

Ambush Marketing Strategy and Marketing Success of Fast-Food Firms in Port Harcourt.

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ABSTRACT:- The study examined the relationship between Ambush Marketing and Marketing Success of fast-food firms in Port Harcourt. One hundred (100) copies of questionnaire were distributed amongst ten (10) selected registered fast-food firms in Port Harcourt. Ninety four (94) copies were retrieved and useful for the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to analyse the data. The analysis revealed that there is a strong and positive relationship between blatant marketing and the measures of marketing success and also there is a strong and positive relationship between subtle marketing and measures of Marketing Success of fast-food firms in Port Harcourt. The study therefore, concludes that the dimensions of ambush marketing to a large extent influences marketing success, thus, it was established that a positive and significant relationship exist between ambush marketing and marketing success. The study further recommends that there should a reduction in the range of sponsorship arrangement. Secondly, Marketers should see ambush marketing as a competitive advantage over their rivals

KEYWORDS: Ambush Marketing, Blatant Marketing, Subtle Marketing, Marketing Success.

I. INTRODUCTION

Globalization has expanded and has been spread across many developing nation. It has further brought about uncertainty in the business world and has made it crucial for service industry to produce more value and adapt the rapid trends and changes that has taken place over the years. It is becoming difficult for firms to penetrate the crowds and get noticed by their target audience. With this difficulty, it has motivated firms to rise up to the occasion and become more competitive in order to attract new customers and gain competitive advantage in the marketplace. Food service industry strives daily to gain competitive advantage over its competitors through proper management of the current marketing trends. Ambush marketing is seen as a practice where a firm, which is often a competitor, intrudes into a public event of a sponsor, thereby deflecting customer's attention towards themselves (Meenaghan, 1994). Furthermore, Ambush marketing can also be seen as the formation of association with an event without securing official sponsorship rights (Kelly et al., 2012). According to Bayless (1988), Sandler & Shani (1989), ambush marketing is a planned effort (campaign) by a firm to associate itself indirectly with an event of a sponsored firm in order to attract attention of new customers to themselves. Ambush marketing has created a conventional notion of the 4ps of marketing Mix. It has thrown marketing activities into an entirely new aspect of advertisement without officially paying for it. Simply, put ambush marketing occurs when a non-sponsor firm attempts to gain benefits that is only made available to the official sponsor (Bean, 1995).

In the food service industry, by using a typical advertising campaign that is different from the expectations of consumers thereby using symbols, signs or trademarks to give wrong impression about actual sponsors, a blat and ambushing is said to have occurred. This effect is the origin of ambush marketing, which is used by firms to send wrong impression about the official sponsor to the target market. Conversely, according to Day (1990) and Green et al., (1995), market share and profitability are seen as the most common performance measures. Day (1984), noted that the aim of a business strategy is an integrated set of actions in pursuit of a competitive advantage. In the service industry, especially the food industry, firms strive towards getting the highest sales volume in other to help them achieve maximum level of profitability, which in turn lead to the success of the business. Marketing success targets high returns on investment, market share and profitability through strategies or techniques put in place by the firm. Based on observation, it appears distinct in the foreign setting where the concept of ambush marketing and its application has gained acceptance amongst various industries. In Nigeria, ambush marketing seems to be lacking in adoption by the food service industry, and food service firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State are lagging behind in its usage and adoption in their firms. It is against this backdrop, that the study tends to examine the relationship between ambush marketing and marketing performance of fast food firms in Port Harcourt.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Competition in the food service industry has become more intense over the years as marketers and firms are improving their services in order to gain competitive advantage. Fast food is among the world’s fastest growing food types across the globe. Fast food outlets often make provision for take away or take out in addition to its sit down services. The concept of fast food was established in 1920s and it is now a multibillion-dollar industry which has continually grown at a rapid pace (Debashish, 2002). Earlier results have shown that ambush marketing is not been adopted by most fast-food firms and these has affected their sales volume and profitability level, which has also resulted to the shutdown of some fast food firms in Port Harcourt. It is the opinion of the author that the adoption and application of ambush marketing in the fast food firms will help in curbing the problem of low sales volume and invariably affect their profitability level.

Aim of the Study

Hence, the aim of the study is to investigate how ambush marketing help in improving the marketing performance of the fast-food firms in Port Harcourt Nigeria.

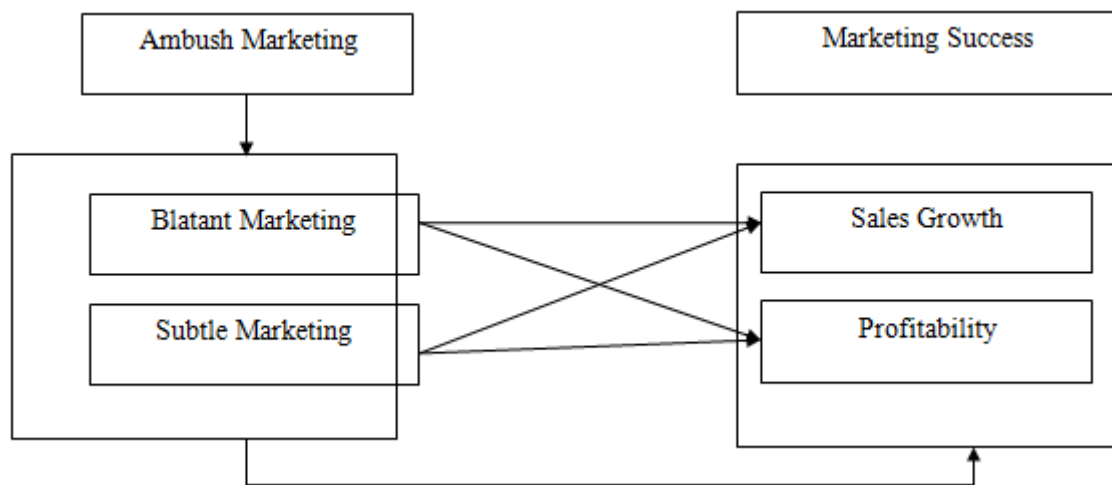


Fig: 1.1: Conceptual Framework on ambush marketing and marketing success of fast food firms in Port Harcourt.

Source: Adapted from, Nufer, (2013) & Venkratraman & Ramanujam (1987).

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

Every organization has a way of communicating with its customers whether in a group or just an individual. Marketing communication is a major aspect in marketing, because firms will always communicate with the clients or customers about their products and services. In otherworld, the communication phase is one of the most central within the field of marketing.

Berrett, (1993), noted that marketing communication is the essential process that enables firms to convey their messages to their customers, helps the target audience to trust the firm. Furthermore, since ambush marketing is the subject discussion, it is very crucial to know how people acquire, process and disseminate information. Belch & Belch (2004), presented a basic communication model, which consists of two major elements; the sender and the receiver, secondly the message and the channel.

The communication model consists of some other functions known as encoding, decoding, response, feedback and noise. The communication process works as follow; the message sent by the sender, is at first encoded into a symbolic language and the language is sent through a communication channel (media), so it can be accessed and given a meaning by the receiver. The receiver then reacts to being exposed to the message and formulates a response to send back to sender (in form of praise or critique). Therefore to communicate effectively with customers, marketers and potential effect associated with the factors of message, sources and channel. Understanding of the customers shows that firms need to be abreast of recent trends in advertising to know that customers debunk adverts that are predictable and uncreative. The communication model explains that a good channel is a veritable tool to make or mare and promotional message. An important aspect of ambush marketing is that it associates itself indirectly with an event in order to gain at least some recognition and benefits that are associated with being an official sponsor. By so doing attracts attention to them rather than the official sponsors, this further creates an impression of being associated to a sponsored event in the mind of the target audience and passes its message in the most effective way possible.

Concept of Ambush Marketing

Ambush marketing is a planned marketing effort (campaign) by an organization to associate itself indirectly with an event in order to gain some recognition and benefits that are associated with being an official sponsor (Sandler & Shani, 1989). Ambush marketing is the term that is used to describe the practice by non-sponsors, to mislead the audience about their identity and status as official sponsors. Meenaghan (1994), described Ambush marketing as the practice whereby another company, often a competitor introduces itself upon public attention, thereby surrounding the event and deflecting attention towards themselves and away from the official sponsors. Ambush markets usually acts as if they are official sponsors of an event, in order to derive the same benefits as the official sponsors. Ambush marketing has always been seen as a low-cost cunning, tactical and parasitic form of marketing aimed at attacking and devaluing official sponsorship and its message (Bayless, 1988, Sandler & Shani, 1989; Meenaghan, 1994, Payne 1998). Ambushers facilitate the accomplishment of their aims through uncertainty in the minds of consumers as to who the official sponsor is (Cornelius, 2011). In other words, when an organization plots a strategy to pose as an official sponsor of an event, by using event and closely-related imagery, intense advertising around the side or within a certain broadcast of an event, they are seen as intentional ambushers or ambush marketers. Ambush marketing is very helpful in increasing brand awareness, without spending more for adverts. The intention of ambush marketing is clearly to mislead customers, although the deception is not in relation to any product attribute claim, but more specifically, about the status of brand awareness in relation to the event.

Dimensions of Ambush Marketing

Blatant Marketing

Blatant marketing activities aimed specifically at the intellectual property arrangements between the event organized and sponsors (Nufer, 2013). Blatant marketing is a marketing activities of an intentional use of symbols, and trademarks associated to the official event so as to give customer wrong impression of being an actual sponsors of the event (Louw, 2012). Furthermore, blatant marketing is a type of ambushing where a firm intentionally makes its brand become associated with an event, without paying for any sponsorship. Blatant marketing which is a type of ambush marketing should create a surprise effect and cause awareness. Its campaign should also be eye catching and unexpected. The unauthorized use of the official sponsors protected property is to gain market share and sales volume (Dicken et al., 2015).

Subtle Marketing

The essence of subtle marketing is in adjusting the message to the nature of the event in a manner which does not directly breach the rights of the official sponsors of the event, but rather uses the event as a pretext for the ambushers own marketing purposes (Louw, 2012). Subtle marketing is a situation where a firm attaches itself to an event, but are not actually concerned with the plans of their rivals.

In subtle marketing, ambushers usually take advantage of the event of the official sponsors without creating new products associated with the event (Nutor, 2013). Subtle marketing is also divided into two, by association and by intrusion. Ambushing by association refers to utilizing and event as attention drawing tool and a platform for communication. In other words, ambushers capitalize on the event of official sponsors and associate itself with the events, so as to attract the attention of customers to their products. While, ambushing by intrusion refers to benefitting from the official sponsors due to the increased attention and awareness exposure from the high level of traffic at an event to conduct marketing activities. Subtle marketing can also be seen as ambushing by distraction, where an ambusher sets up a promotional presence at or near an event, without officially making reference to the sponsors of the event, its imagery or its theme in order to take advantage of the general public's attention towards the event and the audience member's awareness of their surroundings.

Marketing Success

The first thing in determining the marketing effort of a firm is to effectively define their measures of success. Clack & Ambler, (2001), noted that the level of success in any firm is defined by the proximity of achieve, Rumelt (1996). How well a firm is adjusted to its changing environment is usually very difficult to identify, because of its uncertainty. Competitive advantages in terms of skills, resources and position can be observed, but competitors may themselves be environmentally minded and better placed.

Sales Volume

Sales volume indicates the quantity of different stock keeping units sold or the number of the services offered by a firm in a given period of time such as a year of a fiscal quantity.

Sales volume connotes two different discourse, it sometimes means increase in amount, while in another scenario, it is refer to an increase in size or improvement in quality as a result of a process of development sales volume measurement is a vital part of performance evaluation of the sales force who are

responsible for the selling of a firm's products or services. Increased sales volume helps firms to acquire a healthy top line (revenue). It also helps organizations to gain profits from their operations. Traditionally, financial indicators for sales volume are the most commonly used financial ratios in the performance evaluation that are usually related to profitability (Yalcin et al, 2012). Sales volume is one key strategy firms must employ to achieve their financial objectives.

Profitability

Profit is the extra revenue over associated expenses for an activity over a period of time. Profitability is the ability of a given investment to earn a return from its use (Haward and Upton, 1961). Albrecht (2011), noted that profitability is often determined when costs are placed against revenue, which have contribution in the generation of such revenue. Profitability is also the ability to make profit from any business activities an individual or organization engages in. Profits are prerequisite for any business organization to keep going on. It brings about the survival and growth of any business organization over a period of time. It is also interesting to note that a very high profit margin does not always reveals sound organizational efficient and a low profit level does not show that the organization is weak in profit making. However, the term profitability is not synonymous to the term efficiency. It is regarded as a measure of efficiency and management guide to in improving their efficiency.

Biermann & Drebin (1965), stated that profitability is the operating efficiency of the enterprise. Sexton and Kasarda (2000), found out that a firm's profitability level was correlated with sustainable growth, while Chandler & Jesen (1992), found that sales growth and profitability were not correlated. Profitability is used by organization to measure their performance since it is likely that firm growth can be sustained without profits being available for reinvestment in the firm.

Ambush Marketing and Marketing Success

Ambush marketing is a modern marketing technique used in product and service marketing that makes use of the unconventional or usual means of promoting this products and service to the market. In a way to penetrate the market, organizations have deployed different ways of entering the market, which one of them is known as ambush marketing. In most cases, firms give several reasons why they engage in ambush marketing instead of official sponsorship. Firstly, most organizations cannot afford the investment of official sponsorship which has increased enormously (Nufer, 2013). Secondly, as a result of the sponsorship exclusiveness, only a limited number of firms can afford it, indicating that competitors in same sector cannot sponsor alone. The fast food industry and its present competition have made other fast food firms to raise their games and strategies through these unusual modern promotional strategies. Ambush marketing is a practice which acts as a beneficial strategy for efficiency in the market place (Sandra, 2008). Ambush marketing according to Ellis et al., (2011), helps firms in a technological ways that connects the brands or companies to a certain image which is perceived as an expression of competitive market approach in a market environment which is characterized by competitors.

Ambush marketing to a large extent helps firm to communicate directly with customers and offer them surprises in exchange and also create awareness and involvement to customers, which enables them to improve their performance thereby make profit. This however brings us to the relevance of ambush marketing as a veritable tool in influencing the success of any business organization. Furthermore Ambushers also claims that ambush marketing is just a creative, innovative and legitimate business strategy which firms capitalizes as a significant communication opportunity (Pardon, Amezquita 2016).

Blatant Marketing and Marketing Success

Blatant marketing strategy is an intentional use of symbols and trademarks associated to an event so as to give customers the wrong impression. Ambush marketers use blatant marketing strategy as one of its potent weapon to drive its idea to customers and potential customers. Blatant ambush marketing can be called a tactics that poses a surprise effect in order to disseminate information to customers. Every firm that uses ambush marketing often times give customers wrong impression to be seen as the official sponsor of an event. It is interesting to note that anticipated and exciting messages have the capacity to generate high sales volume and profits which could be used to show success of the firm's strategy. Chandon et al., (2002), the more attention a product receives, the more likely it is to be chosen by customers. The unpredictable nature of an ambush effect creates suspense and desire (enthusiasm) for more than the brand has to offer. Blatant marketing helps unknown firms to draw attention to them therefore making their products to be known through the event of an official sponsor. In other words, it brings about increased sales volume to the firm and also maximizes their profit level.

H₀₁: We therefore hypothesize, that there is a significant relationship between blatant marketing and marketing success.

Subtle Marketing and Marketing Success

Ambush marketing is an act of executing an unseal activity in public place to create buzz among customers. Subtle marketing brings about low cost or no cost at all and can get maximum results when implemented in a proper way. Subtle marketing is a process where a firm adjust its message to the nature of the event of the official sponsor in a way that it does not directly obstruct the rights of the organizers (Louw, 2012). Traditional marketing is expensive and requires lots of time and money which is to be spent by the firm. While non-traditional marketing requires organizations to think outside the box and innovate strategies there are unpredictable in their marketing activities. Subtle marketing refers to a firm benefiting due to increased attention and awareness (Nuter, 2013). It utilizes an event as an attention drawing tool and a platform for communicating activities (Nuter, 2013).

It is a modern marketing strategy that fast food firms can use to communicate and advertise its products and services to customers. Firms also connect to an event or a popular performer in the event in order to establish an indirect connection in their advertisement. Subtle marketing is a modern marketing tool that firms can use to attract potential customers through an event of an official sponsor to their own products. Furthermore, when potential customer’s attention is drawn, it brings about sales growth and in turn leads to profitability.

Ho₂: We therefore hypothesis that there is significant relationship between subtle marketing and marketing success.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study focuses on examining the relationship between Ambush marketing strategy and marketing success. The study adopted a quasi-experimental research design. In view of the nature of the study, the study employed the cross sectional survey research method. The population of the study consist of 50 fast food firms in Port Harcourt. However, the researcher streamlined on ten (10) fast food outlets operating in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.Ten (10) employees each were randomly selected, thereby making our target population to be one hundred (100) employees (Genesis Fast Food, Skippers Fast Food, Kilimanjaro, Jevinik, Jovit, Pepperoni, The Promise, Chicken Republic, D’ Lounge, Yogurberry). The study adopted a non-probability sampling technique; this is based on the researcher’s judgment and experience.The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the relationship that exists between the study variables.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

In this section, we present and analyse empirical data which has been collected through questionnaire survey. We also look at the reliability of measures. After that, the calculation of the correlation between measures of ambush marketing and marketing success are presented and analysed, this will follow the presentation and analysis of hypothesis testing which determined whether the hypotheses for this study is accepted or rejected.

Table 1: Properties of the Measurement Instruments.

Constructs/indicators	Factors loading(λ)	λ^2	AVE	α	CR
Blatant Marketing			0.79	0.89	0.94
BM1	0.912	0.832			
	0.882	0.778			
	0.878	0.771			
BM2	0.891	0.794			
BM3					
BM4					
Subtle Marketing			0.76	0.82	0.93
SM1	0.916	0.839			
SM2	0.872	0.760			
	0.819	0.671			
SM3	0.888	0.789			
SM4					
Sales Volume			0.81	0.80	0.94
SV1	0.909	0.826			
SV2	0.891	0.794			
SV3	0.894	0.799			

SV4	0.899	0.808			
Profitability			0.80	0.83	0.94
P1	0.932	0.879			
P2	0.911	0.830			
P3	0.876	0.767			
P4	0.849	0.721			

Premised on the analysis, computed AVE, Cronbach Alpha and Composite reliability for the four variables demonstrated a high level of validity and internal consistency. The AVE results above were greater than 0.50 threshold while Composite reliability and Cronbach Alpha outputs for the various dimensions were above 0.70 threshold. Therefore, with these outputs we can say all the variables were valid and consistently reliable.

One hundred (100) copies of questionnaire were distributed amongst the 10selected registered fast food firms in Port Harcourt. 94(94%) copies were accurately filled while the remaining 6(6%) contained certain inconsistencies, and thus not valid for analysis. Therefore, the analysis was based on 94 copies accurately filled.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis showing the Relationship between Blatant Marketing and Sales Volume and Profitability

Correlations				
		Blatant Marketing	Sales Volume	Profitability
Blatant Marketing	Pearson Correlation	1	.923**	.918**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	94	127	94
Sales Volume	Pearson Correlation	.923**	1	.924**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	94	94	94
Profitability	Pearson Correlation	.918**	.924**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	94	94	94

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2: reveals a Pearson product moment correlation coefficient of 0.923 and 0.918 and probability value of 0.000. The coefficient of determination (r^2) is 0.923^2 , and 0.918^2 , $R^2=0.851929 \times 100$; 0.842724×100 , $r^2 = 85.2\%$ and 84.3% . The coefficient of determination (r^2) is 85.2% and 84.3% meaning that, the level of significant relationship between blatant marketing and marketing success measures is positive and strong. This result indicates that there is a strong and positive significant relationship between blatant marketing and marketing success of fast food firms in Port Harcourt. Therefore, we reject the null hypotheses one and two and accept the alternate hypothesis, because the PV (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05).

Table 3: Correlation Analysis showing the Relationship between Subtle Marketing and Sales Volume and Profitability

Correlations				
		Subtle Marketing	Sales Volume	Profitability
Subtle Marketing	Pearson Correlation	1	.920**	.881**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	94	94	94
Sales Volume	Pearson Correlation	.920**	1	.924**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	94	94	94
Profitability	Pearson Correlation	.881**	.924**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	94	94	94

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3: reveals a Pearson product moment correlation coefficient of 0.920 and 0.881 and probability value of 0.000. The coefficient of determination (r^2) is 0.920², and 0.881², $R^2=0.8464 \times 100$; 0.776161×100 , $r^2 = 84.6\%$ and 77.6% . These results mean that, the level of significant relationship between subtle marketing and sales growth and profitability is positive and strong. This result indicates that there is a strong and positive significant relationship between subtle marketing and marketing success of fast food firms in Port Harcourt. Therefore, we reject the null hypotheses three and four and accept the alternate hypothesis, because the PV (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05).

4.1 Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the outcome of our test of hypotheses.

Blatant Marketing and Marketing Success

The test of hypothesis one and two shows that there is a strong and positive relationship between blatant marketing and marketing success measures of fast food in Port Harcourt. The coefficient of determination is the explanatory power of the model used for the study. It means that the variation can be explained by factors within the model, while others can only be explained by external quantitative and qualitative factors of the model used for the study.

The findings from hypotheses one and two agreed with the findings of Chandon et al., (2002), the more attention a product receives, the more likely it is to be chosen by customers.

Subtle Marketing and Marketing Success

The test of hypothesis three and four shows that there is a strong and positive relationship between subtle marketing and marketing success measures of fast food in Port Harcourt. The coefficient of determination is the explanatory power of the model used for the study. It means that the variation can be explained by factors within the model, while others can only be explained by external quantitative and qualitative factors of the model used for the study. This result is also supported by Nufer, (2013) that subtle marketing has a positive relationship with firm's performance.

V. CONCLUSION

This study examined the effects of ambush marketing and marketing success of fast food industry in Port Harcourt. The study therefore, concludes that the dimensions of ambush marketing to a large extent influence marketing success, thus, it was established that a positive and significant relationship exist between the variables. We add to the evidence that marketing success are amenable to strategies, in much the same way as are blatant marketing and subtle marketing, and shed light on the process by which the phenomenon affects sales growth and profitability.

5.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn from this research we do make the following recommendations:

1. There should be a reduction in the range of sponsorship packages, which will reduce the potential for conflicting sponsorship arrangement.
2. To maximize the protection sponsors might receive from ambushing activities of all types, the normal commercial protections provided by trademark, copyright and passing off laws need to be supplemented by tighter contractual provisions between all of the parties involved in the sponsorship of an event.
3. The management of fast food firms and event managers and official event sponsors should be alerted.
4. Marketers should see ambush marketing as competitive advantage over her rivals.

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Questionnaire

S/No	Statement items	SA	A	N	D	SD
	Blatant Marketing					
BM 1.	Blatant marketing helps your firm to associate itself with an already sponsored event by another firm.					
BM 2.	Blatant marketing creates a surprise effect and awareness to your customers.					
BM 3.	Your firm uses unauthorized adverts from an officially sponsored firm to gain increase market share.					
BM 4.	Your firm uses an instinctual property of another firm to gain popularity.					
	Subtle Marketing					
SM 1	Your firm attaches itself to an event to gain leverage over the official sponsors.					
SM 2.	Your firm intentionally makes its brand become associated with an event to gain awareness.					
SM 3.	Your firm benefits from an official sponsor of an event to increase high level of traffic.					
SM 4.	Subtle marketing creates a promotional presence for your firm in a sponsored event.					
	Marketing Success					

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	Sales Volume					
SV 1.	There has been an increase in your firm's sales volume since the inception of ambush marketing.					
SV 2.	Ambush marketing has created a huge awareness of your brand, without spending much.					
SV 3.	Since the adoption of ambushing, the fast food firms are in utmost competition with one another.					
SV 4.	There has been an awareness of your firm's strategy since the adoption of ambush marketing in the fast food industry.					
	Profitability					
P1.	Your firm has enjoyed maximum profits through ambush marketing.					
P 2.	Your firm has earned great return-on-investment since the adoption of this strategy.					
P 3.	The profit margin of your firm through ambush marketing has increased enormously					
P 4.	Applying ambush marketing has added value to your firm					

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