

“Networked-in; developing a model of network marketing performance”

(Work in Progress)

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Abstract

This paper investigates the relationship between systematic network marketing activity and network marketing performance with the objective of developing and testing a model of network marketing performance.

The study of networks and networking within a business to business marketing environment has been popularised by researchers following in the 'networks in markets' tradition within the IMP framework. Networking and the practice of network marketing has grown in popularity with firms seeking to generate business by referral. However, little is known about the association between network marketing activity and networking marketing performance. This study investigates whether firms which implement a systematic approach to network marketing achieve more positive outcomes, such as an increase in business referrals, a higher market share or an increase in profitability, when compared with firms which adopt an ad hoc approach to network marketing. This research identifies and explores a number of factors identified as contributing to the strength of business networking relationships, being the connections between systematic network marketing activity and network marketing performance.

Data has been collected from a sample of 5000 firms in the West Midlands region of the UK. A statistical model is being developed to summarise the relationship between the constructs to develop and test a model of network marketing performance.

Keywords: networks, relationship, embeddedness, networking, marketing, performance

1. Introduction

The study of social networks and the linkages between micro and macro ties in sociological theory exemplified by Granovetter (1973), combined with the paradigm of markets as an exchange typified by Bagozzi (1975), together underpin much of the 'actor network theory' and subsequent 'networks in markets' approach to understanding the transactional nature of dyadic network constructs Håkansson (1987). The development of a conceptual framework to investigate the linkages between network marketing activity and network marketing performance is based on the theory of relationships in networks described by Iacobucci (1996). This study is at the core of the networks as markets theorists, conceptualised in the framework developed by Håkansson and Snehota (1995), providing a method for understanding networks within a

marketing context. Research undertaken within the 'networks as markets' field recognises the interdependencies, interaction and relationships, as important generic aspects of firms' behaviour and network marketing orientation Håkansson (1982). This is seen as the focal firm's perspective within the dyadic network construct and was influential in the writing of this paper and the development of a conceptual model explaining Network Marketing Performance.

Definitions of the term 'Network Marketing' are neither homogeneous, nor consistent. The study of networks and networking within a business marketing environment has been popularised by researchers following in the 'networks in markets' tradition within the IMP framework. For this study, the term 'Network Marketing' is taken to mean the combination of the metaphor 'network' being a collection of 'actors' and their structural connections, in the practice of 'marketing', defined by Iacobucci (1996) as 'network marketing', the study of networks in marketing practiced by 'network marketers'. The practice of 'Networking' and the idea of 'Network Marketing' as a means of generating new business by referral, has been made fashionable by researchers and marketing practitioners. The definitions offered for Network Marketing are not always distinguished from relationship or interaction marketing. In addition, the term Network Marketing (NM) is not exclusive to the practice of networking and should not in this context be confused with pyramid selling or multi level marketing. In the development of this paper, Network Marketing (NM) is defined as the practice of using business to business (B2B) networks for the explicit purpose of marketing products and services. This definition is based on the creation, utilisation and maintenance of a network between firms, as supported by Gummesson (1995) and in a synthesis of marketing terminology, by Coveillo et al (1996). However, Network Marketing is still ignored by many firms, possibly due to a perceived lack of accountability. It may be that the absence of relevant performance measures can deter firms from considering 'Network Marketing' as a credible part of the marketing mix. The purpose of this paper is to examine the factors influencing Network Marketing (NM) activity and their influence on Network Marketing Performance (NMP).

Networking for commercial gain is not new. Firms' decisions have always been influenced by people (actors) connected to each other through a system of both formal and informal networks. Networking opens firms to their environments and can help to find creative solutions for new ways of working as learning organisations Achrol and Kotler (1997, Womack *et al.* (1990). Business decisions are based on shared knowledge (Swan et al 1999) and it is common for firms to participate in networking and knowledge sharing activities Cross and Prusak (2002). Firms use Network Marketing (NM) as a method of generating new business opportunities Misner (1994), developed and summarised as an interaction approach to business relationships Håkansson and Snehota (1995). However, the outcomes of (NM), or Network Marketing Performance (NMP), have rarely been examined in a quantitative manner. Earlier research placed emphasis on the context of the network and the environment in which it operates Eccles and Crane (1988, Ford (1980, Gadde and Mattsson (1987, Håkansson (1982). Whilst this identified some of the more qualitative issues surrounding the interdependency and mutual benefit derived from the network, subsequent research has extended the earlier dyadic studies by investigating the concept of connectedness and relationships within markets, summarised by Iacobucci (1996) and developed with further research by Araujo (2004), Chell (2000), Healy *et al.* (2001), Mattsson (1997), Mouzas *et al.* (2004), Ottesen *et al.* (2004), Pages and Shari (2003), Stokes and Lomax (2002). These studies investigated the nature of network relationships and subsequent network analysis has developed from understanding the nature of interconnected actors to recognising the interdependence of complex business relationships, with focus increasingly placed on the importance of understanding and managing these relationships within business networks. Strength of relationship is therefore seen as an important factor in determining the success of Network Marketing activity. Relationships in business develop and evolve over time. Existing theories of network relationships are frequently based upon an understanding of the relevant dimensions of relationship traits, such as trust, commitment and mutual understanding. Whilst these studies present an insight into the social aspects of the relationship, they often involve only simple exploratory network tasks with low economic benefits. The stronger network ties based on the interactive nature of relationships in networks, where actors participate in collaborative activities associated with achieving economic goals and gaining financial benefits, are more closely identified with contemporary research into aspects of networking and relationship performance Medlin (2005), Ritter *et al.* (2004), Rust *et al.* (2004). Relationship performance is defined as the perceived economic performance of the jointly acting relationship parties, relative to the expectations in that network. Whilst these studies investigated the nature of network relationships, network performance measures have moved towards a more analytical assessment of relationship benefits. Evidence has been found of established links between networking activities and business relationships for improving business performance Medlin (2003b), Ottesen *et al.* (2004), Ritter (2002), Terziowski (2003) Networking performance has been used as the dependent variable for single firm and dyadic network studies in Medlin (2003a). The advantage of an economic focus is that it offers direct performance indicators relative to commercial expectations. This suggests a connection

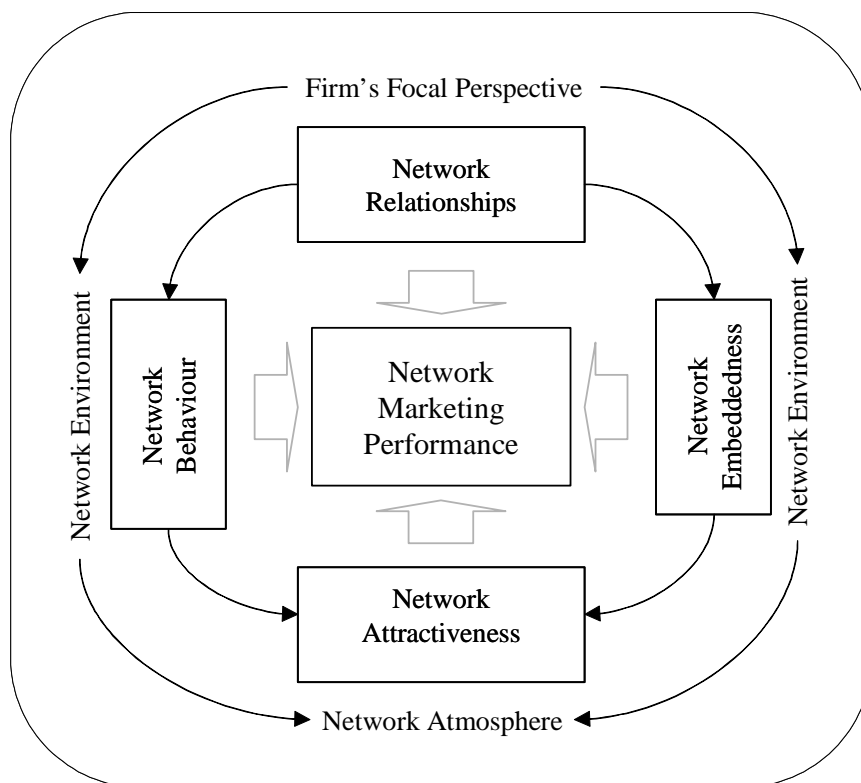
between the strength of relationship in a network influencing Network marketing (NM) activity and the economic outcomes attributable to Network Marketing performance (NMP).

The survey will target a statistically representative sample of firms which meet the sample frame and screening criteria, each with an equal probability of inclusion to validate the sample. The postal survey is currently being administered in a four stage process to ensure a high response rate Salant and Dillman (1994). Analysis will be subject to a range of statistical testing using proprietary software. Using regression analysis, a statistical model will be developed to summarise the relationship between the constructs to predict the outcome Greenfield (2002). The results will test the development of a Network Marketing (NM) model to assist in the understanding of what influences Network Marketing Performance (NMP).

2. Conceptual Framework

The development of a conceptual framework to investigate the linkages between network marketing activity and network marketing performance is based on the theory of relationships in networks suggested by Iacobucci and Hopkins (1992). This study is at the core of the networks as markets theorists, conceptualised in the framework developed by Håkansson and Snehota (1995), providing a method for understanding networks and business relationships within a marketing context. Research undertaken within the ‘networks as markets’ field recognises the interdependencies, interaction and relationships as important generic aspects of firms’ behaviour and network marketing orientation Ford *et al.* (1998), Håkansson (1982). Therefore the paradigm of marketing orientation linking relationships and networks within the network environment is well established. The development of the conceptual framework appears at Figure 1. This draws on the previous research strands from the firm’s focal perspective, the network environment and the network atmosphere. In particular the linkages between network relationships and network embeddedness are examined, along with network attractiveness and network behaviour, together considered to be important aspects of a firm’s perspective on Network Marketing (NM) and how this relates to Network Marketing Performance (NMP). The framework is used to investigate the theoretical linkages between NM activity and NMP.

FIGURE 1
Indicators of Network Marketing Performance



Relationships are seen as a prerequisite to successful networking and the development of inter-firm relationships. There has been a considerable body of research investigating the nature and development of relationships in networks e.g. Achrol (1997), Anderson et al (1994), Håkansson and Snehota (1994). As Ritter et al (2002) observe “The ability of a firm to develop and manage relations with key suppliers, customers and other organisations is a core competence of a firm, having a direct bearing on a firm’s competitive strength and performance”. From early discussions with executives in firms willing to collaborate on this research project, it became evident that it was not the relationship alone but the strength of the relationship, based on the frequency of contact and the degree of mutually beneficial overlap of networking activity, that might prove an important indicator of NM and possibly NMP.

The network environment and the idea of networks having a discernable identity, atmosphere and therefore degree of attractiveness Ford (1998) is encapsulated in the notion of the network environment being the enabler of network embeddedness. There is a close link between relationships, the degree of embeddedness in networks and the resultant economic action, as described by Granovetter (1985). Network embeddedness is the degree to which relationships are embedded in a network and the resulting social bonds identified by Granovetter (1985) and developed by Holmlund and Tornroos (1997), investigating the nature of relationships and the exchanges they encompass. This research built on the earlier concept of an equal power network developed by Thorelli (1986), where members develop close relationships on the basis of reciprocal and mutually supportive actions. Research also suggests that where greater attention is directed to understanding the embedded context within which the dyadic business relationships exist, this provides useful measures of network performance, including resource transferability, relationship cooperation, relationship commitment and network identity Anderson and Håkansson (1994). Heterogeneity in dyadic relationships where actor perceptions differ has been examined by successive researchers Ford *et al.* (1998), Greve and Salaff (2003), Håkansson (1982), Holmlund and Tornroos (1997). Findings describe the variations in network perspective linked to network ‘embeddedness’ where firms having different reasons for joining the network increased their perception of the value of network outcomes as the degree of embeddedness increased Achrol and Kotler (1997), Medlin (2003b), Ritter (2002), Snehota (2003).

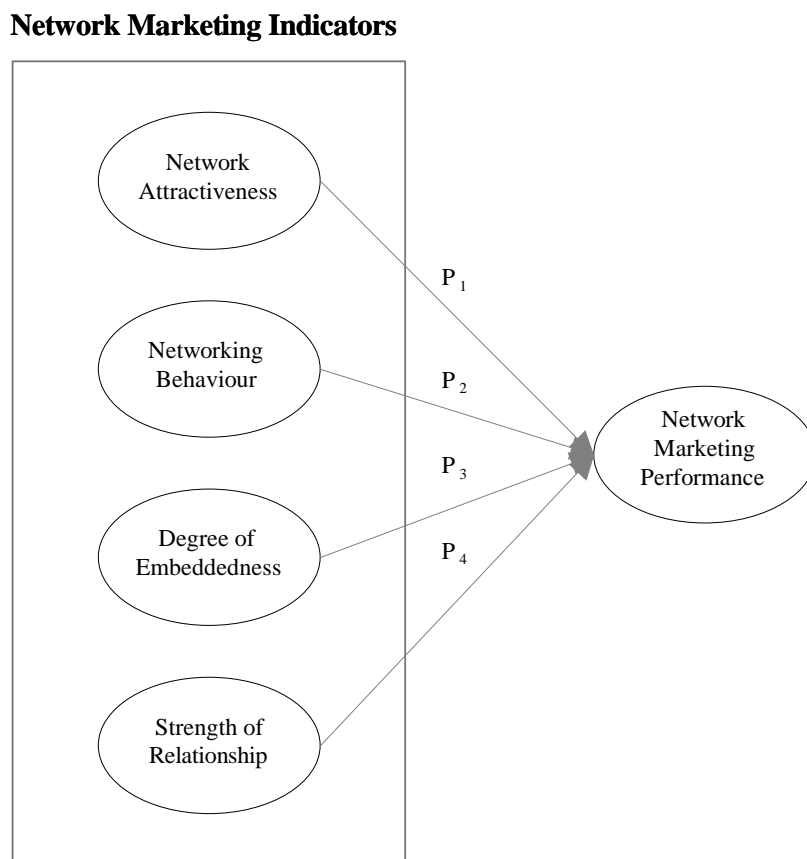
Described as the interactive network process whereby actors seek to develop close relationships on the basis of reciprocal and mutually beneficial acts, network behaviour is seen to be a reliable indicator of network performance Thorelli (1986). Network behaviour can be seen to have stabilising or destabilising consequences on the performance of the network. A business network is sustained by dyadic business relationships, which by their nature are dynamic and can be heavily influenced by the perceived behaviour of actors within the dyadic structure of the network, strengthening or weakening the network by their individual actions Anderson and Håkansson (1994). Network behaviour is a conditioning process, influenced by individuals’ actions with in the group and the network horizon. Behaviour is bounded by the network environment, network rules, network traditions, relationships and business connections. The boundary may not be arbitrary but patterns of network behaviour can be measured against the actor’s perception of network outcomes and network performance. This in turn influences the network identity and reputation, conveying a sense of importance and competence the network exchange Achrol and Kotler (1999).

The idea of network attractiveness being a desirable quality from a firm’s focal perspective is an established social phenomena, recognised within social groups or networks as a prelude to social interaction Granovetter (1973). The conceptualisation of the environment of the firm as being socially bounded has been questioned in organisation theory and resource dependence theory Miles and Snow (1986). However, drawing on this research, Anderson and Håkansson (1994) stressed the importance of social attractiveness in dyadic business relationships and the environment in which they operate. This idea was endorsed by Gadde and Mattsson (1987) and whilst these researchers generalised the social exchange perspective on dyadic relations and social exchange networks, all agree that exchange relationships are contingent on network attractiveness. A firm’s network perspective provides the context for reviewing prospective network identity and the perceived attractiveness (or repulsiveness) of an exchange partner, or network of connected business partners Håkansson and Snehota (1989). The concept of network attractiveness being influenced by network relationships, network embeddedness and network behaviour within the overall network environment, is seen as the focal firm’s perspective within the dyadic network construct and was influential in the development of the NM conceptual framework in Figure 1.

3. Conceptual Model

The notion of network competence and network performance, being the outcomes of networking activity, is conceptualised by Ritter (2002) as a firm specific characteristic, seen as a two dimensional construct, namely task execution and qualifications. The results of similar research found network competence to be closely linked with market orientation and a firm’s overall success Carson *et al.* (1995), Freis *et al.* (2003), Medlin (2003a), Medlin (2003b), Ritter *et al.* (2004). The dyadic nature of network relationships where actor perceptions differ, presents a problem for researchers seeking a quantifiable approach relying on simple aggregation to analyse actor constructs. Medlin (2003b) offers an insight into network performance based upon firms’ perceptions within a single and multi level framework, defining relationship performance as “The perceived economic performance of the jointly acting relationship parties, relative to the expectations in that network”, introducing relationship performance as the dependant variable in dyadic studies. The network concepts and outcomes exist within a network environment and together influence the nature of the network exchange from a network perspective. The networks as markets approach to understanding the variety of resources that can be exchanged has been summarised in Iacobucci (1996), as a set of relationships based upon a number of exchanges, of which the financial and economic exchange is perhaps the most obvious in a business context to measure the economic value of the network relationship. The financial benefits of a network relationship are a major factor in describing networking success Dennis (2000). The positive outcomes of networking activity identified by McLoughlin and Horan (2000) also suggest that the financial aspects of a networking relationship are a major factor contributing to networking success. However, the short term nature of economic considerations alone may not be a long term indicator of network marketing performance and wider measures involving network competence Ritter (2002) have been sought. As a result I posit that Network Marketing Performance (NMP) is dependent on the concept of network attractiveness, networking behaviour, the degree of embeddedness and strength of relationship. This has led to the development of the conceptual model at Figure 2.

FIGURE 2
Conceptual Model



The dyadic nature of network relationships where actor perceptions differ, can present a problem for researchers seeking a quantifiable approach relying on simple aggregation to analyse actor constructs. Medlin (2003b) provides a view of network performance based upon firms' perceptions within a single and multi level framework, introducing relationship or networking performance as the dependant variable in dyadic studies. The network marketing indicators identified above in Figure 2 and as described below, provide the basis for analysing and measuring the impact of NM activity on NMP.

Network Attractiveness

The idea of networks having a discernable identity, atmosphere and therefore degree of attractiveness as described by Ford (1998), is encapsulated in the notion of the network environment and the resulting social bonds and inherent attractiveness suggested earlier by Granovetter (1985). The notion of network 'attractiveness' is recognised as being problematic because of the interconnectedness of the terms surrounding phrases like network environment and network atmosphere in Holmlund and Tornroos (1997) but firms appreciating the relative attractiveness of embedded networks perceive distinct differences in relative network performance Ritter *et al.* (2004). Attractiveness is recognised to be an important constituent in network identity and can lead to other actors' initiatives to establish a relationship, akin to social attraction and social network ties Granovetter (1973). This is supported by respondents who had a clear perspective on what constituted an 'attractive' network and its likely impact on business performance outcomes. Based on the findings of this research, I put forward my first proposition:

P₁: Greater network attractiveness will have a positive impact on network marketing performance.

Networking Behaviour

Networking behaviour is described as the interactive network process whereby actors seek to develop close relationships on the basis of reciprocal and mutually beneficial actions Thorelli (1986). The nature and behaviour within the dyadic relationship is characterised by length of relationship, frequency of contact, network competence, commitment, trust, experience and the social bonds which affect networking behaviour. Behaviour conditions the mutual interactions between actors in a network and defines the nature of the dyadic relationship Ford *et al.* (2003). Networking behaviour is considered to be a reliable indicator of network marketing performance Ritter (2002) and is likely to have a positive impact on network marketing performance. The idea of reciprocal networking behavioural traits resulting in shared networking opportunities is widely accepted by participants in this study. Based on these findings, I put forward my second proposition:

P₂: Stronger networking behaviour will have a positive impact on network marketing performance.

Degree of Embeddedness

The degree to which an actor firm is embedded in a network relates to the linkages of economic action and outcomes, the actors' dyadic relations and the overall structural, economic and social dimensions of the network Holmlund and Tornroos (1997). The importance of 'embeddedness' in actor network relations is recognised by Håkansson (1987) with the extent of its influence on networking outcomes dependent on the nature of the relationships between actor firms and their commitment to create positive outcomes. Network embeddedness is the subject of a considerable body of research into network relationships Greve and Salaff (2003), Håkansson and Snehota (1995), Holmlund and Tornroos (1997, Ritter *et al.* (2004), Young and Wilkinson (2004). Based on the evidence suggesting a positive impact when linking network embeddedness and relationships with network marketing outcomes, I put forward my third proposition:

P₃: Greater network embeddedness will have a positive impact on network marketing performance.

Strength of Relationship

Relationships in networks is recognised as a critical factor in how people in firms interact with each other and is central to marketing performance Iacobucci (1996). Crucial to the idea of a network relationship is dyadic co-operation, avoiding conflict and creating an environment of trust, mutual benefit and what Iacobucci (1996) terms as 'positively valenced influence strategies, creating high performance dyads that will form the core of the networks in which they are located'. The economic value of relationships in networks is complex but critical to understanding the potential the perceived benefits of the relationship Ford *et al.* (2003). The

resultant discussion is centred on ‘managing network relationships’ with the emphasis on hub firms and strategic network alliances Ritter *et al.* (2004). The extent to which firms are able to ‘manage relationships’ is the subject of continuing research, with opposing views attributed to the difference between intentional and unintentional networking Moller and Svahn (2003). Given that respondents to this survey have an active interest in networking outcomes derived from developing business relationships, the suggestion that stronger relationships will have a positive influence of networking marketing performance forms the basis of my fourth proposition:

P₄: Stronger networking relationships will have a positive impact on network marketing performance.

Network Marketing Performance (NMP)

The notion that Network Marketing (NM) will have a positive impact on Network Marketing Performance (NMP) is at the core of this research proposal and provides the background to this study to develop and test a model of network marketing performance. NMP is a construct that is thought to have a positive impact on business performance as suggested by Medlin (2003) and will influence business outcomes, such as the number of referrals, volume of new business, sales, market share and profitability. This research will examine the strengths and the constraints associated with NMP.

Linking NM activity with measures of NMP is suffused with difficulty. Marketing as a business discipline, has been slow to adopt standard measures of performance compared to finance or production Lehmann (2004). Marketing has tended to focus on sales results, market share and measures of customer satisfaction but rarely the impact of marketing decisions on the overall financial performance and brand equity of the firm Rust *et al.* (2004). Recognising the difficulties of obtaining meaningful financial performance measures from firms, led to the realisation that the perceived financial and economic benefits of networking were likely to offer a realistic view of networking performance Chell (2000) and Medlin (2003), allowing for a direct comparison between NM activity and NMP. In addition to analysing the nature of the dyadic network constructs within the business to business network marketing environment, it is important to assess the nature and performance of relationships in the network Dennis (2000), McLoughlin and Horan (2000), O'Donnell *et al.* (2001), Ottesen *et al.* (2004), Tongue (2004). Whilst there is circumstantial evidence linking NM activity with business performance, relatively few researchers have sought to quantify the benefits of discernable NMP. The difficulty associated with measuring the extent of networking activity within network constructs is confirmed by Chell (2000) and supported by Dennis (2000). Meanwhile McLoughlan and Horan (2000) and Medlin (2003) see financial aspects of the network relationship as a major factor in describing and measuring network performance.

4. Method

The proposed research method is based on a seven step process Sekaran (1992). Establishing a systematic approach is also considered important to ensure consistency of data across geographic and market sectors Iacobucci and Churchill (2002). The decision to utilise a quantitative research methodology based on a large-scale cross-sectional mail survey of firms within a defined geographical area, is driven by the need to collate multivariate data for analysis in order to identify linkages between formalised network marketing procedures and network marketing effectiveness. The operational concepts will be defined in terms of clear measures to test the validity of the developed hypotheses Bryman and Cramer (1999). The principal method of data collection is by mail survey. The unit of analysis is individual firms, segmented by geographic location, size and business sector. Researched firms will be assessed on a continuum of Network Marketing (NM) activities. Establishing a systematic approach is considered important to ensure consistency of data across geographic and market sectors Iacobucci and Churchill (2002). The decision to utilise a quantitative research methodology based on a large-scale cross-sectional mail survey of firms within a defined geographical area, is driven by the need to collate multivariate data for analysis in order to identify linkages between formalised NM procedures and NMP. The geographic area chosen for the survey is the West Midlands Region of the UK with a diverse economy based on urban and rural enterprises. The West Midlands has a population of 5,365,400 (9% of the GB total), with 197,592 registered firms employing 2,376,374 staff, statistics compiled by Sutherland (2007). Manufacturing is still important to the region employing 18,998, but 49% of employees are now employed in the service sector, representing banking, insurance, financial services, property and business services, health care, social work and education. The region's capital city is Birmingham with a population of 1 million people, Source: ONS (2007).

Twenty depth interviews have been conducted with firms which meet the sample frame criteria at Director/Chief Executive level. The interviews were semi-structured and designed around the four researched areas of networking competence. The purpose was to validate the survey approach and to provide operational insight into the research area. Each interviewee was encouraged to nominate additional respondents who, in their opinion, had experience of business to business networking and could add knowledge and informed opinion to the survey, using snowball sampling. Interviews lasted for 60-90 minutes and were recorded with the permission of the respondents for transcription after the interview. This followed the personal interviewing process recommended by Alreck and Settle (1995). From this, the survey questionnaire was developed and pre-tested for ease of comprehension and completion, using a pre-test method suggested by Hunt *et al.* (1982).

Data Collection

The principal method of data collection is by mail survey, with an optional on-line web based questionnaire, supplemented by telephone interviews. The process is positivist and empirical in nature, designed to test each construct in a deductive approach to aid the development of the survey and improve its reliability. The principle survey instrument is a structured questionnaire. Respondents identified by job title and business sector, will be supplemented where appropriate, using a multi-level 'snowball sampling' technique Dawes (1987, Dawes and Lee (1996) to increase participation and response by identifying other influential members of networking groups. By focusing attention on the key role players, or 'actors' in a network, it can be argued that these individuals, being influential, enhance the effectiveness the network and will therefore add knowledge to the study Cross and Prusak (2002). The identification of key informants and the issue key informant competence Phillips (1981), has been addressed in the survey design by ensuring informants are at CEO or senior executive level identified by job title, years of service, membership of networking organisations and by personal networking experience. By using a series of multi-stage sampling techniques, through a combination of depth interview and postal survey and telephone, the 'snowball sampling' process will identify others in the network and produce a cross-validated list of respondents and networks who might otherwise be difficult to access Moriarty and Spekman (1984). Participants identified in the depth interview pilot survey, confirmed the firms' characteristics, the degree to which they are involved with network marketing activities, membership of networking groups, timescales, the degree to which they are embedded, the perception of relative 'quality' within the networks and their experience of the outcomes. The main survey will target a statistically representative sample of 5000 firms which meet the sample frame and screening criteria, each with an equal probability of inclusion to validate the sample Bryman and Cramer (1999, Creswell (2003, Greenfield (2002). The postal survey will be administered in a four stage process to ensure a high response rate Salant and Dillman (1994). The two major phases of data collection are; 20 in-depth interviews with Directors of firms acknowledged to be 'active networkers' followed by the large scale mail-survey addressed to named executives, with the option of an on-line survey to access respondents with e-mail address information.

Data Analysis

Measures and scales for each of the key constructs will be developed to test the emerging hypotheses. Individual perceptions of network marketing performance will vary within individual firms and that the measures will need to reflect this variance, recognising that respondents may be aware and involved in different aspects of the network marketing process. A series of indicators will be identified for each of the constructs to be developed from the propositions; Attractiveness P_1 , Behaviour P_2 , Embeddedness P_3 , Relationship P_4 . Analysis will be subject to a range of statistical testing using proprietary software. Using regression analysis, a statistical model will be developed to summarise the relationship between the constructs to predict the outcome Greenfield (2002). The results will test the development of a network marketing model which will assist in the understanding of what constitutes Network Marketing Performance.

5. Discussion

Initial findings from the 20 depth interviews informed the subsequent development of the survey questionnaire. The terminology was 'operationalised' to assist respondents' understanding, for example the term 'embeddedness' was replaced with the phrase 'networking group membership', which following the guidelines suggested by Alreck and Settle (1995), simplified the questionnaire language and improved the respondents' understanding and reduced the time required to complete the questionnaire, in line with the pre-test survey process Hunt *et al.* (1982). The main survey instrument, the questionnaire, is designed for OCR (optical character recognition) with a mix of Likert 7 point scaled questions and single answer questions,

supplemented with a limited number of descriptive answers to complete the 38 questions. The survey is anonymous and is administered by a mail fulfilment house to comply with the Data Protection Act and the Market Research Society code of conduct.

The sample frame screening process requires respondents to be a member of one or more business networking group, networking club professional association or professional institution. This is to ensure that respondents have sufficient working knowledge of the business to business networking environment and processes to be able to contribute to the survey as key informants. This was tested during the depth interview phase and assisted in refining the networking terminology used in the questionnaire. A large sample is required to capture the wide range of business network clubs and professional organisations in the target area, the West Midlands Region in the UK with nearly 200,000 registered firms, where a sample of 2.5% or 5000 named executives in all types of firm should provide a comprehensive picture of networking activity, with a desired response rate of 10%. The survey encourages multiple responses from different actors within the same firm to corroborate evidence of network marketing activity. Survey results will be analysed during 2008 with findings available from later in the year. The research is part of a PhD project conducted by the author.

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