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ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD

Course: Marketing Management (447) • Level: ADB

Semester: Autumn 2026

Assignment No. 2

SOLVED ASSIGNMENT GUIDE

(For Study & Reference)

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Note: This guide is prepared for study and reference purposes only. Students are advised to read the relevant units of the course book, understand the concepts, and then write the assignment in their own words. Copying this guide word for word is not recommended. Total marks of the assignment are 100 and pass marks are 50. Assignment No. 2 is a research activity of 100 marks (pass marks 50): you visit a business or commercial organisation with an international presence, study its marketing activities, and prepare a research report of about 15 to 20 pages on the ONE topic fixed by the last digit of your roll number.

About This Assignment and How to Use This Guide

Assignment No. 2 (as printed): "This assignment is a research activity. You are required to visit any business/commercial organization that has an international presence and study their marketing activities and practices as a whole of marketing of the product and prepare a research report of about 15 to 20 pages on one of the topics given below. To avoid duplication, you are required to select the topic according to the last digit of your roll number." The report must follow this format: Introduction; Review of literature; The data collection; Data analysis;

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Conclusion and recommendations; References; Annexes. Two copies are prepared: one for the tutor and one for presentation in the end-of-semester workshop.

This guide contains a complete model report for EVERY one of the ten topics, because different students need different topics. Find your topic from the last digit of your roll number in the table below, study that model report carefully, and then do the most important part of this assignment yourself: actually visit an organisation, collect your own observations, interviews and figures, and rewrite the report around your own evidence. The organisations, survey results and figures used inside the model reports are realistic teaching illustrations based on publicly known marketing practice; they show you the standard, structure and depth expected. They are not a substitute for your field visit, and your tutor and workshop panel may ask how you collected your data, so keep your visiting card, interview notes, photographs of displays (with permission), price lists and questionnaire copies safely for your annexes.

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Table: Select your topic by the last digit of your roll number

Last digit	Your topic
0	Competitor analysis report for a chosen market: rivals, strategy and response plan
1	Brand equity measurement: design indicators and a basic research approach
2	Channel conflict case: identify causes and propose solutions for a distribution network
3	Retailing strategy: location, merchandising and customer experience for a store format
4	Personal selling strategy: sales process, CRM and performance evaluation plan
5	Advertising campaign plan: objectives, message, media plan and evaluation metrics
6	Pricing under uncertainty: how to set prices during inflation/competition changes

7	Relationship marketing: loyalty program design and customer retention strategy
8	Global marketing strategy decisions for a local brand entering foreign markets
9	Marketing implementation: aligning structure, people and processes for execution

Choosing the Organisation and Planning the Visit

Choose an organisation that genuinely has an international presence and that you can actually reach: a multinational's local office, plant, distributor or flagship outlet (for example a beverages, food, telecom, banking, retail or pharmaceutical company operating in Pakistan and abroad), or a Pakistani company that exports or operates internationally, such as a textile, food or sports-goods exporter. Telephone or visit first, explain that you are an AIOU student doing a course research assignment, and request a short meeting with the marketing, sales or branch manager. Prepare before you go: read the company's website and recent advertisements, note its products and prices in two or three shops, and carry a written interview guide (a model is given in the Annexes at the end of this guide). During the visit, observe as much as you interview: displays, price boards, customer handling, delivery vehicles, complaint desk and staff behaviour are all marketing data. Write up your notes the same day, while details are fresh.

How Each Model Report Is Organised

Every model report below follows the university's prescribed format exactly. The Introduction states the topic, its importance and the objectives of the study. The Review of Literature summarises what standard marketing books say about the topic, in your own words, so that your field findings can be compared with theory. Data Collection explains where you went,

whom you met, what you observed and which documents or responses you gathered. Data Analysis organises the findings into tables and interprets them instead of merely listing them. Conclusion and Recommendations answer the objectives and give practical suggestions the organisation could actually use. References list the books and sources consulted, and the Annexes carry your interview guide, questionnaire and supporting material. To expand a model report into your own 15 to 20 pages, add your organisation's background, your full interview notes in summary form, photographs and price or display tables from your visit, and one or two pages of your own comparison with a competitor. Write throughout in your own words: understanding shown through your own evidence earns marks, while copied text, from this guide or anywhere else, does not.

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Topic 0: Competitor Analysis Report for a Chosen Market — Rivals, Strategy and Response Plan

Introduction

This report presents a competitor analysis of the carbonated soft drinks market of a large Pakistani city, conducted around a field visit to the sales office and distribution operation of an internationally present beverage company and a structured audit of retail outlets. Soft drinks are an ideal market for competitor analysis because competition is visible daily: prices are displayed in every shop, chillers carry rival brands side by side, promotions change weekly and advertising is impossible to miss. The objectives of the study were to identify the real set of competitors at brand, category and generic level, to compare their strategies in product, price, distribution and promotion, to assess their strengths, weaknesses and likely reactions, and to prepare a practical response plan for the host company. The central lesson expected from the

study, and confirmed by it, is that market share in such a market is won or lost in thousands of small outlets and small decisions, not in a single dramatic campaign.

The Organisation and Field Setting

The host operation studied was the local distribution system of a multinational beverage company: a territory sales office supervising pre-sellers and delivery teams who supply general stores, bakeries, restaurants, schools and petrol stations across the city. The writer accompanied a market visit, observed chiller placement and stock rotation in twelve outlets of different sizes, interviewed the territory manager and two retailers, and collected shelf prices for all major brands in three localities. Rival activity was recorded on a standard observation sheet covering pack range, prices, visible promotions, chiller ownership and share of shelf space. Names of individual retailers are kept confidential, as promised during the visit, and figures are presented in rounded, illustrative form.

Review of Literature

Kotler and Keller define competitor analysis as identifying competitors, assessing their objectives, strategies, strengths and weaknesses and reaction patterns, and selecting which to attack or avoid. Competition must be mapped at four levels: brand competition among similar products, industry competition within the product class, form competition among different ways of satisfying the same need, and generic competition for the same consumer spending. Porter's five forces add the bargaining power of buyers and suppliers, the threat of new entrants and substitutes, and the intensity of rivalry itself. The literature also classifies firms by market role — leader, challenger, follower and nicher — and warns that a competitor's reaction depends on its objectives and resources: a share-hungry challenger reacts violently to price

attacks, while a profit-focused incumbent may tolerate small incursions. Benchmarking against the best rival practices, and continuous competitive intelligence gathered legally from markets, media and trade sources, complete the standard framework applied in this report.

Data Collection

Primary data came from three sources. First, a semi-structured interview with the territory sales manager covered the company's view of its rivals, its route-to-market, its promotion calendar and the moves it most fears from competitors. Second, structured observation in twelve outlets recorded, for each major brand, the number of facings, chiller presence and condition, stock freshness and current promotional offers. Third, short interviews with two retailers and six shoppers explored why outlets stock particular brands and why shoppers switch. Secondary data came from company advertisements and social media pages, published price lists, trade press reports and the brands' own promotional material collected in the market. Data were collected over two weeks so that a promotional week and a normal week could both be seen, because a single-day visit during a rival's special offer would give a distorted picture.

Data Analysis

The analysis shows a market with a clear leader, one aggressive challenger and a tail of regional and price brands, with juices, bottled water and energy drinks pressing in as form and generic competitors for the same refreshment occasions. The leader competes on distribution depth, chiller ownership and advertising weight; the challenger competes on price packs, retailer margins and highly visible local promotions; regional brands survive on low price and personal relationships with retailers in defined localities. The outlet audit found that availability and cold

availability explain more of brand choice than advertising recall among the shoppers interviewed: most buyers chose from what was chilled and visible. Retailers, for their part, ranked delivery reliability and damage replacement above small differences in margin. The table below summarises the comparison on which the response plan is built.

Table 1: Rival comparison from the outlet audit (illustrative summary)

Factor	Market leader	Main challenger	Regional brands
Main weapon	Distribution + advertising	Price packs + retailer margin	Low price + local ties
Chiller presence in audited outlets	High	Medium	Low
Promotion style	National campaigns	Frequent local offers	Occasional price cuts
Main weakness found	Slow complaint handling	Inconsistent supply	Weak cold availability
Likely reaction to attack	Strong, fast	Immediate price response	Retreat to core localities

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Three findings matter most. First, the host company's greatest vulnerability is not price but service gaps: two outlets reported slow replacement of expired stock, and every such failure quietly transfers shelf space to the challenger. Second, the challenger's promotions are frequent but shallow; retailers enjoy them yet do not change their basic loyalty, which suggests the host should respond with service and visibility rather than matching every discount. Third, the fastest-growing threat sits outside the cola shelf altogether: small, affordable juice and flavoured-milk packs are taking the school and lunch occasions, a form-level competitor the host's current reporting does not even track.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that competitor analysis pays when it is continuous, outlet-level and honest about one's own weaknesses. The recommended response plan is: (1) institute a monthly rival audit on the same observation sheet used in this study, so changes are caught early; (2) fix the service failures first — a guaranteed 48-hour replacement of expired or damaged stock in audited outlets; (3) defend cold availability by repairing and re-siting chillers before the summer peak rather than funding a price war; (4) answer challenger promotions selectively in the outlets where share is actually moving, instead of city-wide discounts; (5) add juices and other substitute categories to the tracking sheet and test one affordable lunch-occasion pack; and (6) brief pre-sellers on rivals' current offers every Monday so that no retailer knows more about the market than the company's own team. A firm that knows its rivals this well is rarely surprised, and in this market surprise is the most expensive cost of all.

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References

Kotler, P. and Keller, K. L. (2016) Marketing Management, 15th edition, Pearson. Kotler, P., Keller, K. L., Ang, S. H., Tan, C. T. and Leong, S. M. (2021) Marketing Management: An Asian Perspective, Pearson. Porter, M. E. (1980) Competitive Strategy, Free Press. Aaker, D. A. (2001) Developing Business Strategies, Wiley. Company advertisements, price lists and promotional material collected during the field visit.

A practical word on method completes this report. Competitor analysis of this kind costs little money and much shoe leather: the observation sheet, the retailer conversation and the Monday briefing are habits, not projects, and they fail only when they are treated as a one-time assignment instead of a routine. The host company is therefore advised to assign the audit to a

named officer, file each month's sheet with the month's sales results, and review the two together, because a rival's move that is visible in the market in March and visible in the sales figures in May was, in truth, visible in time for anyone who was looking. Looking, systematically and on the record, is the whole secret this topic teaches.

Topic 1: Brand Equity Measurement — Indicators and a Basic Research Approach

Introduction

A brand is more than a name and a packet: it is the set of associations, expectations and loyalties stored in customers' minds, and the extra price and repeat purchase those mental assets produce are called brand equity. Managers invest in brands for years, yet often cannot answer a simple question: how strong is our brand today, and is it getting stronger or weaker? This report designs a practical set of brand-equity indicators and a basic, low-cost research approach suitable for a student study, and demonstrates them on a well-known laundry detergent brand sold by an internationally present company in Pakistan. The objectives were to define measurable indicators of awareness, perceived quality, associations and loyalty, to collect pilot data through a small consumer survey and retail observation, and to show how the results can be summarised in a simple brand-equity scorecard that a company could repeat every six months to track the health of its brand.

The Organisation and Field Setting

The field setting was the market of a mid-sized city where the selected detergent brand competes with two other multinational brands and several economy brands. With the permission of a local distributor's sales supervisor, the writer observed shelf arrangements in

eight stores, noted prices and pack sizes, and then conducted a short questionnaire survey of sixty household buyers outside stores and in two residential localities. Respondents were mostly the household members who actually buy laundry products, because brand equity lives in the buyer's mind, not in the company's records. The brand names in the questionnaire were rotated to reduce order bias, and respondents were assured that the survey was for a university assignment, which visibly improved their willingness to answer honestly, including critically.

Review of Literature

Aaker's model treats brand equity as a set of assets in five categories: brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, brand associations and other proprietary assets such as trademarks and channel relationships. Keller's customer-based brand equity model adds a pyramid: salience (does the brand come to mind), performance and imagery (what it does and what it means), judgements and feelings (what customers conclude and feel), and resonance (the depth of the relationship). Both models agree that equity must be measured in the customer's mind before it appears in sales and price premiums. Standard indicators therefore include unaided and aided awareness, first mention (top of mind), perceived quality ratings against competitors, association checklists, willingness to pay a premium, repeat-purchase and switching behaviour, and recommendation intention. The literature warns that sales alone are a misleading equity measure, because heavy discounting can raise sales while quietly teaching customers that the brand is not worth its full price.

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Data Collection

The questionnaire contained twelve short items: unaided recall of detergent brands, aided recognition from a list, the brand bought last time and most often, quality and value ratings on five-point scales for the two main brands used, three association questions (for example, which brand is “for people like us” and which “cleans best”), the extra amount, if any, the respondent would pay for the preferred brand over the cheapest acceptable brand, and intention to recommend. Retail observation recorded shelf share, price per kilogram across pack sizes and current promotions, because equity should also be visible in the price a brand can hold on the shelf. Sixty usable responses were collected; the sample is small and local, which is acceptable for a course project provided the limitation is stated frankly, as it is in the analysis below.

Data Analysis

The pilot results, summarised in the chart and scorecard, show a brand that is famous but not fully loved. Aided awareness was very high and unaided recall respectable, confirming years of advertising; perceived quality scored well against the economy brands but only level with the main multinational rival; association strength was mixed, with the brand strongly linked to whiteness but weakly linked to care for colours and fabrics, a gap rivals exploit; and loyalty was the softest indicator, with many buyers admitting they switch whenever a rival is on promotion. The average stated price premium over the cheapest acceptable brand was positive but modest, suggesting real but fragile equity. The managerial meaning is precise: this brand does not need more awareness spending, it needs loyalty-building and a stronger care association, and further discount-led volume drives would grow sales while shrinking the very equity this report measures.

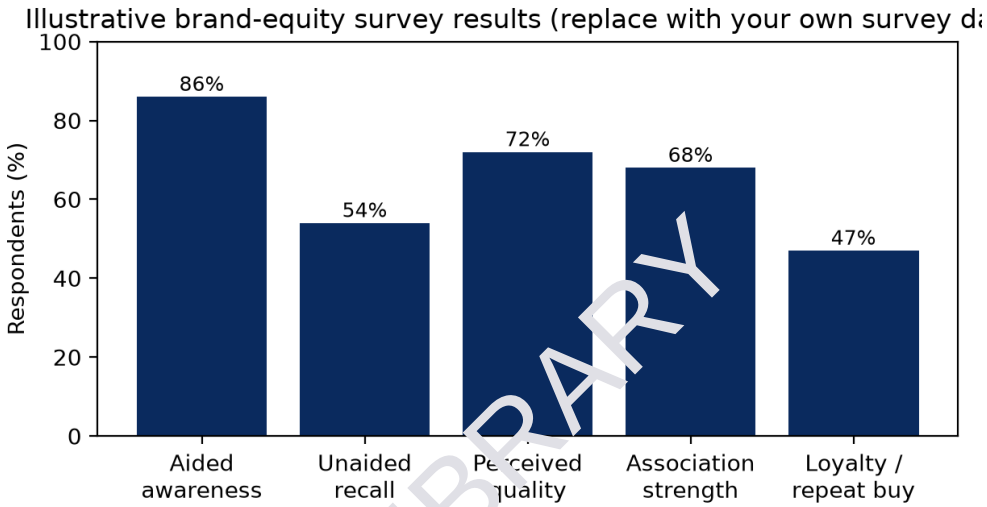

Figure 1: Illustrative pilot survey results for the selected brand (replace with your own survey results).

Table 1: A simple brand-equity scorecard (illustrative pilot values)

Indicator	Measure used	Pilot result	Reading
Aided awareness	% recognising brand from list	86%	Strong
Unaided recall	% naming brand without help	54%	Moderate
Perceived quality	Mean rating out of 100 (scaled)	72	Good, level with main rival
Associations	% linking brand to key benefit	68%	Strong on whiteness, weak on fabric care
Loyalty	% buying it most often / repeat buyers	47%	Weakest link; promotion-driven switching

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that brand equity can be measured usefully even with student-level resources if the indicators are chosen from established models and collected honestly. The recommended approach for any company or student researcher is: fix a small set of indicators

(awareness, first mention, perceived quality, two or three key associations, price premium, repeat purchase and recommendation), measure them with the same short questionnaire in the same type of localities every six months, present them as a one-page scorecard, and read them together with shelf prices and promotion intensity so that equity is never confused with discounted volume. For the brand studied, the specific recommendations are to invest in fabric-care proof and demonstrations rather than more awareness advertising, to build a repeat-purchase mechanic that rewards loyalty without cutting the shelf price, and to track the switching rate after every rival promotion. Brands are built in minds before they are built in markets, and what is measured in minds can finally be managed.

References

Aaker, D. A. (1991) Managing Brand Equity, Free Press. Keller, K. L. (2013) Strategic Brand Management, 4th edition, Pearson. Kotler, P. and Keller, K. L. (2016) Marketing Management, 15th edition, Pearson. Kotler, P. et al. (2021) Marketing Management: An Asian Perspective, Pearson. Student survey and retail observation data collected for this report (see Annexes).

Two cautions from the pilot deserve emphasis for any student repeating this study. First, measure the same indicators in the same way each time: brand equity is a trend, not a photograph, and a scorecard whose questions change every round can show movement that never happened. Second, interview the actual buyer of the category, in the place where the category is bought, and include at least one rival brand in every rating question; equity is relative by definition, and a quality score collected without a comparison brand flatters every brand equally. With these two disciplines observed, even a sixty-respondent student survey

becomes a respectable instrument, and its limitations can be stated in the report with a clear conscience instead of being discovered by the examiner.

Topic 2: Channel Conflict Case — Causes and Solutions for a Distribution Network

Introduction

Distribution partners who must cooperate to serve the customer can also become each other's biggest problem. This report studies a real pattern of channel conflict in the distribution network of an internationally present consumer-goods company: tension between the authorised distributor, the retailers it supplies, the growing modern-trade and online sellers, and the company's own sales team. The case matters because conflict of this kind rarely appears in company reports, yet it quietly decides shelf prices, stock availability and retailer loyalty in every town. The objectives were to describe the conflict as the parties experience it, to identify its structural causes rather than blaming individuals, and to propose solutions that a company could realistically adopt. Names and exact locations are disguised, as agreed with the participants, but the events, complaints and figures follow the pattern documented during the field visit and interviews.

The Organisation and Field Setting

The network studied works as follows. The company appoints one distributor for the town, who buys in bulk, holds stock in a small warehouse and supplies, through order-bookers and delivery riders, about three hundred retailers, from large general stores to small kiosks. Alongside this classic chain now stand three pressure points: a cash-and-carry and two online grocery sellers offering the same brands at prices sometimes below the retailers' purchase price; a company

policy of supplying one large supermarket directly, bypassing the distributor; and neighbouring-territory stock leaking into the town whenever the distributor across the boundary is given extra stock to meet a monthly target. The writer interviewed the distributor's manager, accompanied an order-booker for half a day, and spoke with five retailers of different sizes, hearing the same story from different chairs.

Review of Literature

The literature defines channel conflict as the situation in which one channel member perceives another to be engaged in behaviour that prevents it from achieving its goals, and distinguishes horizontal conflict (between members at the same level), vertical conflict (between different levels) and multichannel conflict (between the channels a firm itself operates). Its recorded causes include incompatible goals, unclear roles and territories, differences in perception of the market, and heavy dependence of weaker members on stronger ones. Conflict is not wholly harmful: a moderate level performs a useful function when it forces adaptation, but unmanaged conflict passes a destructive threshold after which members divert effort from selling to fighting, withhold information and finally exit. Standard remedies include superordinate goals that all members share, clear and written policies on territory, pricing and channel roles, joint planning and councils, regular communication, fair grievance procedures, and, where the structure itself is obsolete, redesign of the channel including compensation for members who lose roles.

Data Collection

Data were collected by semi-structured interviews with the distributor's manager and two of his staff, five retailers (two large, three small), and a company sales officer responsible for the

territory, supplemented by observation on a delivery round and by documents the participants willingly showed: a retailer's purchase invoices across two months showing price differences between sources, photographs of an online seller's promotional prices, and the distributor's stock register showing the week in which cross-boundary stock appeared in local shops at below-standard rates. Each party was asked the same three questions — what is the dispute, who is responsible, and what would settle it — so that their perceptions could be compared directly. The differences in perception turned out to be as important as the facts.

Data Analysis

Analysis separates the case into causes, not complaints. The first cause is goal incompatibility created by the company's own targets: month-end volume pressure pushed extra stock into the neighbouring territory, and the surplus predictably flowed back at cut prices, punishing the honest distributor and every retailer holding stock bought at the normal rate. The second cause is role ambiguity: no written rule states who may sell to whom online, so the e-commerce sellers buy as "retail customers" in bulk and undercut the trade, while retailers blame the distributor, who is innocent of that flow. The third cause is the direct supply to the supermarket, decided for understandable volume reasons but never explained or compensated, which the distributor experiences as the company competing with its own partner. The fourth cause is perceptual: the company judges the territory by dispatch figures, the distributor by collections and returns, and retailers by daily cash sales, so each side's "facts" differ. The visible symptoms — price undercutting, refusal to stock slow lines, delayed payments used as revenge, and one large retailer threatening to switch its main purchases to a rival company's distributor — are the smoke; the four causes above are the fire.

Table 1: Causes of conflict in the case and proposed remedies

Cause	Evidence in case	Proposed remedy
Target-driven stock dumping	Surplus stock re-entered town at cut prices	Smooth monthly targets; track secondary sales, not only dispatches
Unclear online-selling roles	Bulk buying by online sellers undercut shops	Written channel policy; distinct packs/prices per channel
Uncompensated direct supply	Supermarket supplied directly by company	Service fee or territory compensation to distributor; explain policy
Different perceptions and measures	Each party judged by different figures	Joint monthly review on shared dashboard; grievance meeting

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that most channel conflict is designed into the system by targets, silence and unclear rules, and can therefore be designed out. The recommendations are: (1) replace pure dispatch targets with a balanced measure including retailers' sales, stock freshness and payment discipline, removing the incentive to dump stock; (2) publish a short written channel charter covering territories, online selling, direct accounts and price discipline, signed by company, distributor and modern-trade partners; (3) compensate or formally re-scope the distributor for the direct supermarket account so the arrangement is a policy, not a surprise; (4) hold a monthly joint review with a fixed agenda and recorded decisions, and a named company officer to settle grievances within seven days; and (5) differentiate offers by channel — pack sizes and bundles suited to shops, modern trade and online — so channels compete on service rather than destroying one common price. Customers never see these meetings, but they see their results every day in stable prices and full shelves.

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References

Kotler, P. and Keller, K. L. (2016) Marketing Management, 15th edition, Pearson. Coughlan, A. T., Anderson, E., Stern, L. W. and El-Ansary, A. (2006) Marketing Channels, 7th edition, Pearson. Rosenbloom, B. (2013) Marketing Channels: A Management View, 8th edition, Cengage. Kotler, P. et al. (2021) Marketing Management: An Asian Perspective, Pearson. Interviews and documents collected during the field visit (see Annexes).

One further observation from the field deserves record, because it explains why such cases persist for years. Every party interviewed described the conflict as somebody else's character — the company called the distributor greedy, the distributor called the company deaf, and the retailers called both careless — yet when the same events were rewritten as rules, targets and missing policies, every party also agreed the proposed remedies were reasonable. That is the practical value of analysing conflict structurally: it converts blame, which hardens positions, into design faults, which can be repaired without anyone losing face. A channel is a chain of independent businesses pretending, for the customer's benefit, to be one firm; the pretence survives only where the rules make cooperation more profitable than warfare.

Topic 3: Retailing Strategy — Location, Merchandising and Customer Experience for a Store Format

Introduction

Retail is where marketing promises meet the customer face to face, and where most of them are finally kept or broken. This report studies the retailing strategy of a large supermarket format operated in Pakistan by an internationally present retail group, examining the three decisions that dominate retail success: where the store is located, how merchandise is selected,

arranged and priced inside it, and what total experience the customer carries home. The objectives were to understand the logic of the store's location and catchment, to analyse its merchandising and category management in practice, and to evaluate the customer experience from parking to payment, identifying strengths a student of marketing should recognise and weaknesses the store could correct. Supermarkets are especially instructive because they sell thousands of items on thin margins, so success depends on systems and details rather than on any single product.

The Organisation and Field Setting

The store studied is a hypermarket-format outlet occupying the anchor position in a busy commercial area with a mixture of middle and upper-middle income housing, offices and passing highway traffic. It offers food, fresh produce, bakery and meat, together with clothing, electronics, household goods and seasonal departments, under one roof with trolley-based self-service. The writer visited at three different times — a weekday morning, a weekday evening and a weekend afternoon — because a store is almost a different business at each of these hours, observed shopper flows and queues, photographed display arrangements with permission, noted prices of a basket of twenty common items for later comparison, and interviewed the store's duty manager and six shoppers about why they choose this store and what frustrates them.

Review of Literature

Retail strategy begins with the target market and positioning, expressed through the retail marketing mix: merchandise assortment, pricing, location, store atmosphere and layout, communication and customer service. The literature classifies location decisions at three levels

— the region or city, the trading area from which the store draws customers, and the specific site — and evaluates sites by population, income, competition, accessibility, visibility, parking and cost. Merchandising covers the width and depth of assortment, category management, private labels, display and space allocation, and in-store cues from signage to music and scent that form the store's atmospherics. Customer-experience research adds the journey view: pre-store information, ease of entry and navigation, product availability, staff encounters, checkout speed and after-sales service combine into satisfaction, which drives the only figures that ultimately matter in retail — conversion, basket size and repeat visits.

Data Collection

Primary data came from timed observation (queue lengths at three dayparts, trolley availability, shelf gaps counted in five categories), a twenty-item price basket recorded for comparison with a competing supermarket and a traditional wholesale market, structured walks through every department with a checklist covering signage, lighting, cleanliness, display quality and staff presence, and short interviews with six shoppers and the duty manager. Secondary data included the store's promotional leaflets, its loyalty programme material, published information about the retail group's international format standards, and the writer's own previous shopping experience in the same store, used carefully only to check whether observed problems were one-day accidents or habits.

Data Analysis

On location, the analysis is favourable: the site sits on a natural shopping route, shares traffic with surrounding stores rather than fighting them, offers the parking that car-borne family shopping requires, and draws a trading area wide enough to support its size — the classic

anchor-tenant logic of its international format, correctly transplanted. On merchandising, the store's strengths are fresh departments placed to build a quality image, clear category signage, strong seasonal and festival displays, and a private-label range that undercuts national brands on price while holding acceptable quality, which both builds margin and loyalty. Weaknesses found were shelf gaps in fast-moving items at weekend peak, an over-wide slow-moving non-food range occupying space that fresh and value lines could use better, and price-basket results showing the store cheapest on promoted items but not on everyday staples, the items by which families actually judge a store. On experience, shoppers praised cleanliness, variety and one-roof convenience and consistently criticised the same two points: checkout queues at peak hours and difficulty finding staff on the floor for help. In retail, such repetition across interviews is itself a finding.

Table 1: Store evaluation summary from the field visits (illustrative)

Dimension	Strength observed	Weakness observed	Priority action
Location	Anchor site, parking, wide catchment	Heavy congestion at peak entry	Traffic and entry management at weekends
Merchandising	Fresh image, private label, seasonal theatre	Weekend shelf gaps; slow non-food space	Peak-time replenishment; range review
Price image	Strong promotions	Everyday staples not cheapest	Protect price image on known-value items
Experience	Clean, convenient, one-roof	Checkout queues; scarce floor staff	Flexible tills and staff rostering by daypart

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that this format's strategy is sound in its large decisions and vulnerable in its hourly ones. The recommendations are: (1) roster staff and open tills by measured daypart

demand, and add a fast lane for small baskets, since the queue is the last memory of every visit; (2) introduce twice-daily gap checks on the top-selling lines during weekends with authority for department staff to pull stock forward; (3) defend price image deliberately on the twenty to thirty known-value items families compare, funding it from the slow non-food range released by a range review; (4) convert floor staff from shelf-fillers only into visible helpers at peak hours, because availability of help was the experience gap shoppers named unprompted; and (5) measure experience continuously with a short exit survey and monthly publication of queue and availability figures to department heads. Location wins the first visit and merchandising wins the basket, but experience decides whether there is a next visit at all.

References

Kotler, P. and Keller, K. L. (2016) Marketing Management, 15th edition, Pearson. Levy, M., Weitz, B. A. and Grewal, D. (2019) Retailing Management, 10th edition, McGraw-Hill. Berman, B. and Evans, J. R. (2018) Retail Management: A Strategic Approach, 13th edition, Pearson. Kotler, P. et al. (2021) Marketing Management: An Asian Perspective, Pearson. Field observation, price basket and interviews from this study (see Annexes).

A note on method may help students repeating this study in another format, such as a pharmacy, a clothing chain or an electronics store. The three lenses used here — location, merchandising and experience — travel well, but the evidence must be gathered at the hours when the format is under strain, because retailing quality is a peak-hour property: any store looks competent on a quiet morning. Counting simple things honestly (queues, gaps, trolleys, staff found) produces more useful findings than general impressions, and comparing a fixed basket of prices protects the study from the oldest retail illusion, in which a store famous for

promotions is assumed to be cheap in general. State your visit dates and times in the report; they are part of the data.

Topic 4: Personal Selling Strategy — Sales Process, CRM and Performance Evaluation Plan

Introduction

For expensive, technical or trust-based products, no advertisement can answer a customer's questions, read his hesitation and adjust the offer in real time; a salesperson can. This report studies the personal selling strategy of the field sales operation of an internationally present company selling to business and professional customers, and sets out a complete plan covering the sales process its representatives follow, the customer relationship management (CRM) system that supports them, and the method by which their performance should be evaluated fairly. The objectives were to observe how selling is actually organised day to day, to judge the process against the standard steps taught in marketing, and to design an evaluation plan that rewards not only orders collected but also the behaviours that produce future orders. Personal selling is the most expensive promotional tool per contact, so its management deserves the closest attention of all.

The Organisation and Field Setting

The operation studied sells through a team of field representatives, each responsible for a defined territory of business customers whom they visit on planned routes, present new products and offers to, take orders from, and support after the sale with delivery follow-up and complaint handling. The writer interviewed the regional sales manager, accompanied one representative on a full day of calls covering nine customers of different sizes, and reviewed,

with permission and with customer names removed, the representative's call reports and the team's monthly performance summary. The contrast between the official process described at the office and the lived process on the road — where traffic, absent buyers and competitor activity rewrite the plan hourly — is one of the report's main themes.

Review of Literature

The literature describes personal selling as two-way, face-to-face communication designed to influence a purchase decision, and sets out a standard sales process: prospecting and qualifying, pre-approach research, approach, presentation and demonstration, handling objections, closing, and follow-up. Modern relationship selling modifies each step: the representative acts as a consultant who understands the customer's business, keeps promises and solves problems, because acquiring a new customer costs several times more than retaining an existing one. CRM systems support this by holding each customer's history, purchases, preferences and complaints in one place, planning calls, and giving managers early warning of slipping accounts. Performance evaluation in the literature combines quantitative measures (sales against quota, orders, new accounts, collections) with qualitative ones (product knowledge, customer relations, reporting discipline and territory management), and warns that judging only on sales volume encourages discounting, neglect of small customers and falsified optimism in reports.

Data Collection

Data were gathered by the manager interview, which covered recruitment, training, territory design, targets and current reporting; by direct observation of nine sales calls, timed and noted against the standard process steps; by the representative's own account of how he plans his

week and uses the company's CRM application on his phone; and by examining the monthly summary format the team is judged on. Customers were not interviewed formally, to avoid disturbing commercial relationships, but their spontaneous remarks during calls — about delivery reliability, competitor visits and the representative's helpfulness — were recorded in field notes with the representative's consent. All figures are reported in general terms to respect commercial confidentiality.

Data Analysis

The observed process follows the textbook skeleton but with revealing variations. Prospecting is largely inherited — representatives work an existing customer list, and genuinely new-account hunting happens only when a target demands it — while pre-approach preparation is strong for large customers and almost absent for small ones, although small customers form the majority of calls. Presentations are confident on products and prices but rarely use the customer's own sales figures, which the CRM already holds, to make the business case. Objections centre on price and delivery, and are handled by relationship credit ("trust me, I will sort it out") more than by structured responses. Follow-up is the strongest step, and customers visibly value it. The CRM is used mainly as a reporting obligation — calls logged at day's end from memory — rather than as a planning tool before the day begins, which is the exact inversion of its purpose. Evaluation is almost entirely sales-versus-target, so representatives rationally chase easy volume near month-end, offer unauthorised flexibility to close, and under-serve small and new customers whose value lies in the future.

Table 1: Proposed balanced performance evaluation plan

Dimension	Measure	Suggested weight
Results	Sales vs quota; collections on time	40%
Customer development	New accounts opened and retained; distribution of key lines	20%
Activity quality	Planned calls completed; CRM updated same day; route discipline	20%
Customer health	Complaints resolved; customer feedback; no expired stock in territory	10%
Professional conduct	Reporting accuracy; product knowledge test; teamwork	10%

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that the company's people are better than its system: relationships carry what process and evaluation fail to support. The recommended plan is: (1) formalise the sales process as a one-page territory standard, with pre-call planning from CRM data made the first step of every day; (2) convert the CRM from a reporting burden into a selling tool by pre-loading customer purchase histories, suggested orders and due-collection alerts, and by removing duplicate paper reports so the time saved funds the discipline required; (3) adopt the balanced evaluation in the table above, reviewed monthly in a coaching conversation rather than a fault-finding one, with at least one accompanied call per representative per month; (4) train specifically in business-case presentation and objection handling, the two observed weak steps; and (5) protect relationship selling in incentives by paying a small commission element on retained and grown accounts, not only on new volume. Companies get the selling behaviour they measure and reward; measuring only this month's orders reliably produces only this month's orders.

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The accompanied day also produced one finding about honesty in selling that no target sheet can capture. The representative's most trusted customers were those to whom he had once said no — refusing an order the customer did not need, or warning against a slow line before a festival — and that stored honesty returned as orders competitors could not bid away. An evaluation plan should therefore protect, and where possible notice, such behaviour, because a system that counts only this month's volume taxes exactly the conduct that produces next year's. Sales managers shape ethics less by speeches than by what they inspect and praise on the monthly review; this report's balanced plan is designed so that trust-building conduct is inspected, praised and, through the customer-health measures, paid for.

Topic 5: Advertising Campaign Plan — Objectives, Message, Media Plan and Evaluation Metrics

Introduction

Advertising fails most often not because the advertisement is poor but because the plan behind it is missing: nobody agreed what the campaign must achieve, for whom, with what single message, through which media, and how success will be known. This report prepares a complete advertising campaign plan for a consumer product of an internationally present

company operating in Pakistan — a value-tier smartphone data and handset-related offer environment is used as the working context through a telecom brand example, because telecom advertising is heavy, measurable and familiar to every student. The objectives of the report were to set advertising objectives in measurable terms, to develop the message strategy and creative idea, to construct a media plan balancing reach, frequency and budget across television, digital and outdoor media, and to define evaluation metrics before the campaign runs, so that judgement afterwards rests on evidence rather than opinion.

The Organisation and Field Setting

The setting is a national telecom brand competing for young, price-conscious mobile internet users in a market where most customers hold more than one SIM and switch promotional loyalty easily. The writer visited the brand's regional sales and trade-marketing office, reviewed current outdoor sites and retail branding in two localities, examined the brand's recent social media campaigns and those of its two main rivals, and interviewed a trade-marketing officer about how campaigns land in the market — the posters, retailer boards and point-of-sale material through which national advertising becomes local presence. Published industry patterns for media consumption in Pakistan, where television still delivers mass reach, mobile video and social platforms dominate youth attention, and outdoor media owns the roads and markets, inform the media weights proposed.

Review of Literature

The standard planning sequence in the literature is the five Ms: mission (objectives), money (budget), message, media and measurement. Objectives are set by the product's life-cycle stage and communication task: informing and building awareness for new offers, persuading and

building preference in competitive stages, and reminding in maturity; the DAGMAR tradition insists objectives be stated as measurable audience effects within a time period. Message strategy selects the appeal — rational, emotional or moral — and the creative idea that dramatises the core benefit in a form the audience remembers and attributes to the right brand. Media planning trades reach against frequency within a budget, chooses a scheduling pattern (continuous, flighted or pulsed), and allocates across media by audience habits and cost per thousand. Evaluation combines pre-testing of the creative, tracking of awareness and message recall during the campaign, and post-campaign measurement of the behavioural objective, increasingly through digital analytics that report exposure, engagement and conversion in near real time.

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Data Collection

Data for the plan came from the field visit described above, an audit of the three rival brands' visible advertising in the study localities (outdoor sites, retailer branding and current promotions), a review of the brands' public social media pages and recent video advertisements, and thirty short street interviews with young mobile users about which recent advertisements they remembered, which offers they understood and which they ignored. The recall interviews confirmed the planning problem vividly: respondents remembered jingles and celebrities across brands but frequently attributed offers to the wrong company and could rarely state the actual price or benefit of the advertisement they had enjoyed. Entertainment without brand linkage, the plan concludes, is expenditure dressed as communication.

Data Analysis

The plan built from this analysis is as follows. Mission: within ten weeks, raise unaided awareness of the brand's monthly hybrid bundle among mobile users aged 18 to 30 in the target cities from the current low base (to be fixed by the pre-campaign survey) by fifteen percentage points, and increase bundle activations through retail and the brand app by a stated percentage over the comparable previous period. Money: the budget is set by the objective-and-task method — costing the media weight and production needed for the stated effect — after an affordability check, rather than by tradition or by matching a rival's visible noise. Message: the single-minded proposition is reliable monthly internet without the fear of the balance finishing mid-month, expressed rationally through a clear price-per-GB comparison and emotionally through the relief of staying connected with family, class and work; every execution must carry the brand's colours, audio signature and price in the first seconds, correcting the linkage failure found in the field. Media: a pulsed plan over ten weeks, with television for fast mass reach in the launch fortnight, mobile video and social platforms carrying the frequency among the youth target, outdoor concentrated on campuses, markets and transport routes, and retail branding treated as media in its own right because the final decision happens in the shop.

Table 1: Campaign evaluation metrics fixed before launch

Stage	Metric	Source	Target logic
Exposure	Reach and frequency in target audience	Media monitoring / platform data	Planned weight actually delivered
Communication	Unaided awareness; correct brand attribution of message	Pre/post tracking survey	Stated percentage-point rise
Engagement	Video completion,	Digital analytics	Improvement over

	shares, app visits		previous campaign
Behaviour	Bundle activations; retailer-reported sales	Company systems / trade reports	Stated rise vs comparable period
Efficiency	Cost per awareness point and per activation	Budget vs results	Better than previous campaign benchmark

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that a campaign plan is a chain in which every link must hold: measurable objectives discipline the budget, the budget buys a media weight capable of the effect, one clear message with unmistakable branding gives the media something worth carrying, and metrics fixed in advance protect the evaluation from wishful thinking. The recommendations are: (1) never release creative that fails a simple linkage test — show it once to fresh viewers and ask whose offer it was and what it cost; (2) treat retail visibility as part of the media plan with its own budget line and audit, not as an afterthought left to distributors; (3) run the tracking survey in short waves during the campaign so weak media or message elements can be corrected while money remains; (4) report results against the table above to management in one page, including what failed; and (5) archive the plan, creative and results together, because the most expensive advertising mistake is repeating last year's error with this year's budget. Advertising managed this way becomes an investment with an expected return, not a festival expense.

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Promotion and Marketing Communications, 8th edition, Pearson. Kotler, P. et al. (2021) Marketing Management: An Asian Perspective, Pearson. Field audit and interviews from this study (see Annexes).

A final planning note concerns the small print of media buying that students often omit. Every medium in the plan must be specified with the unit in which it is bought and checked — television spots by rating points in the target audience, digital by verified impressions and completion rates, outdoor by audited sites with photographs after installation, and retail branding by a signed outlet list with spot checks. Campaigns leak money at exactly these joints between plan and delivery, and the trade-marketing audit habit learned during this study — walking the market with the plan in hand — is the cheapest media insurance available. The metrics table then measures a campaign that actually ran as planned, which is the only kind worth evaluating.

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Topic 6: Pricing Under Uncertainty — Setting Prices During Inflation and Competition Changes

Introduction

Pricing is difficult in calm times and unforgiving in turbulent ones. When input costs rise month after month, the currency moves, energy tariffs change and competitors react unpredictably, a price list can be obsolete before it reaches the shops. This report studies how a trading and retail business linked to an internationally present home-appliances brand sets prices under exactly such uncertainty in Pakistan: imported and locally assembled appliances whose costs follow the exchange rate, steel and component prices, freight and duties, sold through dealers who face their own nervous customers. The objectives were to document the pricing methods

actually in use, to examine how the business responds when costs jump or a competitor cuts prices, and to develop a practical framework for pricing under uncertainty that protects margin without destroying volume, dealer trust or the brand's price image.

The Organisation and Field Setting

The field setting was the sales office and two dealer outlets of the appliance business in a commercial market of a large city. The writer interviewed the sales manager and both dealers, examined (with commercially sensitive figures discussed in ranges rather than exact numbers) recent price lists, revision circulars and instalment terms, and observed customer negotiations in the shops, where almost every conversation began with the same two questions: what is the price today, and will it rise again? The market context is important: appliances are postponable, high-ticket purchases, customers collect quotations from several shops and online listings before deciding, and a large share of sales is completed through instalments arranged with finance partners, so the monthly figure often matters more to the buyer than the total.

Review of Literature

The pricing literature sets value to the customer as the ceiling and costs as the floor, with competition fixing a reference range between them, and distinguishes cost-based, value-based and competition-based methods, of which cost-plus is the most common and the most dangerous alone, because it ignores demand. Under uncertainty, the literature adds several refinements. Price-change strategy research shows customers judge increases by fairness: rises visibly caused by costs are accepted more readily than rises that look like opportunism, and shrinkflation — reducing quantity or specification at the same price — is noticed eventually and resented. Inflation pricing options include passing costs through fully, partially or with delay;

unbundling services previously included; promoting smaller or simpler models that hold an affordable ticket; and shifting the conversation to cost per month or cost of ownership. Game-theoretic reasoning warns that reactions matter: a cut matched by all rivals leaves everyone poorer at the same shares, so signalling, differentiation and non-price responses often beat reflexive matching.

Data Collection

Primary data came from the three interviews, two recent cycles of price-list revisions with their covering circulars, dealers' accounts of which models stopped selling after each increase, and observation of live customer negotiations, including one sale completed and two postponed explicitly because the customers expected either a further rise (which hurried the buyer) or a promotional discount (which delayed him). Secondary data included the brand's and rivals' public online prices on the days of the visit, published exchange-rate and tariff news affecting the category, and the finance partners' instalment terms displayed in the shops. Collecting prices on the same day from physical and online sellers proved essential, because the "market price" customers quote in negotiation is increasingly the lowest price visible on a phone screen.

Data Analysis

The analysis finds a business pricing mainly by cost-plus with competitor watching, and revising prices in jumps after cost shocks rather than gradually, because each revision carries administrative and dealer-relations cost. Three problems stand out. First, jump revisions create a rush before the increase and a dead market after it, training customers to time purchases around circulars instead of needs. Second, dealers protect themselves by quoting cautiously and discounting privately, so the printed price loses meaning and the brand's price image varies

street by street. Third, responses to competitor cuts are decided case by case in the office, sometimes matched within hours and sometimes ignored for weeks, with no rule connecting the response to whether the rival's cut is permanent, stock-clearing or a temporary promotion. Against these weaknesses, the business has two real strengths: instalment selling, which converts an unaffordable total into a manageable monthly figure, and a service and warranty reputation that lets it hold a small premium when it explains it. The table summarises a decision framework built from these findings.

Table 1: Pricing decision framework under uncertainty

Situation	Risk of wrong move	Recommended response
Input cost rises (currency, freight, duty)	Margin collapse if absorbed; volume loss if over-passed	Graduated pass-through with advance dealer notice; protect entry models
Rival launches temporary promotion	Permanent price cut answering a temporary offer	Match with time-bound offer or bonus, not list price
Rival makes permanent price cut	Share loss if ignored	Respond on contested models; differentiate the rest on service/warranty
Demand slumps with high prices	Dead stock, dealer distress	Promote smaller models; instalment framing; bundle value instead of cutting
Costs fall	Customers feel cheated if prices stay	Return part visibly as promotion; rebuild trust and volume

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that pricing under uncertainty is less a calculation than a discipline of preparation. The recommendations are: (1) maintain a live cost watch — exchange rate, freight, duty and key materials on one page, reviewed weekly — so revisions are anticipated, not improvised; (2) prefer smaller, more frequent, honestly explained adjustments to rare large

jumps, and give dealers written notice with a short protection window for their existing stock, since dealer trust is the channel through which every price must pass; (3) fix response rules for competitor moves in advance, distinguishing temporary promotions from permanent cuts, as in the framework table; (4) defend affordability through structure, not only through price: entry models held at psychological price points, instalment framing and value bundles; and (5) never use uncertainty as cover for opportunistic increases unrelated to costs, because customers remember unfair prices long after they forget fair ones. In an inflationary market, the winning price is not the lowest or the highest; it is the one customers believe.

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One more discipline separates the firms that survive inflation from those it quietly bankrupts: separating the pricing decision from the pricing announcement. The decision belongs to cost and market analysis, taken early and on evidence; the announcement belongs to dealer and customer communication, timed, explained and accompanied by the protections described above. In the businesses observed, the same increase that provoked anger when it arrived unannounced on a delivery invoice was accepted calmly when it came a week earlier with reasons, a stock-protection window and a suggested selling story for the customer. Uncertainty

cannot be removed from this market, but surprise — the most corrosive part of uncertainty — is almost entirely within the firm's own control.

Topic 7: Relationship Marketing — Loyalty Programme Design and Customer Retention Strategy

Introduction

Winning a customer once is an expense; keeping him for years is an asset. Relationship marketing reverses the traditional focus on single transactions and asks how a firm can earn the continuing trust, repeat purchase and recommendation of customers whose lifetime value far exceeds any one sale. This report studies relationship marketing in the setting of an internationally present commercial bank's retail operation in Pakistan, where customers hold accounts for decades yet also move money, cards and loans between competing banks with little ceremony, and designs a loyalty programme and retention strategy suited to that reality. The objectives were to examine how the bank currently builds and loses relationships, to identify the moments at which customers quietly drift away, and to design a practical programme — segments, benefits, communication and measurement — that rewards loyalty honestly and gives dissatisfied customers a reason and a route to stay.

The Organisation and Field Setting

The field setting was a busy urban branch and the digital channels of the bank. With the branch manager's permission, the writer observed the customer service area across two visits, reviewed the bank's public material on its cards, accounts and existing reward arrangements, interviewed the branch manager and a relationship officer, and spoke with seven customers in the branch about what keeps them with a bank and what has made them close accounts

elsewhere. Banking is a revealing relationship setting because the product is largely invisible, switching is easy to start and hard to complete, and trust — built over hundreds of small, correct transactions and tested by a single badly handled failure — is the true currency. Digital banking has added a new relationship arena: for younger customers, the app is now the branch.

Review of Literature

Relationship marketing, a term popularised by Berry and developed by Grönroos, Morgan and Hunt and others, holds that marketing should establish, maintain and enhance relationships with customers at a profit, through mutual exchange and fulfilment of promises; the commitment-trust theory identifies trust and commitment as the central mediators of successful relationships. The retention economics popularised by Reichheld show why this matters: acquiring a new customer costs several times more than retaining one, small improvements in retention raise profits disproportionately because retained customers buy more, cost less to serve and bring referrals, and most defectors leave over service failures and indifference rather than price. Loyalty programmes are classified into points and tier systems, cashback and partner coalitions, and recognition-based schemes; the literature warns that a programme buying repeat purchase with discounts is not loyalty but renting, and that true loyalty combines behaviour (repeat purchase), attitude (preference and recommendation) and a switching cost the customer values rather than resents.

Data Collection

Primary data came from the interviews and branch observation described above, a review of the complaint and account-closure process as explained by staff, and the seven customer conversations, which were structured around three questions: what does this bank do that you

value, what has annoyed you here or elsewhere, and what would make you move your main account? Secondary data included the bank's published product and rewards pages, rival banks' public loyalty and card offers, and standard textbook and article frameworks listed in the references. No individual customer data were accessed or requested; the study concerns systems and experiences, not persons, and all customer remarks are reported without any identifying detail.

Data Analysis

The analysis finds a bank strong in transactional reliability and weak in relational memory. Customers praised the app, the ATM network and the correctness of routine transactions, but repeatedly described feeling unknown: offers arrived that ignored their existing products, staff who knew them changed without handover, complaints required repetition to several people, and the customers the bank could least afford to lose — salaried professionals and small business owners concentrating their financial lives in one place — received exactly the same treatment as a dormant account. The defection stories collected almost never began with price; they began with a failure — a disputed charge, a frozen transaction abroad, a loan delay — followed by slow, scripted recovery. The existing rewards arrangements reward card spending in points whose value customers could not explain, a classic design error: a benefit the customer cannot value does not create gratitude. The opportunity is therefore less to invent loyalty from nothing than to make the bank's existing reliability personal, memorable and recognised, and to catch failures before they become closures.

Table 1: Proposed loyalty and retention design

Element	Design proposed	Reason from field findings
Segments and tiers	Three tiers by relationship depth (accounts + balances + products held)	Rewards the whole relationship, not one product
Core benefits	Fee waivers, priority service queue and named contact at upper tiers	Customers valued recognition and ease over points
Points/cashback	Simple, stated value; monthly statement showing benefit earned	Unexplained points created no gratitude
Early-warning system	Flag salary credit stopped, balance decline, complaint open 7+ days	Defections begin silently, long before closure
Service recovery	One empowered officer owns a complaint to closure; follow-up call	Failures plus slow recovery caused the defections told
Measurement	Retention rate by tier, share of wallet, referrals, complaint closure time	What is not measured will not be managed

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Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that retention is won in operations before it is decorated by programmes: no points scheme survives a bank, shop or airline that repeatedly fails and shrugs. The recommendations are: (1) launch the tiered programme above with benefits stated in plain rupees and minutes saved, communicated in one page a customer can actually read; (2) build the early-warning flags into routine branch reporting, with a personal call — not a promotional message — as the required response; (3) reform complaint ownership so one named officer carries each case to closure and telephones the outcome; (4) brief front-line staff that recognition is the cheapest loyalty currency: use the customer's name, know his products, and hand him over personally when staff change; and (5) judge the programme on retention, share of wallet and referrals by tier after twelve months, not on enrolment numbers in the first

quarter. Relationship marketing, honestly practised, is simply the decision to treat the customer's second purchase as more important than his first.

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It should also be recorded that relationship marketing in this setting is not a department's hobby but the branch's daily conduct: the queue managed fairly, the form explained patiently to a first-time account holder, the pensioner treated with the same respect as the large depositor. The customers interviewed noticed and remembered such moments far longer than any campaign, and two of them had chosen this branch, against a nearer alternative, for exactly that reason. A loyalty programme can organise and reward this goodwill, and the early-warning and recovery systems proposed can protect it, but the goodwill itself is manufactured at the counter and on the phone, one unhurried, competent, courteous transaction at a time. That is why the programme's final measure is not points issued but customers retained.

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Topic 8: Global Marketing Strategy Decisions for a Local Brand Entering Foreign Markets

Introduction

Every strong local brand eventually faces the same exciting and dangerous question: can what succeeded at home succeed abroad? This report studies the global marketing strategy decisions of a Pakistani food brand that has carried local taste into foreign markets — the pattern of a leading recipe-mix and food exporter is used as the model, since Pakistani food brands serving diaspora and mainstream consumers across the Gulf, the United Kingdom, North America and beyond offer the clearest home-grown example of international marketing in action. The objectives were to examine why and how such a brand enters foreign markets, which elements of its marketing it standardises and which it adapts, how it chooses entry modes and distribution partners, and what risks it must manage — and to convert the findings into a decision framework any local brand can apply before spending its first rupee abroad.

The Organisation and Field Setting

The field study combined a visit to the brand's head-office-linked sales and export facilitation environment in Karachi's commercial market — including interviews with an export-sales executive arranged through a distributor contact — with shelf-level observation of the brand and its rivals in local export-oriented stores, and a desk review of the brand's international packaging, country websites and marketplace listings. The brand's home strength rests on an authentic taste promise, extremely wide local distribution and generations of household trust. Abroad, it meets three different customers wearing one face: the Pakistani and South Asian diaspora seeking the exact taste of home, second-generation buyers balancing heritage with

local habits, and mainstream foreign consumers meeting the cuisine, often for the first time, through restaurants and food media. Each group needs the brand differently, which is precisely why global marketing is a set of decisions and not a photocopy of the home plan.

Review of Literature

The global marketing literature organises the decisions in a clear order. First, whether to go abroad at all, weighing reactive motives (saturated home demand, competitor moves, customer requests) against proactive ones (growth, scale economies, spreading risk). Second, which markets to enter, screened by market size and growth, income and taste similarity, trade and labelling rules, competition and political and currency risk; psychic distance argues for entering familiar markets first and learning outward. Third, how to enter: indirect and direct exporting, licensing, joint ventures, contract manufacturing and wholly owned operations trade rising control and profit against rising investment and risk. Fourth, the marketing programme itself: the standardisation-versus-adaptation debate, in which Levitt's globalisation argument favours standardised products and brands for scale and consistency, while practice settles most brands into a pattern of a standardised core — brand, positioning, quality promise — with adapted execution in flavour variants, pack sizes, language, price points, channels and promotion. Finally, organising and controlling international operations, including the risks the course book lists for this unit: nationalisation and political change, currency fluctuations, and tariffs, quotas and embargoes.

Data Collection

Primary data came from the export-executive interview, which covered market selection history, distributor appointment and control, packaging and labelling changes by region and the

handling of price differences across markets; from observation of export packs in local stores, comparing ingredients, languages, net weights, halal and regulatory markings and preparation instructions with the domestic packs of the same products; and from conversations with two retailers serving export and traveller demand. Secondary data included the brand's country-specific web presence and online marketplace listings in three regions, published trade reporting on Pakistani food exports, and the destination-market rules visible on the packs themselves, which are an underused but honest source: every line on an export label exists because some market required or rewarded it.

Data Analysis

The analysis confirms the textbook pattern with local colour. Market entry followed the diaspora: the Gulf and the United Kingdom first, where population, taste familiarity and established South Asian retail made distribution achievable, then North America and wider Europe, and only later deliberate approaches to mainstream shelves — a psychic-distance ladder climbed in the right order. The entry mode is overwhelmingly exporting through appointed country distributors, keeping investment light and local knowledge rented rather than owned, with the company controlling brand, packaging and quality centrally. Standardisation protects the core: the master brand, its visual identity and its taste promise do not change, because for the diaspora buyer any change reads as betrayal. Adaptation does the selling: multilingual labels and market-specific regulatory compliance, pack sizes matched to smaller diaspora households and to trial buyers, spice and variant extensions for local palates, price points set against local rivals rather than converted from home prices, and promotion rooted in Ramadan and festival calendars, community media and in-store tasting where the

cuisine must introduce itself. The risks named in the course book are all visible in practice — currency swings absorbed or passed through distributor agreements, tariff and labelling changes monitored market by market, and reputation risk if grey-market or expired stock appears under the brand in a distant store.

Table 1: Standardise or adapt? Decisions observed

Marketing element	Standardised	Adapted	Reason
Brand and quality promise	Yes — identical core	-	Trust and diaspora recognition travel with it
Product range and variants	Core recipes	Regional variants and heat levels	Palates and trial behaviour differ
Packaging and labelling	Identity and design system	Languages, weights, compliance marks	Law and shelf practice differ by market
Price	Premium-to-value positioning	Price points set per market	Rivals and incomes differ; conversion misleads
Channels and promotion	Distributor-led model	Community media, festivals, tastings	Media and occasions are local by definition

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Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that successful global marketing by a local brand is disciplined borrowing of the world, not abandonment of home: enter markets in an order you can serve, rent local knowledge through distributors before buying it, standardise what carries trust and adapt everything that touches law, language, palate and purse. For a local brand preparing its first entry, the recommendations are: (1) screen candidate markets on diaspora size, category growth, labelling and halal-certification rules, landed-cost competitiveness and distributor quality, and enter one market well rather than five thinly; (2) write the standardisation list before departure — brand, promise, quality specification and design system — and defend it in

every negotiation; (3) budget adaptation honestly, including label redesign, certification, smaller launch packs and community promotion, since underfunded adaptation is the most common cause of quiet foreign failure; (4) protect the brand abroad with expiry, storage and grey-market clauses in distributor agreements and periodic market audits; and (5) review each market annually against contribution after all adaptation and freight costs, expanding, fixing or exiting on evidence. The world rewards local brands that arrive as students of each market and ambassadors of their own.

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Students adapting this report to another industry — textiles, sports goods, software services or surgical instruments, all fields in which Pakistani firms sell abroad — should keep the decision order intact even though every detail changes: the motives and market screen come first, the entry mode second, and the standardisation list must be written before the first distributor negotiation, because it is far easier to defend a core that was defined in the office than one improvised in a foreign meeting. They should also interview, if possible, one buyer or retailer in the destination market, even by video call through the exporter; a single hour of the customer's voice corrects more assumptions than a month of desk research conducted entirely from home.

Topic 9: Marketing Implementation — Aligning Structure, People and Processes for Execution

Introduction

Marketing history is full of strategies that were praised in the boardroom and never met a customer. The difference between a plan and a result is implementation: the daily alignment of structure, people, skills, incentives and processes through which an organisation does what it decided. This report studies marketing implementation in the setting of a multi-branch retail and services business linked to an international group, during the rollout of a new customer-growth programme across its branches, and examines why the same programme succeeded in some branches and stalled in others. The objectives were to map the structures and processes through which the programme had to travel, to identify where alignment broke down, and to prepare an implementation plan — responsibilities, sequencing, training, incentives, controls and feedback — that a manager could apply to any marketing programme, from a product launch to a service-quality drive.

The Organisation and Field Setting

The programme studied aimed to grow active customers through a combination of local promotion, a simplified account or membership offer, staff referral habits and follow-up of dormant customers. Head office designed the offer, material and targets; regional managers cascaded them; branch teams were to execute. The writer visited two branches of contrasting performance, interviewed the regional marketing coordinator and both branch managers, spoke with front-line staff who were expected to change their daily behaviour, and reviewed the programme circulars, target sheets and weekly progress reports through which the rollout

was managed. Implementation research benefits from this contrast method: when the plan, the market type and the period are the same, the remaining differences — leadership, clarity, training, incentives and follow-through — stand out sharply, and they did.

Review of Literature

Implementation literature, notably Bonoma's classic work and the marketing-organisation chapters of Kotler and Keller, separates strategy (doing the right things) from implementation (doing things right), and finds four recurring failure sources: unclear or conflicting objectives between levels, structures that give responsibility without authority or resources, people without the skills, information or motivation the plan assumes, and processes — budgeting, reporting, approval and supply — that quietly contradict the stated priority. Effective implementation therefore requires translating strategy into specific programmes with owners, budgets and dates; an organisation structure that matches the strategy; shared values and staff who understand not only what to do but why; systems for tracking and feedback; and leadership that follows up personally and visibly. The literature also stresses internal marketing: employees are the first market for any programme, and a firm that cannot sell the plan to its own staff will not sell its fruits to customers. Control closes the loop, comparing milestones with plan while correction is still cheap.

Data Collection

Primary data came from the interviews described above, observation of both branches during programme hours (noting display of materials, staff conversations with customers and the handling of the new offer), and a short anonymous staff questionnaire in the two branches covering understanding of the programme, training received, perceived obstacles and

suggestions. Secondary data were the programme documents themselves: the launch circular, branch target sheets, the weekly reporting format, training attendance records and the two branches' results across the programme's first eight weeks. Reading the documents beside the interviews proved essential, because the circular said one thing clearly, the target sheet rewarded something slightly different, and the weekly report measured a third thing — a small documentary triangle in which the programme's energy quietly leaked away in the weaker branch.

Data Analysis

The successful branch displayed alignment in the literal sense. Its manager could state the programme's purpose in one sentence and had translated the branch target into named weekly responsibilities; staff had practised the customer conversation in a short role-play before launch; the branch kept a visible daily tally, celebrated the first successes publicly and raised obstacles to the region the same day, receiving answers while the obstacle was still small. Its incentive, though modest, was team-based and paid on the same measures the programme preached. The stalling branch inverted almost every element: the programme arrived as one circular among many, targets were posted but never divided, no rehearsal took place because "staff already know how to talk", the tally was reconstructed for the weekly report rather than kept daily, obstacles (a late supply of forms and a system problem) waited a fortnight for answers, and the only individual incentive visible rewarded an unrelated older product, so rational staff sold that instead. The lesson is not that one branch had better people; it is that one branch was given clarity, practice, feedback and consistent reward, and the other was given instructions.

Table 1: Implementation alignment plan (template from the case)

Alignment area	Question to answer before launch	Case lesson
Structure	Who owns each result, with what authority?	Name owners; responsibility without authority stalls
People and skills	What new behaviour is required? Has it been practised?	A 30-minute rehearsal beat a 10-page circular
Incentives	Do rewards pay for the new behaviour or the old one?	Conflicting incentive silently redirected effort
Processes and resources	Are forms, systems, stock and approvals ready on day one?	Small supply delays became a fortnight of drift
Communication	Can every employee state the purpose in one sentence?	Understanding, not circulation, is the test
Control and feedback	What is reviewed, how often, and who answers obstacles?	Same-day answers kept the strong branch moving

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Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that implementation is a management craft in its own right, and that most "strategy failures" reported in companies are alignment failures wearing strategy's clothes. The recommendations, framed as a pre-launch checklist for any marketing programme, are: (1) translate the strategy into a one-page implementation map — objectives, owners, budgets, dates and the exact new behaviours required at each level — and test understanding by asking, not by counting circulars sent; (2) align incentives before launch, removing or pausing rewards that pay for the old behaviour; (3) rehearse the human moments of the programme — the counter conversation, the phone call, the complaint — because programmes live or die in conversations; (4) ready the processes and materials before the announcement, and run a small pilot branch first to expose the obstacles cheaply; (5) review early results weekly in the first month with same-day obstacle removal, visible recognition of early wins and honest publication

of both branches' figures; and (6) after the programme, record what implementation taught in a short note filed with the plan, so the next launch inherits experience instead of repeating discovery. A strategy is a promise an organisation makes to its market; implementation is how it keeps its word.

References

Kotler, P. and Keller, K. L. (2016) Marketing Management, 15th edition, Pearson. Bonoma, T. V. (1984) "Making Your Marketing Strategy Work", Harvard Business Review. Kotler, P. et al. (2021) Marketing Management: An Asian Perspective, Pearson. Walker, O. C., Boyd, H. W. and Larréché, J.-C. (1999) Marketing Strategy: Planning and Implementation, Irwin/McGraw-Hill. Branch visits, staff questionnaire and programme documents from this study (see Annexes).

One closing reflection from the two branches may be the most transferable finding of the study. Staff in both branches described themselves as equally committed and equally hardworking, and observation supported them; the difference in results was produced almost entirely by what management had aligned around them before the first customer arrived. Implementation, in other words, is respect expressed in advance: respect for staff, shown by clarity, training and working systems; respect for customers, shown by a programme that reaches them as designed; and respect for the strategy itself, shown by leaders who follow up on what they announced. Where that respect is present, ordinary teams execute difficult programmes; where it is absent, excellent teams are wasted on ordinary excuses.

Annexes: Field-Work Tools for Your Own Report

Annex A — Interview Guide (Adapt to Your Topic)

Introduce yourself, state that you are an AIOU student, name your topic, promise confidentiality where needed and ask permission to take notes. Suggested questions: (1) Please describe your organisation's main products, customers and markets. (2) Who are your main competitors, and how do you differ from them? (3) Which marketing activity takes most of your time and budget, and why? (4) [Topic question — for example, for Topic 2: Where does disagreement arise between your company, distributors and retailers? For Topic 6: How do you revise prices when costs change?] (5) Can you give a recent example of a marketing decision that succeeded or failed, and what you learned? (6) What documents, price lists or public material may I consult? (7) What one improvement would you make to marketing here if resources allowed? Close by thanking the respondent, confirming how the material will be used, and noting the date, place and designation of the person interviewed for your report's data-collection section.

Annex B — Observation Checklist

Carry this checklist on every visit and complete it on the spot: products and ranges visible; prices displayed and any promotions running; display and shelf position of your organisation versus rivals; condition of branding and point-of-sale material; customer flow and the questions customers ask; staff behaviour, product knowledge and complaint handling; delivery, stock or service processes you can observe; and anything that surprises you, because surprises are often the most valuable data. Attach dated photographs only where permission was given, and record the source of every figure you quote so that your analysis section can be trusted.

Annex C — Expanding Your Report to 15–20 Pages and Preparing for the Workshop

To reach the prescribed length honestly, expand with substance, not with larger fonts or wider spacing: add a one to two page profile of your organisation, present your interview findings under sub-headings with the tables you collected (prices, ranges, survey counts), include a short comparison with one competitor, and give your analysis a full section in which every table is interpreted in words. Keep one copy for your tutor and one for the workshop, as the assignment instructs. For the workshop presentation, prepare a five-minute summary: your topic and why your roll number assigned it, the organisation you visited, your three most important findings, and your two strongest recommendations — and be ready to show your interview notes and annexes, which are the proof that the research is your own. Finally, write the whole report in your own words. This guide has shown you the standard and the structure; the visit, the evidence and the words must be yours.

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