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Improving the Competitiveness of the Big C Supermarket System in Viet Nam

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Abstract

The study sought to analyze the competitiveness of the Big C supermarket in Viet Nam, using Porter's Five Forces model. The study's objectives were to determine the impact of suppliers' bargaining strength, consumers' bargaining power, the threat of substitutes, the existing degree of competitive rivalry, and the threat of new entrants on competition in the Vietnamese supermarket business using the Big C supermarket system.

The study found that supplier bargaining power had the greatest impact on supermarket competitiveness, followed by consumer bargaining power, threat of substitutes, current level of competitive rivalry, and threat of new entrants. The results reveal that consumers' bargaining power had an impact on grocery pricing and location. The threat of substitutes in the supermarket industry, such as shopping malls, was revealed. It was also discovered that there are no official policies governing supermarket admission.

The study concludes that the current level of competitive rivalry, the threat of substitutes, customer bargaining power, and supplier negotiating power all influence competitiveness inside the Big C supermarket in Vietnam in a positive and significant way.

This study suggests that the connection between supermarkets and suppliers be kept as healthy as possible. The report also suggests that supermarket management's future marketing and growth plans should consider the pricing and location of new branches. Further research into the competitiveness of the Big C supermarket in Vietnam is also recommended by this study.

Keywords*: Competition, BigC, Supermarket system, Improving, Bargain, Substitute*

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I. Introduction

After Vietnam's membership to the WTO, the retail market in Vietnam is fast evolving and has been seen as a potential market in the trend of internationalization and globalization. In recent years, the supermarket industry in Vietnam has seen a slew of new entries, increasing competitiveness. Because most suppliers can sell to more than one retail chain, their power has grown as a result of increased competition. Today's global business climate, as well as moving economic activities between and within regions, places additional competitive demands on businesses, necessitating competitiveness (Tharnurjan & Seneviratne, 2009).

On the other hand, technological advancements have made customer and supplier communication easier to integrate, allowing for more information sharing and improved corporate performance.The emergence of these two has for instance given consumers greater bargaining power by providing them with full information about actual market prices and even supplier costs. This is true for supermarkets in Viet Nam.

One of the most effective ways to ensure competition is to make good use of knowledge, skills, and human resource management. There are different views on competitiveness at all levels: country, enterprise, and product. Indicators assessing labor productivity, technology, total productivity of factors of production, costs for research and development, quality and distinctiveness of products, input costs... Thus, the term "competitiveness" exists in many different views, leading to the way to measure the competitiveness of enterprises has not been defined in a unified and universal way. The competitiveness of a supermarket is a manifestation of the strength and advantages of a supermarket compared to its competitors in best satisfying customer requirements by exploiting and using internal and external strengths and advantages to create products and services that are attractive to consumers to survive and develop, gain increasingly higher profits, and improve their position in comparison.

Bargaining Power of Suppliers: One, if suppliers are concentrated in relation to buyers or if there is a small number of suppliers and a lot of buyers, then the bargaining power of the supplier becomes high. Two, in case the switching costs of the buyer or the cost of the buyer changing from one supplier's goods to another are high, the suppliers power remains high too (Nair, Narasimhan & Bendoly, 2011). Three, if suppliers can effortlessly forward integrate or embark on producing the buyer's goods themselves, the power of the supplier goes high. Four, if the buyer fails to be keen on the price changes or is ignorant of the goods, the power of the supplier goes high. Five, if the supplier's goods are highly differentiated, the power of the supplier goes high. Six, if the buyer fails to represent a huge section of the sales by the supplier, the supplier's power remains high. Finally, if alternative goods are out of stock in the market, the power of the supplier goes high. And evidently, if the opposite happens for the above elements, the power of the supplier is low (Matsa, 2011).

Bargaining Power of Consumers: The power of customers is also stated as the outputs market: the capacity of buyers to put the business under pressure, which also impacts the buyer's sensitivity to changes in prices. Businesses can take actions to decrease the power of the buyer, for instance executing a loyalty program for its customers. The extent to which buyers are able to influence market forces is influenced by the how large their purchases are on the basis of the supplier's income (Solomon & Rabolt, 2004).

Threat of Substitute Products: Threats of substitute goods and services in a sector have a significant impact on the competitive environment for enterprises in that industry, as well as their potential to achieve profitability (Davis et al., 2006). The presence of close replacement goods and services can make a sector extremely competitive, resulting in lesser profit potential for the sector's enterprises. The absence of near substitute goods and services, on the other hand, makes a sector less competitive and increases profit potential for its enterprises. The beverage industry, which has a large number of competitors, is a good illustration of a danger from alternative goods (Chidmi & Lopez, 2007).

In case the substitute good or service is of the same or better quality in relation to the business' goods and services, the threat of substitute goods and services goes up (Elms et al., 2010).

Existing Competitive Rivalry between Suppliers

The degree of rivalry amongst competitors in a sector refers to the degree to which businesses within a sector put pressure on each other and restrict each other's profit prospective. In case the rivalry is severe, competitors are making attempts to steal the returns and the share of the market from each other (Smith, 2004). The high degree of competitive rivalry consequently makes a sector highly competitive and lower profit prospective for the existing businesses. Consequently, low degree of competitive rivalry can make a sector less competitive and raises profit prospective for the existing businesses (Sacconaghi, Garfunkel & Colledge, 2005)

Threat of New Market Entrants

Frequently, new entrants to a business in most cases come along with an aspiration and new capacity to gain market share which exerts more pressure on expenses, prices and the rate of investment needed to compete (Marques et al., 2000; Livingstone & Tigert, 2008).

Entry barriers are the advantages that the incumbents have over new entrants. There are seven chief sources of these entry barriers, which includes the demand-side benefits of scale, customer switching costs, supply-side of scale, capital necessities, uneven success to allocation channels, anticipated retaliation, limiting government policy, and incumbency benefits irrespective of size (Lal & Rao, 2009).

II. Methodlogy

The enterprise's competitiveness is reflected in its business performance, which is measured in terms of profit and market share and stated in terms of the enterprise's business plan. At the same time, the firm's competitiveness is reflected in the competitiveness of the products and services that the enterprise sells. For a company to compete successfully in the industry, it must first address two key questions: what customers want from them, and how can businesses compete against the competition.

To do so, businesses must first focus on analyzing the industry environment based on Michael Porter's five competitive forces model. This analysis helps the company to identify opportunities and threats, so it knows where it should stand to effectively deal with the five competitive forces in the industry. These five pressures are not static factors, but on the contrary, they move continuously along with the development stages of the industry. This will identify the key success factors that are seen as an external source of competitive advantage. The model of Michael E.Porter (1979) was used in this study to analyze the external factors affecting the competitiveness of Big C supermarkets.

Research approach and design

For the research approach, the questionnaires are distributed to collect the data. The questionnaire is the method of getting needed information from a sample of people, and it is helpful in describing the characteristics of a large population. With a big capability, this method ensures more accuracy than any others. Besides, when applying this traditional method, questionnaires are delivered to participants by a variety of ways, such as via email, social networking, or questionnaire paper. Therefore, this is the reason why I chose the survey method to be the primary one for the research.

In this questionnaire, some questions about the personal information of respondents (gender, age, occupation, and monthly income) are included to make it more informative. The rest of the survey questions find out which factors have a relationship with and influence the competitiveness of supermarkets. In the questionnaire, the Likert Scale is developed to measure attitudes by asking people to respond to a series of statements relating to customer loyalty, in terms of the extent to which they agree with each statement. The research uses the Likert Scale with a five-value scale (Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, and Strongly Agree=5).

Data collection

Identify the data: According to Catherine (2007), data may be collected as either primary or Secondary, the research uses both primary and secondary data. The secondary data employed to explore the theoretical issues are based on books, journal articles, and other research projects. Reviewing the secondary literature will enable for a better understanding of the research topic, in general, and the study problem at hand it serves as useful reference for making comparisons to the primary research, later in the research report.

For the purposes of gathering primary data for this research report, questionnaires were prepared, Primary data were collected based on structured questionnaires. A structured questionnaire (fixed response type) is used to collect primary data from the respondent, by focusing on the research objective.

Tools and Data Analysis Techniques

In this research, the data which is gathered from questionnaires and the secondary data are differentiated through tabulation and graphical methods.

Tabulating is a way of classifying and presenting available information or data in a table with rows and columns. This method helps to present and interpret complicated data in a systematic and simple way. The graphical representation is a way of analyzing numerical data which have many characteristics. The popular graphical methods are line graphs, bar charts, histograms, and pie charts.

After the data is available, it is analyzed descriptively through a simple analysis method. Table analysis is used to study, and the collected data is represented in percentage units for easy comparison.

Based on the previous research and after refinement, the variables and measurement scale used for this research

III. Discussion

The respondents were requested to indicate their gender. According to the findings, 55.56% of the respondents were female, while 44.44% were male, indicating that the majority of the respondents were female, implying gender equality in the Vietnamese supermarket industry. The respondents were further asked to indicate the level of competitiveness of their respective supermarkets. From the findings, 37.78% of the respondents indicated that the level of competitiveness of their respective supermarket was good, 25.56% indicated it was excellent, 13.22% indicated it was moderate, 12.22% indicated it was bad while 11.11% indicated it was poor. These findings clearly show that the level of competitiveness in the Big C supermarket systems in Viet Nam is good.

Bargaining Power of Suppliers

According to the results, the respondents agreed with a mean of 4.354 and a standard deviation of 0.128 that it is not difficult for their suppliers to enter their business, sell directly to their customers, and become their direct competitors. In addition, the respondents agreed with a mean of 4.243 and a standard deviation of 0.765 that purchases from their suppliers represent a large portion of the suppliers' business. Also, the respondents agreed with a mean of 4.213 and a standard deviation of 0.454 that they stock various brands from different suppliers hence reducing the power of suppliers. Further, the respondents also agreed with a mean of 4.172 and a standard deviation of 0.536 that their organization is well informed about their supplier's product and market. Additionally, the respondents agreed with a mean of 4.111 and standard deviation of 0.492 that there are a large number of potential input suppliers. The respondents also agreed with a mean of 3.876 and a standard deviation of 0.674 that their organization purchases ordinary products. Finally, the respondents agreed with a mean of 2.324 and a standard deviation of 0.434 that their organization can easily switch to substitute products from other suppliers.

This implies that new entrants can enter into the supermarket industry in Viet Nam and all supermarkets in Viet Nam were relying on products from their suppliers. Suppliers can assert their power by threatening to raise prices or reduce the quality of products/services provided. As a result, suppliers can squeeze the margins of an industry's retailer when that industry's inability to offset the cost increase in production costs.

However, various supermarkets were stocking products from various suppliers so as to reduce their power their organization purchases ordinary products. In addition, it is easy for supermarkets to switch to substitute products from other suppliers.

Table 1: Statements in relation to the bargaining power of suppliers

	Mean	**Standard Deviation**
There are a large number of potential input suppliers	4.111	0.492
Their organization purchases ordinary products	3.876	0.674
Purchases from their suppliers represent a large portion of the suppliers business	4.243	0.765
It is not difficult for their suppliers to enter their business, sell directly to their customers, and become their direct competitor	4.354	0.128
Their organization can easily switch to substitute products from other suppliers?	2.324	0.434
Their organization is well informed about their supplier's product and market	4.172	0.536
We stock various brands from different suppliers hence reducing the power of suppliers	4.213	0.454

Current Level of Competitive Rivalry

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with various aspects of competitive rivalry. According to the findings tabled below, the respondents agreed with a mean of 4.243 and a standard deviation of 0.091 that their products are unique. Further, the respondents agreed with a mean of 4.211 and a standard deviation of 0.249 that the market is growing fast. Also, the respondents agreed with a mean of 4.106 and a standard deviation of 0.362 that there are clear leaders in the market. In addition, the respondents agreed with a mean of 3.511 and a standard deviation of 0.476 that they offer low fixed costs. Additionally, the respondents agreed with a mean of 2.809 and a standard deviation of 0.574 that they store their products to sell at the best times. The respondents also agreed with a mean of 2.456 and a standard deviation of 0.432 that there are a small number of competitors in the industry. Further, the respondents agreed with a mean of 2.004 and a standard deviation of 0.109 that it is easy for competitors to abandon their product. This implies that products from various supermarkets are unique and the supermarket industry is growing fast. In addition, to remain competitive in the market, various supermarkets offer low fixed costs.

Table 2: Statements in Relation to the Level of Competitive Rivalry

	Mean	**Std Deviation**
There is a small number of competitors in the industry	2.456	**0.432**
We offer low fixed costs	3.511	0.476
There are clear leaders in the market	4.106	0.362
The market is growing fast	4.211	0.249
We store their products to sell at the best times	2.809	0.574
Their products are unique	4.243	0.091
It is easy for competitors to abandon their product	2.004	0.109

Bargaining Power of Consumers

The study sought to establish the level at which the bargaining power of consumers was impacting on competitiveness within the supermarket industry in Viet Nam.

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with various aspects of the bargaining power of consumers. From the findings, the respondents agreed with a mean of 4.243 and a standard deviation of 0.095 that customers are well informed about their product and market. Also, the respondents agreed with a mean of 4.004 and a standard deviation of 0.105 that their products are unique. In addition, the respondents agreed with a mean of 3.809 and a standard deviation of 0.074 that their products represent a small expense for their customers. Further, the respondents agreed with a mean of 2.172 and a standard deviation of 0.506 that it is difficult for customers to switch from their products to those of their competitors. Moreover, the respondents agreed with a mean of 2.111 and a standard deviation of 0.476 that they have enough customers such that losing one is not critical to their success. Additionally, the respondents agreed with a mean of 2.094 and a standard deviation of 0.844 that it would be difficult for buyers to integrate backward in the supply chain, purchase from suppliers providing the products we provide, and compete directly with their supermarkets. This implies that customers are well informed about the products in market. The findings also imply that it is not difficult for customers to switch from the products of one supermarket to those of competitors.

Table 3: Statements in Relation to the Bargaining Power of Consumers

	Mean	Std Deviation
We have enough customers such that losing one is not critical to their success	2.111	0.476
Their products represent a small expense for their customers	3.809	0.074
Customers are well informed about their product and market	4.243	0.095
Their products are unique	4.004	0.105
It would be difficult for buyers to integrate backward in the supply chain, purchase from suppliers providing the products we provide, and compete directly with us	2.094	0.844
It is difficult for customers to switch from their products to their competitors' products	2.172	0.506

From a competitive perspective, customers often put pressure on supermarkets to supply their products when they can. They often ask for a discount or improve the quality of the product, provide more services and more free services.

Supermarkets will face difficulties in doing business in the market in the following cases:

- Alternative supplies are readily available.
- High customer switching costs or low customer supplier switching costs.
- Customers have the ability to link with each other

Threat of Substitutes

The respondents were requested to indicate the extent to which they agree with various aspects of threat of substitute. According to the findings shown in the table below, the respondents agreed with a mean of 4.111 and a standard deviation of 0.876 that their products compared favorably to possible substitutes. The respondents also agreed with a mean of 2.809 and a standard deviation of 0.194 that it is costly for their customers to switch to another product. Additionally, the respondents agreed with a mean of 4.021and a standard deviation of 0.645 that their customers are loyal to existing products. This implies that products in the supermarket industry are compared favorably to possible substitutes. However, it is not costly for customers to switch from one supermarket to another.

Table 4: Statements in Relation to the Threat of Substitute

	Mean	Std Deviation
Their products compare favorably to possible substitutes	4.111	0.876
It is costly for their customers to switch to another product	2.809	0.194
Their customers are loyal to existing products	4.021	0.645

Threats of New Entrants

The respondents were requested to indicate the extent to which they agree with the various aspects of threat of entry. According to the findings shown in the table below, the respondents agreed with a mean of 4.326 and a standard deviation of 0.693 that there is a process or procedure critical to their business. Further, the respondents agreed with a mean of 4.174 and a standard deviation of 0.467 that there are high start-up costs for their business. Also, the respondents agreed with a mean of 4.007 and a standard deviation of 0.873 that customers are loyal to their brand. Additionally, the respondents agreed with a mean of 3.064and a standard deviation of 0.747 that assets needed to run their business are unique. Also, the respondents agreed with a mean of 2.853 and a standard deviation of 0.449 that a new competitor will have difficulties acquiring/obtaining needed inputs to compete efficiently. In addition, the respondents further agreed with a mean of 2.739 and a standard deviation of 0.349 that a new competitor will have difficulties in acquiring/obtaining customers. This implies that there are high start-up costs for starting a supermarket and the assets needed to run supermarkets are unique. However, new competitor will not have difficulties acquiring/obtaining needed inputs to compete efficiently or have difficulties in acquiring/obtaining customers.

Table 5: Statements in Relation to the Threat of Entry

	Mean	Std Deviation
Customers are loyal to their brand	4.007	0.873
There are high start-up costs for their business	4.174	0.467
Assets needed to run their business are unique	3.064	0.747
There is a process or procedure critical to their business	4.326	0.693

A new competitor will have difficulties in acquiring/obtaining customers	2.739	0.349
A new competitor will have difficulties acquiring / obtaining needed inputs to compete efficiently	2.853	0.449

Correlation Analysis

A correlation is a number between -1 and +1 that measures the degree of association between two variables. A positive value for the correlation implies a positive. A negative value for the correlation implies a negative or inverse association.

From the correlation analysis, the study found that there is a positive relationship between the bargaining power of suppliers and competition within the Big C supermarkets in Viet Nam, where the correlation coefficient was 0.481 and a p-value of 0.000. The study also found that the bargaining power of consumers and competition within the Big C supermarkets correlate positively with correlation coefficients of 0.306 and p-value of 0.002. The study further established that there is a positive relationship between threat of substitutes and the competition in the Big C supermarkets with a correlation coefficient of 0.228 and p-value of 0.021. Additionally, the study found that there is a positive relationship between the current level of competitive rivalry and the competition in the supermarket industry with a correlation coefficient of 0.198 and a p-value of 0.037. Lastly, the study found that there is a positive relationship between the threat of new entrants and affecting competition within the Big C supermarkets in Viet Nam with a correlation coefficient of 0.432 and a p-value of 0.022.

This infers that among the four variables, the bargaining power of suppliers was influencing the competition between Big C supermarket system and other competitors most, followed by bargaining power of consumers, threat of substitutes, current level of competitive rivalry and threat of new entrants.

Table 6 : Correlation coefficients

		Competition	Bargaining power of suppliers	Bargaining power of consumers	Threat of substitutes	Level of competitive rivalry	Threat of new entrants
Competition	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
Bargaining power suppliers	Pearson Correlation	0.481	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000					
Bargaining power consumers	Pearson Correlation	0.306	0.038	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	0.803				
Threat substitutes	Pearson Correlation	0.228	0.120	0.364	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.021	0.428	0.013			
Current level of competitive rivalry	Pearson Correlation	0.198	-0.252	0.027	-0.084	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.037	0.091	0.859	0.579		
Threat new entrants	Pearson Correlation	0.432	0.223	0.254	-0.023	0.633	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.022	0.032	0.052	0.734	0.083	

Powerful suppliers, including labor suppliers, can squeeze profits out of an industry that cannot to pass on cost increases in its own prices (Bonanno & Lopez, 2009). The study established that most of the supermarkets, their suppliers supply the same products to their competitors while over This shows that the suppliers supplied similar products to the competition implying that all the supermarkets in Viet Nam were getting products from the same suppliers and hence the products were the same (Marques et al., 2000). This indicates that suppliers are highly concentrated in relation to buyers or there are a small number of suppliers and a lot of buyers, hence the bargaining power of the supplier becomes high. Powerful suppliers tend to capture more value for themselves by engaging in shifting of costs to other industry participants, limiting services or quality or charging higher prices. Suppliers with high bargaining power, including labor suppliers, can effectively squeeze profits out of an industry that does not have the capacity to pass on cost increases in its own prices.

Further, it was established that the suppliers supplied the same products to the competition. In relation to statements in relation to the bargaining power of suppliers, the study established that it is not difficult for their suppliers to enter their business. In addition, the study established that purchases from the suppliers represent a large portion of the suppliers business and that the supermarkets stock various brands from different suppliers hence reducing the power of suppliers. If a specific industry accounts for a large part of supplier group's profit or volume, however, suppliers will be forced to protect the industry by offering reasonable pricing and help in activities like lobbying and R&D (Matsa, 2011).

About addition, the survey found that supermarkets are well-versed in the supplier's goods and market. In addition, the analysis discovered a huge number of possible input suppliers. The connection between supermarkets and suppliers, according to West (2009), has deteriorated in recent years. Under the guise of doing what is best for their clients, supermarkets have taken advantage of their suppliers. They exert influence over the consumer's purchasing power and independence by influencing suppliers.

Current level of competitive rivalry

The study also established that there were many competitors in the supermarket industry. Lal and Rao (2009) state that opposition amongst competitors takes various common forms that include price discounting, innovative product introductions, advertisements, and general service improvements.

The number of competitors in the Viet Nam supermarket industry is high indicating that the rivalry will be highly intense in the market even in the coming years. In case competitors are tactically diverse in that they position themselves in a different way from the rest of the competitors, the rivalry of the sector will be intense. Further, the study found that most supermarkets offer low fixed costs which indicates that the degree of competitive rivalry will as well be minimal. The study indicates that products from various supermarkets are unique, and the supermarket industry is growing fast. Since the losses and costs that come in if a business ceases operations are low, there will be a high degree of rivalry amongst industry businesses.

Bargaining power of consumers

In relation to agreement with statements in relation to the bargaining power of consumers, the study found out that customers are well informed about their product and market and that the supermarkets' products are unique. The study found supermarkets' products represent a small expense for their customers. Further, the study established that it would be difficult for buyers to integrate backward in the supply chain, purchase from suppliers providing the products they provide, and compete directly with their supermarkets.

The result shows that customers are well informed about their product and market. This implies that when the customers have full knowledge about the cost structure of the supplier or his competitive situation, he becomes powerful since this knowledge to pressurize the supplier. The study further revealed that most supermarket products are unique. This implies that when the consumer's goods or services are not greatly influenced by the quality of the supplier's goods, they would only go ahead a buy on the basis of the costs. In addition, the study found that products represent a small expense for their customers. In such a case the customers will put pressure on the prices of suppliers to lower them thereby intending to raise their margins (Davis et al., 2006).

The results shows that it is difficult for customers to switch from their products to those of their competitors. This implies that the customers can consequently without difficulty switch to a substitute supplier.

Threat of substitutes

The study established that there were threats of substitute in the supermarket industry. Most threats were emanating from shopping malls, chain stores and specialized international stores. This implies that there were threats of substitute in the supermarket industry hence supermarkets must be strategic to be in a position to overcome the threats (Solomon & Rabolt, 2004). In regard of statements in relation to the threat of substitute, the study found out that the supermarkets' products compared favorably to possible substitutes and that it is costly for their customers to switch to another product with the respondents agreeing to a great extent.

The study established most supermarkets products compared favorably to possible substitutes. Since the quality of the substitute product compared favorably to the supermarket product the threat of substitute goods and services to the supermarket products was low. The availability of a substitute goods and services threat influences the profitability of a sector because buyers can decide to pay for the substitute commodity or service as an alternative to the business' commodity or service. The presence of close substitute goods and services can turn a sector highly competitive and lower profit potential for the businesses in the sector. Alternatively, the absence of close substitute goods and services turns a sector less competitive and raises profit potential for the businesses in the sector.

Additionally, the study established that most customers are loyal to existing products. Loyalty with the customers for the supermarkets indicates that despite the presence of substitute products to supermarkets products the threat of the substitute products is insignificant to the products. These findings clearly show that products in the supermarket industry compared favorably to possible substitutes. However, it is not costly for customers to switch from one supermarket to another.

Threat of new entrants

In relation to new entrants in the industry, the study found that there are new entrants into the industry in the last two years. It also established that the new entrants in the last two years were Kassmart and Cleanshelf. According to Marques et al. (2000), frequently, new entrants to a business in most cases come along with an aspiration and new capacity to gain market share which exerts more pressure on expenses, prices and the rate of investment needed to compete.

Further, the study established that there were no government policies regulating entry into the supermarket industry. The government also has authority to restrict or even close in advance entry into the industries via licensing necessities and limitations on foreign financing (Neven et al., 2008).

The study established that there is a process or procedure critical to their business. According to Harvey (2000), the necessity to put in huge monetary resources to compete often discourages new entrants. Capital may be significant not only for fixed amenities, but also to create inventories, spread client credit and finance startup losses. The barrier is precisely vast if the capital is required for unrecoverable, thus harder-to-finance expenses, such as development and research or up-front publicity.

Also, the study revealed that customers are loyal to their brand. This indicates that despite the new entrants, the customers will not shift hence the threat of new entrants is minimal.

In addition, the study revealed that a new competitor will have difficulties in acquiring/obtaining customers hence the competitor may not be a threat to existing supermarkets which are already established. Hence, according to the study, high initial costs for starting a supermarket and the assets needed to run supermarkets are unique. Nevertheless, new competitor will not have difficulties acquiring/obtaining needed inputs to compete efficiently or have difficulties in acquiring/obtaining customers (KukarKinney, Xia & Monroe, 2007).

IV. Conclusion

Bargaining Power of Suppliers: The study concludes that there is a positive relationship between the bargaining power of suppliers and competition in the supermarket industry in Viet Nam. The study further concludes that it is not difficult for their suppliers to enter their business, that purchases from the suppliers represent a large portion of the suppliers' business and that the supermarkets stock various brands from different suppliers hence reducing the power of suppliers. The study also concludes that there are a large number of potential input suppliers and that the supermarkets' purchases ordinary products. It is further concluded that the supermarkets can easily switch to substitute products from other suppliers.

Bargaining Power of Consumers: The study concludes that there is a positive relationship between bargaining power of consumers and competitiveness within the supermarket industry in Viet Nam. The study established that bargaining power of consumers influence the pricing and location of the supermarkets. Additionally, the study concludes that it is difficult for customers to switch from their products to those of the supermarkets' competitors. The study further concludes that the supermarkets do not have enough customers such that losing one is not critical to their success. It is further concluded that it would be difficult for buyers to integrate backward in the supply chain, purchase from suppliers providing the products they provide, and compete directly with their supermarkets.

Threat of substitutes: The study concludes that there is a positive relationship between threat of substitutes and the competition in the supermarket industry in Viet Nam. The study therefore concludes that there were threats of substitute in the supermarket industry. One notable threat was identified to be shopping malls. In addition, the study concludes that the supermarket's customers are loyal to existing products.

Current Level of Competitive Rivalry: The study concludes that there is a positive relationship between current level of competitive rivalry and the competition in the supermarket industry. The study concludes that there are many competitors in the supermarket industry. Further, the study concludes that the studied supermarkets were serious competitors to one another. Further, the study concludes that price variations, promotions and improved customer service are the main strategies used in supermarkets and have increased competitiveness.

New entrants in the industry: The study found that there is a positive relationship between new entrants in the industry and the competition in the supermarket industry.

Bargaining power of suppliers: Big C Vietnam supermarket system needs to create a good relationship with suppliers and build this relationship before deciding to build a supermarket.

In the coming time, Big C supermarket needs to have a comprehensive cooperation plan with strategic suppliers in all areas such as: information sharing; connect; association in marketing, advertising and promotional activities; suggestions and advice on products; creating a stable and high-quality source of goods for supermarket chains.

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