

Perceived Environmental Uncertainty, Marketing Activities, and Business Performance: Evidence from the Thai Hotel Industry

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Abstract

A relationship between perceived environmental uncertainty (PEU) and performance has been substantially investigated in the extant literature. However, a limited number of studies have explored the relationships between these two constructs and marketing activities. This study seeks to explore the relationships between PEU, marketing activities, and performance in the Thai hotel industry context, which has not yet been sufficiently studied in the literature. The findings indicate that the overall level of PEU significantly influences the extent to which Thai hotels engage in marketing activities, as well as hotel performance. However, only macro-environmental uncertainty, rather than industry-level environmental uncertainty, is found to have a direct impact on the level of engagement in marketing activities.

Keywords: Perceived Environmental Uncertainty, Business Performance, Hotel Industry, Thailand

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บทคัดย่อ

มีการศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างการรับรู้ความไม่แน่นอนของสภาพแวดล้อมในการดำเนินธุรกิจกับผลการประกอบการเป็นจำนวนมากอยู่แล้วในงานวิจัยที่เกี่ยวข้อง แต่งานวิจัยที่เชื่อมโยงการรับรู้ความไม่แน่นอนของสภาพแวดล้อมในการดำเนินธุรกิจและผลการประกอบการเข้ากับกิจกรรมทางการตลาดยังคงมีอยู่เป็นจำนวนจำกัด การศึกษาในครั้งนี้จึงต้องการที่ค้นหาสภาพความสัมพันธ์ของตัวแปรเหล่านี้ในบริบทของอุตสาหกรรมการโรงแรมในประเทศไทย ผลการวิจัยบ่งชี้ว่าความไม่แน่นอนของสภาพแวดล้อมในการดำเนินธุรกิจโดยผลรวมมีผลกระทบกับปริมาณการมีส่วนร่วมในกิจกรรมทางการตลาดและผลการประกอบการของโรงแรมอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ อย่างไรก็ตามหากจำแนกการรับรู้ความไม่แน่นอนของสภาพแวดล้อมในการดำเนินธุรกิจออกเป็น 2 ประเภทย่อย กล่าวคือ ความไม่แน่นอนของสิ่งแวดล้อมทางธุรกิจในระดับมหภาค และความไม่แน่นอนของสิ่งแวดล้อมในอุตสาหกรรมจะพบว่าความไม่แน่นอนของสิ่งแวดล้อมทางธุรกิจในระดับมหภาคเท่านั้นที่มีผลกระทบกับปริมาณการมีส่วนร่วมในกิจกรรมทางการตลาดขององค์กร

1. Introduction

The external environment has a significant impact on firm operations. The ability of firms to detect and respond to changing business environments in a timely way is critical to their success and survival. Prior studies have investigated the relationship between environmental uncertainty and firm performance. Nonetheless, most studies are performed in the context of manufacturing firms. This research intends to fill the gap in the literature by focusing on service firms. More specifically, this study examines the relationship between the external environment and the business performance of firms in the Thai hotel industry. The Thai hotel industry has been growing rapidly in the past decades in response to the growth of the country's tourism sector (Cho, 2005; Chon, Singh & Mikula, 1993; Panmunin, 1993). In spite of the unstable political situation in Thailand over the past few years, there have been a large number of hotel developments (e.g., the Westin Group and the Marriott International Group) in the country. As in all other industries, the success and survival of Thai hotel businesses are contingent upon their ability to interact with business environments.

Environmental uncertainty can have positive or negative effects on hotel performance. For example, a stable and growing economy tends to positively affect hotel performance, while labor shortages and rising inflation are likely to have a negative effect on hotel performance. Different types of environmental uncertainty can have different impacts on hotel business performance. That is, some types of environmental uncertainty create macroeconomic impacts on hotel businesses, while others have industry-specific impacts on hotel businesses. This study investigates the impact of each type of environmental uncertainty on firm performance. The relationship between environmental uncertainty and firm performance has been substantially investigated in the extant literature. However, a limited number of studies have explored such relationships via marketing activities.

This paper adopts the conceptualization of environmental uncertainty as its perceived state. Consistent with prior studies (e.g., Bourgeois, 1980; Miliken, 1987; Miles, Snow & Pfeffer, 1974), environmental uncertainty is defined as the state of affairs regarding the environment as it is perceived by the owners or managers of firms. Given the complexity of external environments, the perception of environmental

uncertainty has been argued to be the most relevant to the study of firms' behaviors and activities (Bourgeois, 1980). The objectives of this paper are twofold. First, this paper examines the relationships between environmental uncertainty, marketing activities, and firm performance for hotel businesses in Thailand. More specifically, we assess the direct effect of environmental uncertainty on business performance, as well as the indirect effect of environmental uncertainty on business performance, via the firms' marketing activities. Moreover, the perception of environmental uncertainty is substantiated both as a single overall construct and one that consists of two secondary constructs, signifying that it could be sub-divided into uncertainty at the macro environmental level and uncertainty at an industry level. Second, we investigate each type of environmental uncertainty (i.e., macro-environmental uncertainty and environmental uncertainty within the industry) and its associated impact on marketing activities and firm performance.

We find that perceived environmental uncertainty has a significant and positive effect on hotel performance. Hotel managers who perceive external environment as being uncertain are associated with more favourable firm performance. Perceived environmental uncertainty is also positively related to the level of engagement in marketing activities. Hotel managers who view the external environment as being unpredictable are more likely to engage in marketing activities. Through engagement in marketing activities, hotel performance could be improved.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 describes the environmental uncertainty, marketing activities, and firm performance concepts. In this section, we also review prior studies that examined the relationships between environmental uncertainty, organizational strategy, and firm performance, developing hypotheses for empirical testing. Section 3 discusses the data, variable measurement, and research methodology. Section 4 provides empirical findings, and Section 5 concludes the paper.

2. Environmental Uncertainty, Marketing Activities, and Firm Performance

The concept of environmental uncertainty has long been recognized in business study. Given its multidimensional and context-specific construct (Boyd &

Fulk, 1996; Buchko, 1994; Milliken, 1987; Weaver et al. 2002), environmental uncertainty can be classified and measured in many ways. For instance, Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) measured environmental uncertainty in three dimensions: lack of clarity of information, general uncertainty about casual relationships, and long intervening periods between events and results. Duncan (1972) classified business environments according to the simple vs. complex environment and static vs. dynamic environment concepts. Tosi and Slocum (1984) proposed a new method of uncertainty classification using customers, capital resources, raw material supplies, and technological dimensions. Miller (1993) classified uncertainty into three levels: macro-environmental uncertainties (i.e., political and government policy instability and macroeconomic uncertainty), industry uncertainties (i.e., input market, product market, competitive, and technological uncertainties), and firm-specific uncertainties (i.e., uncertainties regarding operations, research and development, and management and employee actions). Dickson and Weaver (1997) and Weaver et al. (2002) proposed four types of environmental uncertainty: general uncertainty, technological uncertainty, certainty regarding the predictability of the environment, and internationalisation uncertainty. Babakus, Yavas, and Haahti (2006) categorized environmental uncertainty based on the relationships between firms and stakeholders: labor market uncertainty, supplier market uncertainty, customer market uncertainty, and capital market uncertainty.

Environmental uncertainty can be measured objectively or subjectively (Bourgeois, 1980; Lindsay & Rue, 1980; Koberg, 1987; Milliken, 1990; Sawyerr, 1993). While the objective measurement of environmental uncertainty relies on ready indicators, such as economic growth, inflation rate, unemployment rate, growth in industry sales, and industry regulation, the subjective measurement of environmental uncertainty assesses the perception of the business environment via the decision-makers of firms. Many scholars (e.g., Duncan, 1972; Bourgeois, 1980; Milliken, 1990) have argued that the subjective measurement of environmental uncertainty is more relevant to the study of organizational actions because interpretation and assessment are needed to give meaning to indicators and data regarding the environment. Even when using the same objective environmental indicators, firm owners and managers will still make individual judgements as to the importance of indicators and their likelihood of having an effect on a firm.

Findings in prior studies (e.g., Gelderen, Frese & Thurik, 2000; Gerloff, Muir & Bodensteiner, 1991; McCabe & Dutton, 1993) suggest that there is a relationship between perceived environmental uncertainty and firm performance, but the direction of the relationship is rather unclear. On the one hand, perceived environmental uncertainty could lead to increased adaptive behaviour in firm strategies and improved performance. On the other hand, it could have a detrimental effect on firm performance if the level of environmental uncertainty is too high for the owners or managers to cope with (Downey & Slocum, 1982; Gelderen, Frese & Thurik, 2000). In the context of the U.S., Downey and Slocum (1982); Bourgeois (1985); Kasperson (1985); Waddock and Isabella (1989); Gerloff, Muir and Bodensteiner (1991); and Khatri and D'Netto (1997) find that environmental uncertainty negatively affects firm performance. Meanwhile, Sawyerr, McGee, and Peterson (2003) find that environmental uncertainty has positive impacts on the performance of small high-tech firms in the U.S. Milliken (1990) finds both positive and negative effects for verifiable environmental changes on the perceived effectiveness of U.S. firms.

Based on prior empirical studies, we therefore hypothesize the followings:

- H1: There is a relationship between perceived environmental uncertainty and hotel performance.*
- H1a: There is a relationship between perceived macro-environmental uncertainty and hotel performance.*
- H1b: There is a relationship between perceived environmental uncertainty within the hotel industry and hotel performance.*

One of the challenges faced by every firm is deciding how to deal with uncertainty in the business environment (Schulte & Eggers, 2010). A number of studies have examined the relationship between environmental uncertainty and firm strategy (e.g., Babakus, Yavas & Haahti, 2006; Downey & Slocum, 1975; Gils, Voordeckers & Den Heuvel, 2004; Khatri & D'Netto, 1997; Sawyerr, McGee & Peterson, 2003). Individual firms perceive the various types of environmental uncertainty differently and cope with them by implementing different strategies (Sawyerr, 1993). The way an owner or manager perceives environment substantially

affects his or her actions: the more a firm perceives the environment to be uncertain, the more it must engage in some kind of business strategy to cope with this perception (Dickson & Weaver, 1997; Weaver et al., 2002). If a firm perceives the environment as stable and simple, it will be less active in making strategic changes to remain aligned with external environmental changes in the market. One of the important business strategies that firms can use to cope with environmental uncertainty is marketing strategy. Marketing strategies can help firms deal with changes that occur in the environment (Clark, Varadarajan & Pride, 1994; Dilts & Hanlon, 2002). In the hotel industry, marketing strategies can be an important tool for hotels to use in coping with external environmental changes, such as changes in customer demand because of seasonality (Moriarty et al., 2008). We therefore hypothesize the followings:

H2: Perceived environmental uncertainty is positively related to the extent to which hotels engage in marketing activities.

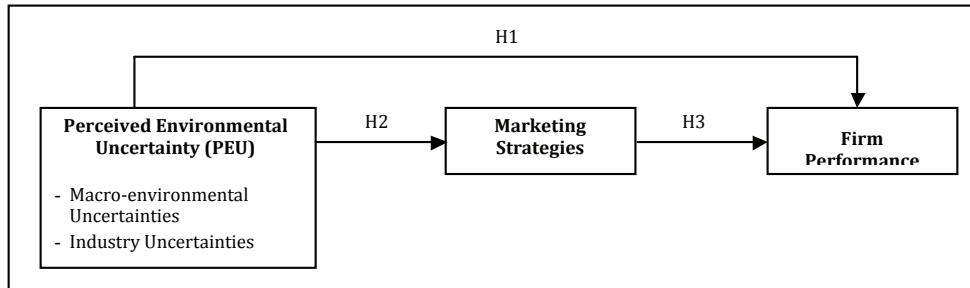
H2a: Perceived macro-environmental uncertainty is positively related to the extent to which hotels engage in marketing activities.

H2b: Perceived environmental uncertainty in the hotel industry is positively related to the extent to which hotels engage in marketing activities.

Firms usually align their strategies with the dynamics of the external environment. They engage in marketing activities to survive in a competitive environment. The extant research indicates that firms that actively make changes to their marketing strategies via efforts such as product adaptation, market segmentation, and co-marketing alliances are more likely than others to improve firm performance (e.g., Dickinson & Ramaseshan, 2008; Kandemir, Yaprak & Cavusgil, 2006; Leonidou, Katsikeas & Samiee, 2002; Tantong et al., 2010). Based on this evidence, the following is posited:

H3: A hotel's marketing activities positively affect hotel performance.

Figure 1 conceptually illustrates the framework used in this study. The framework links perception (PEU), strategies (the combination of various marketing strategies and activities), and output (firm performance).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

3. Data, Measurement, and Methodology

Different types of environmental uncertainties affect managers' perception of success and failure and the degree to which they feel they have control over the future of their firms in different ways. We investigate two categories of business environments. The first is the macro-environment, which firms have little or no control over, including government policies and the economy. The second is the industry environment, which includes the resources and services used by the company, the product market and demand, competition, and technology in the industry. In this study, perceived environmental uncertainty (PEU) was assessed using subjective reporting by the owners/key managers of the firms. Following Kasperson (1985) and Waddock and Issabella (1989), we define PEU as the degree to which a firm believes that the future state of the environment is unpredictable and measure it using a 7-point Likert scale. The method is reportedly "more appropriate for studying managerial behavior and decision-making" (Boyd & Fulk, 1996, p. 3). This study uses Miller's (1993) 32-item 7-point PEU scale, which covers six dimensions of PEU (i.e., government policies, the economy, the resources and services used by company, the product market and demand, competition, and technology in the industry) (See Appendix A).

Marketing activity was assessed in two dimensions: engagement in marketing strategies/ activities and the level of change made to marketing activities. The extent to which firms engage in marketing activities was measured using a 7-point scale. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they engage in twenty marketing activities from 1 (not at all) to 7 (to a very large extent). The level of change

made to marketing activities was also measured using a 7-point scale. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they have changed their firms' seven marketing activities in the past 5 years from 1 (no change at all) to 7 (to a very high extent).

There is no generally accepted single method of measuring firm performance. Commonly used measurements of firm performance include return on sales, return on assets (Geringer, Beammish & daCosta, 1989), perceived satisfaction (Dimitratos, Lioukas & Carter, 2004), and growth in sales and profitability (Cooper, 1993; Grant, 1987). A firm's objective financial data (i.e., accounting data) could be difficult to obtain during empirical research. When access to financial data is limited, measuring a firm's performance relative to competitors can reveal important performance information (Birley & Westhead, 1990; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003) and provide a high level of validity and reliability (Chandler & Hanks, 1993). This study measures firm performance subjectively. Respondents were asked to compare their firms' performance with those of their major competitors and to indicate how satisfied they were with their performance. The performance measurement was achieved via the use of an eleven-item scale adapted from Tan and Litschert (1994) and Kropp, Lindsay, and Shoham (2006). All eleven items were combined and averaged to provide an overall picture of firm performance.

The data for this study were collected from hotel businesses in Thailand in 2010. We randomly selected 3,000 firms to distribute our survey to. It was addressed to the owners or the marketing managers of the firms. Four hundred and thirty-one firms responded to our survey. Sixty-two of the returned questionnaires contain more than 80% missing values and thus were thus discarded, leaving the final sample size of 369 firms (a 12.3% response rate). The reliability of all measures, as well as their means, standard deviations, and correlations are presented in Table 1 and Table 2. All measures in this study had a satisfactory level of internal reliability because they had a coefficient alpha above 0.70.

Table 1: Cronbach's α and Intercorrelations for Key Variables (N = 369)

	1	2	3	4	5	Cronbach's α
1. Overall Perceived Environmental Uncertainty	-					0.94
2. Perceived Macro-Environmental Uncertainty	0.82**	-				0.90
3. Perceived Environmental Uncertainty in the Hotel Industry	0.94**	0.57**	-			0.92
4. Marketing Activities	0.21**	0.24**	0.15**	-		0.96
5. Hotel Performance	0.12*	0.09	0.12*	0.30**	-	0.95

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations of Perceived Environmental Uncertainty, Marketing Activities and Performance

	Mean	SD
1. Overall Perceived Environmental Uncertainty	133.28	35.30
2. Perceived Macro Environmental Uncertainty	55.35	15.11
- Government and Policies	36.64	10.72
- Economy	18.70	6.41
3. Perceived Industry Environmental Uncertainty	77.93	24.45
- Resources and Services	21.55	8.90
- Product Market and Demand	15.20	6.41
- Competition	26.85	9.48
- Technology	14.34	6.83
4. Marketing Activities	119.38	32.25
5. Hotel Performance	22.39	7.87

4. Empirical Findings and Discussion

Five regression models were constructed to examine the relationships set forth in Section 2. Hypotheses 1, 1a, and 1b were tested via Models 1 and 2. Hypotheses 2, 2a, and 2b were examined via Models 3 and 4. Model 5 was used to investigate the relationship proposed in Hypothesis 3. The regression results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Regression Analysis Summary (N =369)

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SEB</i>	β
Model 1: Testing H1, Predicting Hotel Performance			
Constant	18.83	1.54	
Overall Perceived Environmental Uncertainty	0.03	0.01	0.12*
Note: $R^2 = 0.014$ ($N = 369$, $p < .05$) $F = 5.34^* = p < .05$, $** p < .01$			
Model 2: Testing H1a and H1b, Predicting Hotel Performance			
Constant	18.99	1.65	
Perceived Macro-Environmental Uncertainty	0.02	0.03	0.03
Perceived Industry Environmental Uncertainty	0.03	0.02	0.10
Note: $R^2 = 0.015$ ($N = 369$, $p < .10$) $F = 2.75^* = p < .05$, $** p < .01$			
Model 3: Testing H2, Predicting the Level of Engagement in Marketing Activities			
Constant	94.05	6.43	
Overall Perceived Environmental Uncertainty	0.19	0.05	0.21**
Note: $R^2 = 0.043$ ($N = 369$, $p < .001$) $F = 16.60^* = p < .05$, $** p < .01$			
Model 4: Testing H2, Predicting the Level of Engagement in Marketing Activities			
Constant	90.2	6.59	
Perceived Macro-Environmental Uncertainty	0.49	0.13	0.23**
Perceived Industry Environmental Uncertainty	0.03	0.81	0.02
Note: $R^2 = 0.058$ ($N = 369$, $p < .001$) $F = 11.27^* = p < .05$, $** p < .01$			
Model 5: Testing H3, Predicting Hotel Performance			
Constant	13.59	1.5	
Level of Engagement in Marketing Activities	0.07	0.01	0.30**
Note: $R^2 = 0.091$ ($N = 369$, $p < .001$) $F = 36.86^* = p < .05$, $** p < .01$			

Hypothesis 1 is supported. The overall PEU level has a positive impact on hotel performance. The more the owner or manager perceives the environment to be uncertain, the better the performance of the hotel. When looking specifically at the influence of macro-environmental uncertainty and industry environment uncertainty, each of these two types of PEU alone does not significantly affect hotel performance. As a result, Hypotheses 1a and 1b are not supported. Hypothesis 2 is supported. The overall level of PEU has a positive influence on a hotel's engagement in marketing activities. When we classify PEU into macro-environmental uncertainty and industry environmental uncertainty, we find that only perceived macro-environmental uncertainty has an impact on a hotel's engagement in marketing activities. Thus, Hypothesis 2a is supported, while Hypothesis 2b is not supported. The relationship between the level of engagement in marketing activities and hotel performance (Hypothesis 3) is supported. Our results suggest that there is a positive relationship between the level of engagement in marketing activities and hotel performance.

Our empirical results provide two main findings. First, perceived environmental uncertainty has the direct effect on hotel performance. More specifically, we find that the more the owner or manager perceives the external environment to be unpredictable, the better the performance of the hotel will be. When we divide perceived environmental uncertainty into two sub-types (i.e., macro-environmental uncertainty and industry environmental uncertainty), the results indicate that neither type of environmental uncertainty individually affects hotel performance. Second, perceived environmental uncertainty has an indirect effect on hotel performance via engagement in marketing activities. It is clear from this study that an increase in the extent to which hotel managers perceive their business environments to be uncertain leads to a wider breadth of marketing activities. Through these marketing activities, hotel performance improves. However, we find that only macro environmental uncertainty (as opposed to industry environmental uncertainty) has a positive relationship with the level of engagement in marketing activities. Hotel managers appear to be more active in making changes to their marketing activities when they perceive that the economy, as well as the government policies, is uncertain. Industry-related uncertainties, such as market demand, competition, and industry technology, do not significantly affect the level of engagement in marketing

activities. One plausible explanation is that hotel managers perceive macro-environmental uncertainty as being more critical and uncontrollable, and thus, they must make changes to their marketing strategies as a means of surviving in volatile business environments. On the other hand, managers may perceive industry-related uncertainty as a type of uncertainty that they can exercise at least some control. Given the political unrest that occurred in Thailand from February to May of 2010, the period during which we conducted this survey, hotel managers may have been more concerned about macro-environmental uncertainty than industry environmental uncertainty.

5. Conclusion

This study investigates the relationships between perceived environmental uncertainty, marketing activities, and performance in the Thai hotel industry. Our empirical results indicate the importance of perceived environmental uncertainty because it can significantly affect hotel performance and the extent to which hotels engage in marketing activities. Hotel managers who perceived the overall business environments as being uncertain were more likely to engage in and make more changes to their marketing activities and thus achieve better performance. Based on our empirical finding, hotels should consider hiring managers who keep themselves abreast of changing business environments and express their concern for various aspects of environmental uncertainty because such managers tend to contribute more favorably to the overall performance of hotels.

As a whole, perceived environmental uncertainty significantly affects hotel performance. However, only macro-environmental uncertainty, as opposed to industry environmental uncertainty, has a positive relationship with the extent to which hotels engage in marketing activities. Future research should link these two types of environmental uncertainty with a variety of marketing activities that hotels engage in. This would provide us with a deeper insight into the relationship between PEU and firm engagement in marketing activities. Future research should also investigate whether the relationships between perceived environmental uncertainty, level of engagement in marketing activities, and hotel performance are non-linear. It is possible that the effect of engagement in marketing activities on

hotel performance could decline after a certain level of perceived environmental uncertainty is reached. That is, too much perceived uncertainty could completely stop a hotel manager from engaging in any kind of marketing activities and return the organization to the status quo.

This study could be limited in terms of the sample characteristics because the sample was drawn only from the hotel industry. The sample might have depicted certain characteristics in terms of attitudes and behaviours that are different from firms in other industries. Future studies should explore the relationships examined in this study within other industry contexts to increase the generalizability of the results.

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APPENDIX A: Measurement

A. 1 *Perceived Environmental Uncertainty (PEU)*

Macro-Environmental Uncertainty

Government and Policies (1= “Easy to Predict” to 7 = “Unpredictable”)

1. Ability of the party in power to maintain control of the government
2. Threat of armed conflict
3. Tax policies
4. Monetary policies
5. Prices controlled by the government
6. Legal regulations affecting the business sector
7. Enforcement of existing laws
8. Public service provision

Economy (1= “Easy to Predict” to 7 = “Unpredictable”)

1. Inflation rate
2. Exchange rate with major currencies
3. Interest rate
4. Results of economic restructuring

Industry-level Environmental Uncertainty

Resources and services used by your company (1= “Easy to Predict” to 7 = “Unpredictable”)

1. Availability of trained labor
2. Labor and union problems
3. Quality of inputs, raw materials, and components
4. Availability of inputs, raw materials, and components
5. Prices of inputs, raw materials, and components
6. Transportation system

Product market and demand (1= “Easy to Predict” to 7 = “Unpredictable”)

1. Client preferences
2. Product demand
3. Availability of substitute products
4. Availability of complementary products

Competition (1= “Easy to Predict” to 7 = “Unpredictable”)

1. Changes in competitors’ prices
2. Changes in the markets served by competitors
3. Changes in competitors’ strategies
4. Entry of new firms into the market
5. Domestic competitors
6. Foreign competitors

Technology in your industry (1= “Easy to Predict” to 7 = “Unpredictable”)

1. Product changes
2. Changes in product/service quality
3. New product/service introductions
4. Changes in production/ service delivery process

A. 2 Marketing Activities

Engagement in Marketing Activities (1 = “Not at All” to 7 = “To a Very Large Extent”)

1. Reviewing marketing and sales activities
2. Managing product/service categories
3. Setting marketing objectives and strategies
4. Gathering information about competitor activities
5. Gathering information about changes in the market place
6. Sales promotion
7. Public relations activities to encourage support within channel/ Sponsorship
8. Local/National advertising
9. Personal selling
10. Promotion through Internet
11. Setting pricing policies

12. Increasing the use of direct and indirect channel of distribution
13. Attracting new customers
14. Managing the level of channel control
15. Increasing the use of sales force and targeting new market sectors when appropriate
16. Developing branded product/service
17. Rationalizing the product/service ranges
18. Managing new product/service development
19. Obtaining advice, giving advice, promoting partnerships and/or alliances with the channel

Changes Made to Marketing Activities (1 = “No Changes at All” to 7 = “To a Very High Extent”)

1. Additions and/or elimination of the products/services
2. Changes in your target customers
3. Changes in the way you reach your customers
4. Changes in your promotional activities
5. Changes in your pricing strategies
6. Changes in your firm image
7. Changes in your co-marketing activities

A. 3 Hotel Performance

1. The firm has been very profitable.
2. The firm has generated a high volume of sales.
3. The firm has achieved rapid growth.
4. The performance of the firm has been very satisfactory.
5. The firm has been very successful.
6. The firm performance has fully met our expectations.
7. Sales
8. Market shares
9. Growth
10. Overall firm performance and success
11. Competitive position