkmaktadır. İlişkisel pazarlama özellikle rakipler arasında hizmet ve fiyatlarında benzerlik olduğunda farklılık yaratıcı değer katmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, Türkiye'deki limanların ilişkisel pazarlama faaliyetleri keşfedilmiştir. İlişkisel pazarlamanın temel odağı özel müşterilerle güçlü ilişkiler kurmak olduğu için cevap aranmaya çalışılan ana soru "Limanlar özel müşterileriyle ilişkilerini nasıl geliştirir ve sürdürür?" dür. 32 liman pazarlama müdürüne açık uçlu sorular sorulmuş ve cevaplar içerik analiziyile incelenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Liman Sektöründe Pazarlama, İlişkisel Pazarlama

1. Introduction

The primary goal of businesses is to sustain and develop their existence in the market. Accelerating intensive competition is the ultimate obstacle over against this goal and it is impossible for businesses to run away from the competition. Some strategies were developed to gain and sustain competitive advantage by several authors. It is accepted that the foremost contributions for competitive advantage concept have been primarily implemented by M.E. Porter and J. Barney. Porter [1] developed the generic competitive strategies which dwell on the cost leadership, differentiation and focus. Barney [2] emphasized on the valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, immobility and heterogeneity dimensions of strategies for sustainable competitive advantage.

Intensive competition, homogeneous port services and mature port industry make it harder for port companies to differentiate from others. In these circumstances to develop competitive advantage the importance of relationship marketing shows up for port companies. Relationship marketing lies in adding the value that makes difference, especially when services and prices are similar among the competitors [3, 4]. Increasing the number of berths, decreasing the cost and the resultant price, offering service with technological handling equipment, or offering green practices are ways to add value for ports, but competitors can imitate them easily with appropriate strategic decisions and adequate capital. Good and long-lasting relationships with customers, on the other hand, are difficult to be imitated by competitors because such relationships require careful consideration and take the time to establish and sustain. To achieve this goal, it is vital to understand and recognize the customer closer, exploring the values which are important to customer and ensuring sustainability in

creating value.

Focusing on just managing marketing mix (value offer) leads putting customers in a passive position which means that there is no personalized relationship with customers. Grönroos [15] explains this situation as follow;

“Managing the marketing mix means relying on mass marketing. Customers become numbers for the marketing specialists, whose actions, therefore, typically are based on surface information obtained from market research reports and market share statistics.”

It is important for ports to adopt relationship marketing approaches with the aim of providing customers with a favorable brand experience in relation to their port, which could prevent them from switching to rival ports and which could motivate them for re-buying and recommending. This makes ports' executive boards increasingly realize the value of relationship marketing practices in achieving an identity for the port. Especially for some cultures like China and Turkey interpersonal relationships have great influence on business transactions. Apart from the culture, the information level of customers in industrial markets compared to consumer markets is rather high, that's why it is vital for ports to use relationship marketing strategy [53] as there is no need to raise awareness of customers about port services.

Demands for port services are derived from the need of transporting the goods from one point to the other. Demands are generated indirectly from shippers (sender and receiver). But the direct users of ports change, such as they can be shipper, ship owner, or agent. Although past studies have made significant progress toward understanding port selection choices of port users [5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12] one fundamental question remains unanswered: How ports develop

and sustain relationships with special (strategically-important) customers? Relationship marketing as a tool for developing and sustaining relationships with customers which have the potential to lead competitive advantage for ports especially which operate in the same geographical area, with the same service quality to the same customer segments still remains as a virgin subject. Therefore, as part of a larger study, the present research sought to investigate how ports apply relationship marketing strategy. To the aim, 32 port marketing managers in Turkey were asked about their application on financial, social, and structural relationship marketing tactics. The results are discussed under the analysis and results heading.

2. Relationship Marketing-Background

The changing dynamics of the marketplace such as intense competition, homogeneity in offerings, technological developments necessitate long-term relationship orientation instead of short-term transaction orientation [13, 14]. Relationship marketing has been started discussing in 1990's as a change in marketing paradigm against the inadequate efforts of the marketing mix. Grönroos [15] defined relationship marketing as mutual exchange and fulfilment of promises to enhance and terminate relationships with customers where the goals of both parties are met. Berry [16] defined relationship marketing as "attracting, maintaining, and enhancing customer relationships".

Based on several studies, with the help of RM, companies reduce customer defections so they lower the costs to find new customers, increase the revenue with loyal customers [16] and gain competitive advantage by performing better than its rivals [17]. Winning and retaining long term relationships with important customers can be achieved with close and extensive relationships between buyer and seller

[18]. From the customer's point of view, increased satisfaction, customized service delivery [16], continuity of the service with the same provider [16] are potential benefits of RM. Jackson [19] and Berry [16] also indicated the importance of RM in terms of satisfying the basic human needs of feeling important and getting social benefits. Relationship marketing is the backbone of customer-orientated efforts of companies since customer-led business activities cannot be achieved without directly close and regular contacts between the buyer and the seller [18].

As a way to gain such benefits, relationship marketing strategy depends on several drivers. In the literature different drivers of RM were handled in different empirical researches. For example Odekerken et al. [20] and Palmatier et al. [21] handled relationship marketing tactics (financial, social, structural) as relationship marketing strategy component in their study while Morgan and Hunt [22] and Sin et al. [23] focused on relational forces such as trust, commitment, and communication. Also there exist mixed studies [i.e. 24, 25] that handle all of them. In this research, applications of relationship marketing tactics were handled.

2.1. Relationship Marketing Tactics

Unique customer bonds and relational norms might be achieved by different relationship marketing tactics. Palmatier et al. (26, 27) and Berry [16] categorized relationship marketing tactics as follow:

Financial RM tactics: With the aim of getting customer loyalty, these programs offer such financial benefits [28] as discounts, progressive discounts [29], free products, free shipping, annual bonuses [29] or extended payment terms. Because this kind of initiatives can be easily imitated by competitors, the advantages tend to be unsustainable. Financial RM tactics are not the efficient way in terms of generating

economic returns. It may stimulate a necessary response to a competitive threat in the short term but is not a way to keep customer long time.

Social RM tactics: Include such efforts as gift giving [28], hosting dinners, inviting to a birthday or to a sports event [3, 4], for building relational bonds with the customer and personalizing the relationship. The activities performed under these tactics and the results are difficult to be imitated by competitors. Social interaction helps to develop a feeling of familiarity, personal recognition which does enhance bonding between parties. Especially for Chinese people, the business which is developed by friendship is more important and precious than business leading to friendship [4]. Commitment to a relationship may scale up in virtue of sharing inner feelings and revealing personal secrets. According to the research that carried out by Palmatier et al. [27] social RM tactics manifest the highest payoff than the structural or financial RM programs. For the customer, social RM tactics generate feeling of interpersonal debt, encouraging a pressing need to reciprocate and thereby generating immediate returns [30].

Structural RM tactics: Include efforts to the aim of providing benefits, increasing productivity and efficiency for customers. Structural RM tactics include such activities as electronic order processing interfaces, dedicated personnel [31, 32] and customized packaging [27] or customized products [33]. The return on structural RM investment is approximately 120 percent [27]. Structural RM tactics increase long-term profits because customers are inclined to take advantage of the value provided.

3. Methodology & Analyses & Results

Because there is not any available study about port relationship marketing, in this study it is wanted to explore the current relationship marketing strategy

applications of ports. To the aim, a short questionnaire was developed. It consists of 4 open-ended and 1 Likert type questions (Appendix).

One open ended question was asked to reveal the importance of relationship marketing strategy for port industry. The rest open ended questions were asked to discover the applications of ports in financial, social, structural relationship marketing tactics. In the literature of relationship marketing, the contents of each relationship marketing tactics is not so definite. That's why the respondents were let free to answer open-ended questions as how they wish, and this approach turned out precious results for us. The open-ended questions' answers were analyzed with content analysis technique. Content analysis is 'any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of [34]. The technique uses a set of codes to reduce volumes material into more manageable data from which researchers identify patterns and gain insight. The categories researchers use in a content analysis can be determined inductively, deductively, or by some combination of both [35]. Berg [36] explains the two of these methods as follow:

"Inductive approach begins with the researchers 'immersing' themselves in the documents (the various messages) in order to identify the dimensions or themes that seem meaningful to the procedures of each message. In a deductive approach, researchers use some categorical scheme suggested by a theoretical perspective, and the documents provide a means for assessing the hypothesis. However, in order to present the perceptions of others (the producers of messages) in the most forthright manner, a greater reliance upon induction is necessary."

Due to the lack in the literature, we didn't have any categorical scheme to use the

deductive approach in content analysis. As a result, we analyze each answer inductively to identify the themes that seem meaningful.

Likert-type question is asked to measure the means of each RM tactic that ports believe important in relationship marketing. The expressions, “1 for totally disagree”, and “5 for totally agree” were attached to make the respondents evaluate each item on each scale. The reliability of scale analysis was conducted and scale were found reliable according to the value of Cronbach Alpha (0,81).

The questionnaire was sent to respective port authorities as a HTML form and data were gathered anonymously from 11th to 22th of January 2016. 40 survey questionnaires sent out the ports which are located in Turkey, handled more than 100,000 TEU or 500,000 tons of bulk and general cargo, and handled 3rd party's cargo. 8 port authorities declined to participate. There were 32 responses to the questionnaires returned as completed responses leaving the response rate of 80%. Thus, despite the limited sample size, the survey has covered the overwhelming majority of the target population of Turkish ports.

The further sections include the results of the research in which the subheadings were constructed according to the questions (Appendix) asked to the port managers.

3.1. Importance of Relationship Marketing for Port Businesses

Before proceeding to the main research content (the current relationship marketing strategy applications of ports in Turkey), we wanted to reveal the importance of relationship marketing for ports. That's why we asked port marketing managers' opinions in Turkey about relationship marketing strategy development study attempt for ports. 31 out of 32 port marketing managers indicated the absolute need for relationship marketing strategy development for port businesses and they emphasized on the importance of relationship marketing

strategy as follow:

- Protecting the relationships with current customers is more important and less costly than attracting new customers.
- 80% of the revenues are generated from the 20% of customer portfolio. That's why it is vital to determine special customers and develop good relationships with them.
- Shrinking market conditions and close locations of ports lead the competition more violent. In these circumstances, it will be precious to keep valuable customers through relationship marketing.
- To make a difference in the highly competitive port industry, it is important to track valuable customers and to determine and react their changing needs quickly.
- To know the customer very well, and to identify their special needs, relationship marketing would have a vital role for ports in positioning themselves in valuable level for customers.
- Customer satisfaction, business continuity, and mutual benefits all can be achieved with the help of relationship marketing.
- Effective communication and cooperation can be achieved via relationship marketing.
- Beside the big annual contracts with customers, relationship marketing strategy will raise the satisfaction level.
- If the port management wants themselves to be an inseparable node in the customer's supply chain, they should use relationship based marketing efforts.
- To cover all the expenses and to be able to invest while making business in high volumes, ports need special customers who add values and it is important to apply relationship marketing strategy to them.
- Turkish people's culture is more inclined to the warm relationships instead of strict procedures and professional or

institutional relationships especially in some certain regions like Central Anatolia and Mediterranean region. The port service marketing efforts are more influential when these efforts focus on relationship development with customers.

3.2. Performed Relationship Marketing Tactics in Port Industry

As Palmatier [28] and Berry [16] offered in the literature, relationship marketing tactics are divided into three parts: Financial, social, and structural. 32 port marketing managers were asked to select the most suitable expression for them with the aim of measuring the importance level of each RM tactic which were listed as Likert item with 5 options. Respectively the means of each RM tactic are; Social (4,50), Financial (4,22) and Structural (4,00). Port managements in Turkey see social RM tactics as most important and structural RM tactics less important. This section's subheadings involve the results of the 3 open-ended questions

that asked to 32 port marketing manager about their financial, social and structural relationship marketing tactics. Tables were constructed with an inductive procedure where meaningful data are extracted on the basis of the repeated examination among the answers.

3.2.1. Financial RM Tactics Performed by Ports

According to the answers (Table 1), the ports in Turkey mostly offer discount benefits to their special customers. But discount format changes in 9 ports. 5 ports offer a discount in exchange for standby arrangement about cargo volume and 4 ports offer a gradual discount with respect to cargo volume of the customer. 21 ports offer deferred payment opportunity but 15 of them enable it without any provision. Other 6 ports offer this opportunity according to the cargo volume, standby arrangement, guarantee letter, transaction frequency and a credit score of the customer.

Differently from the literature, 4 ports

Table 1. Financial Relationship Marketing Tactics of Ports

Financial RM Tactics of Ports	Frequency
Discount	24
Discount benefit	15
Discount in exchange for standby arrangement about cargo volume	5
Gradual discount according to the cargo volume	4
Deferred Payment	21
Deferred payment opportunity	15
Deferred payment according to the credit score of the customer	1
Deferred payment according to the business transaction frequency	1
Deferred payment in exchange for standby arrangement about cargo volume	2
Deferred payment according to the cargo volume	1
Deferred payment in exchange for guarantee letter	1
Others	4
Providing advantage with the same price	2
Excusing customers from extra charges	1
Incentives according to the cargo type, handling regime (import, export, domestic, transshipment), and transportation vehicle	1

indicated dissimilar financial relationship marketing tactics. The first one is to offer price advantage for customers, for example providing more free time than the other customers in empty container warehouses. The second one is to excuse customers from extra charges, for example not receiving payments from special customers whose containers arrive at port in the midnight or excuse ships from extra charges who dock at port on Sunday. The third one is to offer incentives according to the cargo type (ie. Big Bags, rolls, or sheet irons), transportation vehicle (ie. the cargoes which arrive at port via railway), and regime (ie. discount in storing service for transits).

3.2.2. Social RM Tactics Performed by Ports

According to the answers (Table 2), regular visit is mostly performed social relationship marketing tactic of ports. With the help of visiting customers, ports may enable the customer to feel him/herself outstanding and they can appreciate how business works while developing more sincere relationship

and trust. The second mostly performed social RM tactics of ports are gift giving and hosting a lunch or dinner. Warm and closer bonds may be achieved with the help of giving gifts to the customer. This application is risky, that is to say, the gift could be understood as bribery or fee for service and at last results in only a short-term transaction or may finish the relationship. Gift giving is a sensitive action which requires careful consideration with multiple factors like paying attention how much to spend, timing, or personalizing each gift to each customer. Hosting lunch or dinner is a classic activity of business world which can help build warm and long lasting relationships.

10 ports indicated that they strike up a friendship with customers which involves establishing good dialogs, close and sincere relationships. 8 ports handled satisfying efforts as social relationship marketing tactic as the first aim of building a relationship is to satisfy customers. Meticulous satisfying efforts involve actions like solving problems and answering customer needs immediately,

Table 2. Social Relationship Marketing Tactics of Ports in Turkey

Port Social Relationship Marketing Tactics	Frequency
Regular visits	20
Gift giving	15
Hosting a lunch or dinner	15
Striking up a friendship	10
Meticulous satisfying efforts	8
Hosting customer events or inviting customers to an event	7
Special day greetings	6
Caring about interpersonal relations	4
Contact with customers regularly (phone call)	4
Doing non-business favors for customers	3
Performing social responsibility projects and including customers in it	3
Attending fairs	2
Sending notice mails	1
Sending flowers in special days (funerals, marriage, success, etc.)	1
Tracking special interests of customers	1

measuring customer satisfaction and adapting the best service quality philosophy. 7 ports stated that they host customer events like throwing parties or invite customers to an event like concerts, sports competitions, or professional events like congress, conferences or fairs. 6 ports indicated that they celebrate the special days like New Year, national or religious days, and birthdays of customers. 4 ports remarked that they show care about interpersonal relations like showing respect to the customer, acting honestly, making customers feel safe and feel themselves as business partners. 3 ports told they do non-business favors for customers such as developing relations with customers, with other professionals, companies and countries

and helping customers in their marketing efforts. The other social relationship marketing tactics of ports in Turkey are performing social responsibility projects, attending fairs, sending notice mails, sending flowers in special days, and tracking special interests of customers.

3.2.3. Structural RM Tactics Performed by Ports

It is observed that (Table 3) respondents focus, in the scope of structural RM tactics, mostly on long term and special contracts for personalized offerings and service enhancement factors in which they develop services, offer service flexibility and maximize service quality.

Table 3. Structural RM Tactics of Ports in Turkey

Structural RM Tactics of Ports	Frequency
Contracts	11
Drawing up special contracts for personalized service offerings	7
Drawing up long term contracts	4
Service Enhancement	11
Developing special services	4
Providing flexibility in services	4
Maximizing service quality	3
Information and Communication Systems	9
System integration to fulfill the requirements	2
Establishing informing systems for customers about how to use terminal services efficiently without waste of time	1
Establishing track and tracing systems	1
Establishing joint communication system (ie. EDI)	4
Berthing window application system	1
Investment	5
Developing new products and services in accordance with needs	2
Providing the needed infrastructure	1
Investing in accordance with customer requests	2
Others	5
Attaining special representatives for customers	2
Satisfaction studies for customer's customer	1
Special usage of port infrastructure and superstructure opportunity for special customer	1
Arranging presentation and training programs for customer about usage of the systems	1

Another popular structural RM tactic of ports is developing several information and communication systems such as establishing informing systems for customers about how to use terminal services efficiently without waste of time, track and tracing systems, joint communication system, and berthing window application system to provide berthing of ships without time loss. Also, 5 ports indicate that they invest according to the customer requests and develop new services.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

Shrinking market conditions and close locations of ports lead the competition more violent. In these circumstances, it will be precious to keep valuable customers through relationship marketing. To make a difference in the highly competitive port industry, it is important to track valuable customers and to determine and react their changing needs quickly. An effective relationship marketing consists of financial, social, and structural practices. In this research port industry related relationship marketing practices are explored and discussed.

The port businesses in Turkey pointed out that social relationship marketing tactics are more important than financial and structural marketing tactics. This result shares the same view of Palmatier et al. [27]'s study which found the social programs more vital as they manifest the higher payoff. Additionally, this result comply with the latest trend in port literature where scholars manifest the importance of non-price competition issues to gain competitive advantage for ports [37, 38]. According to the results, ports located in Turkey mostly prefer visiting, giving gifts and hosting lunch or dinners as social RM tactics. Some authors (e.g. Wang et al. [39]) have pointed out that social relationship marketing (sometimes called guanxi) behaviors are not so important for

companies since it may lead sales person based loyalty instead of company loyalty. But it is important not to forget that the company loyalty stems from the frontline employees' actions because they are the exposed face of the company. Especially for some cultures, building social relationships is the only way of doing business together in industrial markets. As it is found in the study of Lu [47], sales representative services and attributes of shipping companies are found as the most important factors in the satisfaction levels of shippers. Also in the study of Yeo et al. [48], there was found positive relationship between process related port service quality (e.g. interaction between employees and customers) and customer satisfaction.

As financial RM tactics, ports in Turkey mostly offer discount and deferred payment benefits for the special customers. In the marketing literature it has been argued the unsustainability of financial RM in terms of keeping customers for long term [16]. But in port industry this situation is reversed because cargo handling constitutes more than 80% of the bill of a ship [40]. That's why financial benefits offered by a port are welcomed by shippers and liners as has been proved with numerous academic studies [e.g. 11, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46]. However, still it is vital to note that, without high service quality, offering attractive prices will not work out.

As Ng (2006) indicated that financial benefit provided by a port is not the only element of port attractiveness. Also the service quality (e.g. time efficiency, quick response, or zero damage) should be taken into account. Structural relationships are built with the aim of improving service quality to a special customer. Also the other aim of structural RM tactics is to provide value added benefits that are difficult or expensive for customers to provide [16]. It was found by Schellinck and Brooks [37] that, high levels of value added services

could create satisfaction and loyalty by overcoming high perceived cost. Structural relationship in harmony with trust between port user and port business may stimulate the win-win benefits (e.g. higher revenue and investment opportunity for ports, higher efficiency and dedicated service opportunity for port customers). In this study the results show that ports in Turkey, under structural RM tactics, mostly focus on personalized contract development and service enhancement efforts. Port industry, as a part of logistics systems, is a capital intensive sector. Drawing customized long term contracts with customers may reduce the risks of lower return on investment (ROI) rates.

To date, there is paucity of academic research on how RM is implemented by port businesses, even by other actors in maritime industry. This provided the impetus for our research which addresses this gap. But still several limitations exist in this study. Firstly the research was conducted only in Turkey and it is believed by the authors that the results, especially the relationship marketing tactics applications, will change if this research will be done in other countries. Secondly, the port performance outcomes and the effect of relationship marketing strategy on those outcomes are not handled in this study. Thirdly, the study handles the relationship marketing issue just from the port point of view. Given the exploratory nature of the study, it is important to be cautious about the analysis results. Moreover, due to the focus on one country, the analysis results may not be generalizable to other countries.

In the future studies, the systematized but unadulterated results of this study can be developed, for example, relationship marketing tactics can be extended. With the aim of comparing the countries, relationship marketing applications of other ports in different countries can be examined. Furthermore, the impact of

relationship marketing on port market and financial performance can be studied. Also, it would be beneficial to search relationship marketing drivers from the port user point of view.

References

- [1] Porter, M. (1985). *Competitive Advantage: Creating and sustaining superior performance*. The Free Press.
- [2] Barney, J. (1991). "Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage." *Journal of Management*, 17(1):99-120. doi: 10.1177/014920639101700108.
- [3] Ambler, T. (1994). "Marketing's third paradigm: Guanxi." *Business Strategy Review*, 5(4): 69-80. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8616.1994.tb00084.x.
- [4] Yau, O. H., J.S. Lee, R.P. Chow, L.Y. Sin, and A.C. Tse. (2000). "Relationship marketing the Chinese way." *Business Horizons*, 43(1):16-24.
- [5] Slack, B. (1985). "Containerization, inter-port competition and port selection." *Maritime Policy and Management*, 12(4):293-303. doi: 10.1080/03088838500000043.
- [6] Bird, J. and G. Bland. (1988). "Freight forwarders speak: the perception of route competition via seaports in the European communities research project." *Maritime Policy and Management*, 15 (1):35-55. doi: 10.1080/03088838800000042.
- [7] De Langen, P.W. (2007). "Port competition and selection in contestable hinterlands: the case of Austria." *European Journal of Transport and Infrastructure Research*, 7(1):1-14.
- [8] Malchow, M. and Kanafani, A. (2004). "A disaggregate analysis of port selection." *Transportation Research Part E: Logistics and Transportation Review*, 40(4):317-337. doi: 10.1016/j.tre.2003.05.001.
- [9] Lirn, T.C., H.A.Thanopoulou, M.J.

- Beynon, and A.K.C. Beresford. (2004). "An application of AHP on transshipment port selection: a global perspective." *Maritime Economics & Logistics*, 6(1):70–91. doi: 10.1057/palgrave.mel.9100093.
- [10] Ng, K.Y.A. (2006). "Assessing the attractiveness of ports in the North European container transshipment market: an agenda for future research in port competition." *Maritime Economics and Logistics*, 8(3):234–41. doi: 10.1057/palgrave.mel.9100158.
- [11] Chang, T-T, S-Y. Lee, and J.L.Tongzon. (2008). "Port selection factors by shipping lines: Different perspectives between trunk liners and feeder service providers." *Marine Policy*, 32: 877–885. doi: 10.1016/j.marpol.2008.01.003
- [12] Tongzon, J. L. (2009). "Port choice and freight forwarders." *Transportation Research Part E: Logistics and Transportation Review*, 45(1):186–195. doi: 10.1016/j.tre.2008.02.004.
- [13] Webster Jr, F.E. (1992). "The Changing Role of Marketing in the Corporations." *Journal of Marketing*, 56(4): 1-17. doi: 10.2307/1251983.
- [14] Kotler, P. (1992). It's Time for Total Marketing. *Business Week ADVANCE Executive Brief*, 2.
- [15] Grönroos, C. (1994). "From Marketing Mix to Relationship Marketing : towards a paradigm shift in marketing." *Management Decision*, 32(2):4–20. doi: 10.1108/00251749410054774
- [16] Berry, L. L. (1995). "Relationship marketing of service_growing interest, emerging perspectives." *Journal of the Academy of marketing science*, 23(4):236-245. doi: 10.1177/009207039502300402.
- [17] Winston, E., and Dadzie, K. Q. (2002). Market orientation of Nigerian and Kenyan firms: The role of top managers. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 17(6), 471-480.
- [18] Awuah, G. B. (2008). Analyzing customer-orientation practices of firms from a wider perspective. *Journal of business-to-business marketing*, 15(1), 45-72.
- [19] Jackson, D. W. (1994). Relationship selling: the personalization of relationship marketing. *Asia-Australia Marketing Journal*, 2(1), 45-54.
- [20] Odekerken-Schröder, G., De Wulf, K. and Schumacher, P. (2003). Strengthening outcomes of retailer–consumer relationships: The dual impact of relationship marketing tactics and consumer personality. *Journal of business research*, 56(3), 177-190.
- [21] Palmatier, R. W., Scheer, L. K., Houston, M. B., Evans, K. R. and Gopalakrishna, S. (2007). Use of relationship marketing programs in building customer–salesperson and customer–firm relationships: Differential influences on financial outcomes. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 24(3), 210-223.
- [22] Morgan, R. M. and S.D. Hunt. (1994). "The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing." *Journal of Marketing*, 58(3):20–38. doi: 10.2307/1252308.
- [23] Sin, L. Y. M., A.C.B. Tse, O.H.M. Yau, R.P.M. Chow, J.S.Y. Lee, and L.B.Y.Lau. (2005). "Relationship marketing orientation: scale development and cross-cultural validation." *Journal of Business Research*, 58(2):185–194. doi: 10.1016/S0148-2963(02)00493-9.
- [24] Rodríguez, C. M., and Wilson, D. T. (2002). Relationship bonding and trust as a foundation for commitment in US-Mexican strategic alliances: A structural equation modeling approach. *Journal of International Marketing*, 10(4), 53-76.

- [25] Smith, B. (1998). Buyer-seller relationships: bonds, relationship management, and sex-type. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences/Revue Canadienne des Sciences de l'Administration*, 15(1), 76-92.
- [26] Palmatier, R. W. (2008). *Relationship marketing*. Cambridge, MA: Marketing Science Institute.
- [27] Palmatier, R. W., Dant, R.P., Grewal, D. and Evans, K.R. (2006). "Factors influencing the effectiveness of relationship marketing: a meta-analysis." *Journal of marketing*, 70(4):136-153. doi: 10.1509/jmkg.70.4.136.
- [28] Choo, H., and J.F. Petrick. (2012). "Comparison Between First-timers and Repeaters for Relationship Marketing Implications." *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 14(3): 298-302. doi: 10.1002/jtr.846
- [29] Hougaard, S., and M. Bjerre. (2002). *Strategic relationship marketing*. Springer Science & Business Media.
- [30] Hutt, M. D., and T.W. Speh. (2010). *Business marketing management: B2B*. Mason, OH:South-Western Cengage Learning.
- [31] Abramson, N. R., and J.X. Ai. (1997). "Using guanxi-style buyer-seller relationships in China: reducing uncertainty and improving performance outcomes." *The International Executive*, 39(6): 765-804. doi: 10.1002/tie.5060390606.
- [32] Kotler, P. and R.E. Turner. (1985). *Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning and Control*. Canadian Fifth Edition, Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall.
- [33] Hollensen, S. (2003). *Marketing Management, A Relationship Approach*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- [34] Holsti, O.R. (1969). *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities*. MA:Addison-Wesley.
- [35] Strauss, A.L. (1987). *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- [36] Berg, B.L. (2001). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. (4th ed.), MA:Pearson Education.
- [37] Schellinck, T., and Brooks, M. R. (2016). "Does superior service performance provided to shipping lines improve the perceived value of a port?." *International Journal of Shipping and Transport Logistics*, 8(2): 175-193.
- [38] Esmer, S., Nguyen, H. O., Bandara, Y. M., and Yeni, K. (2016). "Non-price competition in the port sector: A case study of ports in Turkey." *The Asian Journal of Shipping and Logistics*, 32(1): 3-11.
- [39] Wang, G., Wang, X., Long, Y., Hou, W. C., and Ching, L. A. (2015). "Buyer Loyalty in Business Markets: Can the Firm and Salesperson Get What They Truly Desire?." *Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing*, 22(3):197-210.
- [40] Tovar de la Fé, B., Trujillo, L., and Jara-Díaz, S. (2004). "Organization and regulation of the port industry: Europe and Spain". *Essays on Microeconomics and Industrial Organisation*, 2nd edn. New York: Physica-Verlag. A Springer-Verlag Company.
- [41] Bird, J., and Bland, G. (1988). "Freight forwarders speak: the perception of route competition via seaports in the European Communities Research Project. Part 1". *Maritime Policy & Management*, 15(1):35-55.
- [42] Lirn, T. C., Thanopoulou, H. A., Beynon, M. J., and Beresford, A. K. C. (2004). "An application of AHP on transshipment port selection: a global perspective." *Maritime Economics & Logistics*, 6(1):70-91.
- [43] Ugboma, C., Ugboma, O., and Ogwude, I. C. (2006). "An analytic hierarchy process (AHP) approach

- to port selection decisions—empirical evidence from Nigerian ports.” *Maritime Economics & Logistics*, 8(3):251-266.
- [44] Tongzou, J. L., and Sawant, L. (2007). “Port choice in a competitive environment: from the shipping lines' perspective.” *Applied Economics*, 39(4):477-492.
- [45] Onwuegbuchunam, D. E. (2013). “Port selection criteria by shippers in Nigeria: a discrete choice analysis.” *International Journal of Shipping and Transport Logistics*, 5(4-5):532-550.
- [46] Yang, J., Wang, G. W., and Li, K. X. (2016). “Port choice strategies for container carriers in China: a case study of the Bohai Bay Rim port cluster.” *International Journal of Shipping and Transport Logistics*, 8(2):129-152.
- [47] Lu, C. S. (2000). “Logistics services in Taiwanese maritime firms.” *Transportation Research Part E: Logistics and Transportation Review*, 36(2):79-96.
- [48] Yeo, G. T., Thai, V. V., and Roh, S. Y. (2015). “An analysis of port service quality and customer satisfaction: The case of Korean container ports.” *The Asian Journal of Shipping and Logistics*, 31(4):437-447.

Appendix

Research Questionnaire

Do you think relationship marketing strategy is important for port industry? If yes please indicate the reason.					
What are your financial relationship marketing applications (e.g. discount) for your special customers?					
What are your social relationship marketing applications (e.g. visiting) for your special customers?					
What are your structural relationship marketing applications (e.g. investing) for your special customers?					
Please indicate the importance level of each relationship marketing by considering like "financial relationship marketing is very important".					
	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Agree strongly
Financial Relationship Marketing					
Social Relationship Marketing					
Structural Relationship Marketing					