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Internal equity and customer relationship management in developing countries: A quantitative and a comparative study of three private companies in Burkina Faso

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Internal equity in customer relationship management is ignored by companies in Burkina Faso, which causes a reduction in terms of profitability. Equity and ethical practices in marketing are essential to the sustainable development of companies in Burkina Faso especially in the context of globalization where values of fair trade are promoted and where competition is ferocious. This research focuses on the contribution that fair business practices from business to customers bring in terms of companies' performance in developing countries. Data collection was performed with a questionnaire addressed to customers of two Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and one Very Small Enterprise (VSE) in Burkina Faso. Quantitative data is processed using Sphinx IQ and SPSS. The results confirm that companies in which internal equity degree is high, the sales growth is increasing due to satisfaction and repurchase.

Key words: Internal equity, customer satisfaction, customer repurchase, sales, growth, marketing.

INTRODUCTION

The field of this research is that of marketing. Recent studies show that some illogical and immoral practices are in private companies of Burkina, affecting its economy and its development (Akouwerabou and Bako, 2014). This research is therefore focused on private companies and is entitled "Internal equity and customer relationship management in developing countries: a quantitative and a comparative study of three private companies in Burkina Faso". The various actors in the field and the subject of research are the managers, customers, and the competition. Furthermore, Customer Relationship Management is a process by which a company seeks how to meet its customers' needs and expectations, thus its customer satisfaction in order to promote sustainable and profitable exchange for both parties. The company seeks to know deeply each customer; it then communicates with its customers using practical tools and customizing its offers to establish sustainable relationships. For Perconte (2003), Customer Relationship Management is a business strategy to

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attract new customers, to extend relationships with them and to retain them. For Borg and Blidner-Knittel (2009), Customer Relationship Management is defined as a process in which a company seeks to know its customers by connecting with those who bring an income and should not just be a way to make a lot of money. From this definition, it is clear that Customer Relationship Management implies several parameters (Reinartz et al., 2004).

Moreover, misunderstanding and incidents between businesses and their customers remain challenges for companies (Morrison, 2005). Therefore, human relationship school states that the company is primarily a "social system" (Bressy and Konkuyt, 2004), a system in which it is important to know how to harmonize relationships to achieve specific objectives. Achieving these goals requires both an innovative strategy and a knowledge that is a competitive advantage (Ouédraogo, 2006). It is fundamental for a company to know its customers and to satisfy them, to enable the company to keep a good image (Van Laethem et al., 2007). Therefore, some authors tried to understand customer's perception of the exchange. The equity concept becomes important in Customer Relationship Management. Kotler and Dubois (2003) mention equity by bringing out the concept of fair price that customers perceive about an offer. The most relevant research is the one of Morrisson (2005), which is limited only to the influence of external equity on customer satisfaction and on the research of Urbain (1979) that links concepts such as equity, fair price and the perception of fair price; and Brewer and Selden (2000) that define internal equity as a dimension of performance. As one can see, the previous research in the area of Customer Relationship Management mainly puts a focus on notions such as external equity and customer satisfaction, equity and fair price, or a focus on internal equity and performance in a context different from the West African context. Until now, the effects of internal equity on corporate business especially in the West African context were particularly ignored. In exchanges between customers and companies, the quality of products or services compared to the prices charged by companies rarely met customers' expectations. That is what explains anger, unhappiness among customers and the consequences that this entails in trade. It is then necessary for companies to have a management system that meets customer needs by offering a higher level of satisfaction than the conventional system in terms of quality, and price. One of the existing solutions is to take into account the average income of Burkina, what can bring companies to offer quality products or services tailored to customers' expectations. Another solution is to bring the companies to abide to market rules, as these companies often face financial difficulties because they do not respect the rules of the market and its transparency (Ouédraogo, 2003). To better understand the customer, it was considered necessary to consider the following key question: What is the impact of the perception of internal equity on sales growth in private Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and private Very Small Enterprises (VSEs) of Burkina Faso? The problem raised by this question comes from the simple fact that the loss of customers of a given company is often related to several causes (Morrison, 2005). Another finding is that some companies do not pay great attention and importance to the concept of internal equity in the exchanges with customers. A Customer Relationship Management, in which the company provides no efforts to take into account the needs and expectations of customers, may be inappropriate and fatal to that company (Juët, 2005). In an exchange situation the individual compares his or her ratio with the offer as a repository and s/he can perceive a sense of equity or non-equity (Adams, 1963; Peretti, 2004). When the exchange is unfair the customer may be a victim of injustice (Adams, 1963). This leads to dissatisfaction which may lead him/her to no longer make purchases (Morrison, 2005). This research is structured on the following fundamental questions:

(1) What is internal equity in Customer Relationship Management?
(2) What are the effects of the perception of internal equity on customer satisfaction?
(3) What are the effects of internal equity perception on repurchase?
(4) What are the effects of the perception of internal equity on the growth of Small and Medium Enterprises turnover (SMEs) and Very Small Enterprises (VSEs) turnover?

LITERATURE REVIEW

A more thorough review of the literature shows what has already been discussed.

The theory of equity in business exchange

Homans (1961), Adams (1963), Zeithaml et al. (2004), Peretti (2004), Aravindakshan et al. (2004), Morrison (2005), Olsen (2002), and Nasse (2012), underline the notion of equity resulting from the comparison between what an individual perceives in an exchange "output, profit" and the contribution s/he makes to the exchange "input, investment ". They demonstrate that equity not only influences customer satisfaction but also, they demonstrate that equity influences customer repurchases. They show internal equity in the business-customer exchanges have an important place.

The theory of distributive justice

Sabadie (2000), Kotler and Dubois (2003), Peretti (2004),

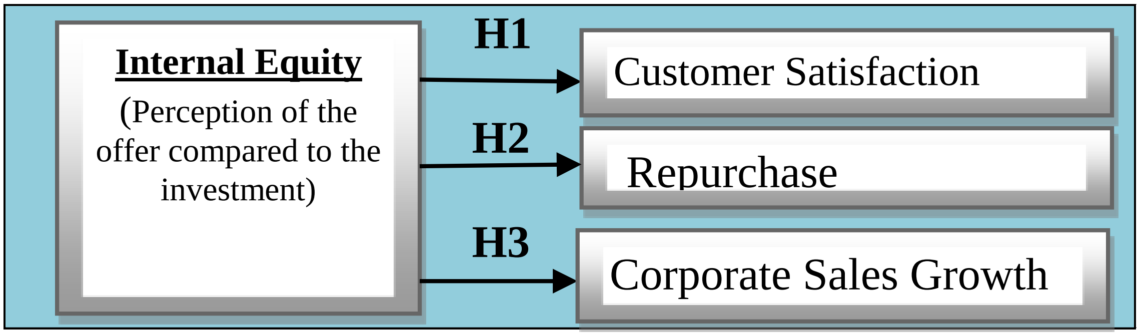

Figure 1. The three hypotheses.
Source: Nasse (2015).

Juët (2005), Van Laethem et al. (2007), and Akouwerabou and Bako (2014) are mainly supporters of the concept of fair price to the extent that the concept of fair price is perceived as the balance between the needs of customers and the interests of the company, and it is understood as an avoidance of unfair or illegal practices in setting prices.

The theory of quality

For Kotler and Dubois (2003), Demeure (2008), Van Laethem and Body (2008), and Nasse (2012), Customer Relationship Management requires the company's products to be of good quality and the prices to meet customer's expectations. They abound in the sense of the quality theory by showing that customers take into account, not only as a fundamental criterion the quality of the product but also another fundamental criterion that is the quality of induced services. One can see that quality is very important for customers. Product quality is often associated with its price. The customer considers the offer by making a quality/price ratio.

The theory of satisfaction

Ladhari (2005), Vanhamme (2004), Gandhi (2011), Bashar et al. (2012), and Nasse (2012) mention customer satisfaction. For these authors, equity and emotional reactions are linked to the concept of satisfaction. For these authors, fairness is an antecedent of satisfaction.

The theory of repurchase

Simon (2000), Van Laethem and Body (2008), Kitchathorn (2009), and Nasse (2012) show that satisfaction has a significant influence on the repurchase intentions. For these authors, a satisfied customer has an intention not to break now but to continue buying the products and services of the company. They thus establish a link between equity and repurchase.

The theory of sales growth

Morrisson and Mathieu (2003), Ouédraogo (2007), Nasse (2012), and Shamba and Livian (2014) talk succinctly about company's sales growth.

For these authors, there is a need for companies to consider customer satisfaction, what necessarily leads to sales growth.

Research model and hypotheses

The research model that shows the different relationships between the various variables identified in the literature review is shown in Figure 2.

There are three hypotheses to be tested as as follows (Figure 1):

Hypothesis 1: Internal equity influences customer satisfaction.
Hypothesis 2: Internal equity influences repurchase.
Hypothesis 3: Internal equity influences corporate sales growth.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is an exploratory dealing with marketing research in the context of Burkina Faso. The epistemological posture adopted is postpositivist. The approach is hypothetico-deductive.

Research procedure

This exploratory study uses a quantitative questionnaire composed of fourteen questions designed by using the software packages Sphinx IQ Version 2014 and Statistical Product abd Service Solutions IBM-SPSS (Hejase and Hejase, 2013). The questionnaire is pre-tested with a number of customers belonging to three private

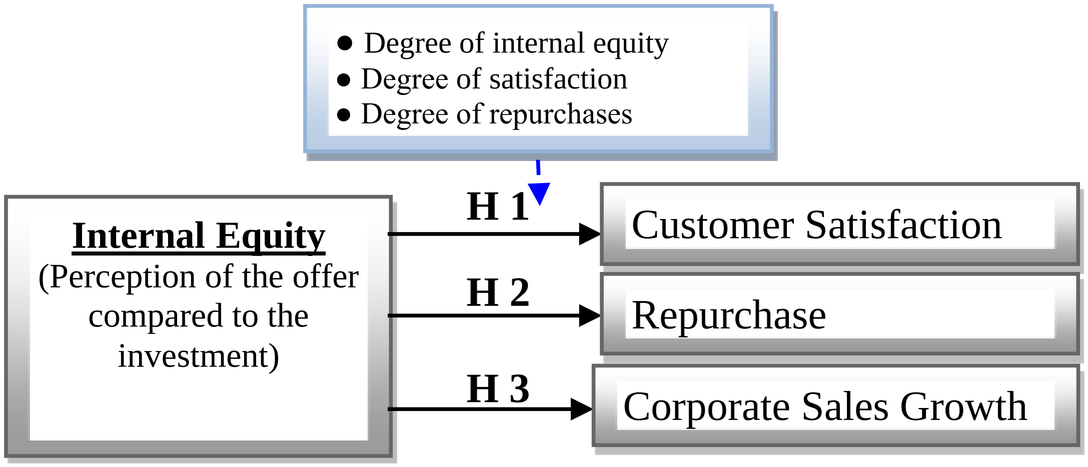

Figure 2. Final research model
Source: Nasse (2015).

companies. This first test is done on a sample of 120 respondents. The pre-test results is used to draft a final version of the quantitative questionnaire. Once the final version of the designed questionnaire is made, it is administered again on a paper to the customers of the three companies for a period of six months. The studied population is composed of individuals interested in purchasing different products. For the quantitative approach due to a lack of resources and a lack of time, a survey is conducted, involving a "sample". This sample is a subset of the studied population. To set the sample size, the following formula is used:

$n = (p)(1-p) / (e / Z)^2$

where p is representing the selected proportion of an attribute, for example gender. Here, assuming 50-50 female to male ratio, p=0.50 or 50%; e represents the level of precision or accuracy set for this research, here 6.5%, and Z is the number related to degree of confiedence in this case Z=1.96 or 95% confidence (Hejase and Hejase, 2013: 231; Ganassali, 2009: 51). Then

$n = 0.25 / (0.0\,65 / 1.96)^2 = 229$ people.

A sample of 229 people is enough for a 6.5 point error estimate. Once the sample is determined, data collection was done through a questionnaire. The total number of respondents is 233, what is sufficient.

Research instrument

This is focused on the description of the questionnaire. It shows the number of questions, the focus of the questions, where the questions are from. The research has been carried out through a survey questionnaire. The number of questions is 14. Items are measured on a Likert scale in four items ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree." These four items are respectively "Strongly disagree", "Disagree", "Agree" "Strongly agree". The Likert scale in four items is selected not only to avoid neutral answers and to collect the answers of a good quality but also to allow respondents to save time as most of the respondents encountered were in hurry. According to Ganassali (2009), "With four items the respondent is forced to match the effort to tick one side or the other of the central position, which is sometimes chosen as a safe haven." Furthermore, to better quantify the data discussed, a number is assigned to each data response. Thus, the answer "Strongly disagree" is the number 1, the answer, "Disagree" is the number 2, the answer, "Agree" is the number 3, and the answer "Strongly agree" is the number 4.

Instrument validation

The survey questionnaire is composed of 14 questions and it is validated by some university teachers. Dr. Niamboue Bado from Florida A. & M. University in United States of America and Pr. Alidou Ouédrago from the University of Moncton in Canada.

Research setting

The country where the research is conducted is Burkina Faso where participants are identified. The research field is limited to the main city of Burkina, the capital city that is Ouagadougou in the Kadiogo province and the city for a period of one year. In the context of Burkina Faso, conducting a research in the companies is challenging and problematic because most of the companies want to protect their data and keep it confidential. Therefore, the research is limited to these three companies because it is only these companies that allow the researcher to carry out the reasearch.

Research participants

Participants are considered using the criteria that include age, gender, level of education, marital status, profession and social class. First, the age of participants is ranged from 10 to more than 55 years old. Second, participants gender includes both women and men being customers of one of the surveyed companies. Third, the education level of participants is from primary school to university. Finally, participants are from different socio-professional categories and social classes.

Data analysis

It is a quantitative data (questionnaire) analysis. First, quantitative data is processed using both Sphinx IQ software and SPSS

Table 1. Correlations between variables.

Enterprise	Variables Crossing	Results
Training Center	"Satisfaction linked to quality " and "Internal Equity"	p-value = <0.01; χ^2 = 41.83; df = 9.00
	"Satisfaction linked to price" and "Internal Equity"	p-value = <0.01; χ^2 = 54.73; df = 9.00
	"Satisfaction linked to product" and "Internal Equity"	p-value = <0.01; χ^2 = 36.16; df = 9.00
	"Global satisfaction " and "Internal Equity"	p-value = <0.01; χ^2 = 40.08; df = 9.00
	"Repurchase" and "Internal Equity"	p-value = <0.01; χ^2 = 39.37; df = 9.00
Restaurant	"Satisfaction linked to quality" and "Internal Equity"	p-value = 0.01; χ^2 = 16.63; df = 6.00
	"Satisfaction linked to price" and "Internal Equity"	p-value = <0.01; χ^2 = 45.15; df = 9.00
	"Satisfaction linked to product " and "Internal Equity"	p-value = <0.01 ; χ^2 = 19.64; df = 6.00
	" Global satisfaction " and "Internal Equity"	p-value = 0.04; χ^2 = 13.02; df = 6.00
	"Repurchase" and "Internal Equity"	p-value = 0.02; χ^2 = 15.61; df = 6.00
ENT SARL	"Satisfaction linked to quality" and "Internal Equity"	p-value = 0.01; χ^2 = 16.25; df = 6.00
	"Satisfaction linked to price" and "Internal Equity"	p-value = <0.01; χ^2 = 27.61; df = 4.00
	"Satisfaction linked to product " and "Internal Equity"	p-value = <0.01; χ^2 = 30.85; df = 4.00
	"Global satisfaction " and "Internal Equity"	p-value = <0.01; χ^2 = 18.67; df = 6.00
	"Repurchase" and "Internal Equity"	p-value = <0.01; χ^2 = 18.96; df = 6.00

Source: Nasse, Data Analysis (2015).

software. Second, the quantitative data is completed by direct observation and indirect observation.

Validation of the research

The research instruments chosen must allow people to better appreciate the phenomenon to measure and see if it is well measured (Carricano et al., 2010). Post validation of data is made, and respondents reiterate the same points of views.

Viability of the research

The results are tested several times to see if the results are the same. According to Carrino et al. Bertrandias (2010), the method of ‘‘test’’ and ‘‘retest’’ is the best way to show the viability of a research. The results are tested several times with the same instruments and the outcomes are the same.

RESULTS

The total sample collected in the three companies consists of 233 respondents with a 100% response rate. However, the comparative study of the three companies has necessitated reconsideration of sample data N (= 233) into three sub samples (N1 = Training Center = 138 respondents; N2 = SARL ENT = 49 respondents; N3 = Restaurant = 46 respondents). The processing of the data has revealed at least five identical relevant relationships in the three private companies. These five relevant relationships are obtained by crossing the variable "internal equity" with other variables. These relationships are either significant (S) or very significant (VS). The results in Table 1 show the correlations between variables.

For the training center

Table 1 depicts that cross tabulating the variable "internal equity" and the variable "satisfaction related to quality" shows that the relationship is statistically significant because the p-value = <0.01 and χ^2 = 41.83. Similarly, the same behaviour is observed for the following crosstabs: crossing the variable "internal equity" and the variable "satisfaction linked to the price" (p-value = <0.01 and χ^2 = 54.73), crossing the variable "internal equity" and the variable "satisfaction related to the product" (p-value = <0.01 and χ^2 = 36.16), crossing of the variable "internal equity" and the variable "overall satisfaction" (p-value = <0.01 and χ^2 = 40.08), and crossing the variable "internal equity" and the variable "repurchase" (p-value = <0.01 and χ^2 = 39.37).

For ENT SARL (a printing company)

Table 1 depicts that cross tabulating the variable "internal equity" and the variable "satisfaction related to the quality" shows that the relationship is statistically significant as the p-value = 0.01 and χ^2 = 16.63. Similarly, the same behavior is observed for the following crosstabs: crossing the variable "internal equity" and the

Table 2. Test of multiple comparisons (Satisfaction linked to quality).

Test	(I) Enterprises	(J) Enterprises	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Games-Howell	Training Center	ENT SARL	- 0.47678*	0.10729	0.000	- 0.7312	- 0.2223
		Restaurant	0.15942	0.13465	0.466	- 0.1619	0.4808
	ENT SARL	Training Center	0.47678*	0.10729	0.000	0.2223	0.7312
		Restaurant	0.63620*	0.13938	0.000	0.3035	0.9689
	Restaurant	Training Center	- 0.15942	0.13465	0.466	- 0.4808	0.1619
		ENT SARL	- 0.63620*	0.13938	0.000	- 0.9689	- 0.3035

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
Source: Nasse, Data Analysis (2015).

Table 3. Test of multiple comparisons (Satisfaction linked to price).

Test	(I) Enterprises	(J) Enterprises	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Games-Howell	Training Center	ENT SARL	- 0.369565*	0.124945	0.011	- 0.66730	- 0.07183
		Restaurant	0.152174	0.114020	0.380	- 0.11920	0.42355
	ENT SARL	Training Center	0.369565*	0.124945	0.011	0.07183	0.66730
		Restaurant	0.521739*	0.139635	0.001	0.18910	0.85438
	Restaurant	Training Center	- 0.152174	0.114020	0.380	- 0.42355	0.11920
		ENT SARL	- 0.521739*	0.139635	0.001	- 0.85438	- 0.18910

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
Source: Nasse, Data Analysis (2015).

variable "satisfaction linked to the price" (p-value = <0.01 and χ^2 = 45.15), crossing the variable "internal equity" and the variable "satisfaction related to the product" (p-value = <0.01 and χ^2 = 19.64), crossing of the variable "internal equity" and "overall satisfaction" variable (p-value = 0.04 and χ^2 = 13.02), and crossing the variable "internal equity" and the variable "repurchase" (p-value = 0.02 and χ^2 = 15.61).

For the restaurant

Table 1 also depicts that cross tabulating the variable "internal equity" and the variable "satisfaction related to the quality" shows that the relationship is statistically significant as the p-value = 0.01 and χ^2 = 16.25. Similarly, the same behavior is observed for the following crosstabs: crossing the variable "internal equity" and the variable "satisfaction linked to the price" (p-value = <0.01 and χ^2 = 27.61), crossing the variable "internal equity" and the variable "satisfaction related to the product" (p-value = <0.01 and χ^2 = 30.85), crossing of the variable "internal equity" and the "global satisfaction" variable (p-value = <0.01 and χ^2 = 18.67), and crossing the variable "internal equity" and "repurchase" variable (p-value = <0.01 and χ^2 = 18.96).

The comparative analysis between the three companies shows that the results are excellent in ENT SARL compared to the two other companies namely the training center and the restaurant because there is more customer satisfaction at ENT SARL than at the training center and the restaurant.

Table 2 shows that all comparisons are significant with respect to the variable satisfaction related to the quality except between the training center and the restaurant (p = 0.466).

Looking into Table 3, the results indicate that all comparisons are significant with respect to the variable "satisfaction linked to the price" except between the training center and the restaurant (p = 0.380).

Table 4 depicts that all comparisons are significant with respect to the variable internal equity except between the training center and the restaurant (p = 0.226).

Table 5 shows that all comparisons are significant to the variable satisfaction with the product, except between the training center and the restaurant (p = 0.162).

Table 4. Test of multiple comparisons (Internal Equity).

Test	(I) Enterprises	(J) Enterprises	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Games-Howell	Training Center	ENT SARL	- 0.47752*	0.12096	0.000	- 0.7654	- 0.1896
		Restaurant	0.21014	0.12648	0.226	- 0.0915	0.5118
	ENT SARL	Training Center	0.47752*	0.12096	0.000	0.1896	0.7654
		Restaurant	0.68767*	0.14543	0.000	0.3412	1.0341
	Restaurant	Training Center	- 0.21014	0.12648	0.226	- 0.5118	0.0915
		ENT SARL	- 0.68767*	0.14543	0.000	-1.0341	- 0.3412

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
Source: Nasse, Data Analysis (2015).

Table 5. Test of multiple comparisons (Satisfaction linked to product).

Test	(I) Enterprises	(J) Enterprises	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Games-Howell	Training Center	ENT SARL	- 0.46835*	0.09069	0.000	- 0.6832	- 0.2535
		Restaurant	0.22464	0.12184	0.162	- 0.0663	0.5156
	ENT SARL	Training Center	0.46835*	0.09069	0.000	0.2535	0.6832
		Restaurant	0.69299*	0.12270	0.000	0.3997	0.9863
	Restaurant	Training Center	- 0.22464	0.12184	0.162	- 0.5156	0.0663
		ENT SARL	- 0.69299*	0.12270	0.000	- 0.9863	- 0.3997

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
Source: Nasse, Data Analysis (2015).

Table 6 shows that all comparisons are significant to the variable global satisfaction except between the training center and the restaurant ($p = 0.038$).

Table 7 depicts that all comparisons are significant to the variable global satisfaction except between the training center and the restaurant ($p = 0.240$).

The results of the quantitative analysis between the three companies, thus show that the perception of internal equity practices is satisfactory in the point of view of all the customers of ENT SARL company; a great number of customers from the training center are also satisfied, but just a small number of customers of the restaurant are satisfied.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained through the survey, allow the comparisons of the theoretical hypotheses and the empirical research results to test if they are confirmed. The results of the quantitative analysis brought a number of significant items and thus they confirm the hypotheses.

First, the results of the training center, of ENT SARL and of the restaurant show that there is a strong relationship between internal equity and customer satisfaction, the strength of the relationship between internal equity and customer satisfaction is statistically significant. Furthermore, the variability of customer satisfaction can be explained by the variability of internal equity perceived by the customer. The degree of internal equity perceived has a moderating effect on customer satisfaction: internal equity influences customer satisfaction, thus the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and hypothesis 1 is confirmed.

Second, the results of the training center, of ENT SARL and of the restaurant demonstrate that there is a strong relationship between internal equity and the degree of repurchase; the relationship between internal equity and customer satisfaction is statistically significant. Furthermore, variability in the degree of repurchase can be explained by the variability of the internal equity perceived by the customer. The degree of internal equity perceived has a moderating effect on the degree of repurchase: internal equity influences the repurchase,

Table 6. Test of multiple comparisons (Global satisfaction).

Test	(I) Enterprises	(J) Enterprises	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Games-Howell	Training Center	ENT SARL	- 0.44587*	0.10592	0.000	- 0.6971	- 0.1947
		Restaurant	0.32609*	0.13049	0.038	0.0148	0.6374
	ENT SARL	Training Center	0.44587*	0.10592	0.000	0.1947	0.6971
		Restaurant	0.77196*	0.13529	0.000	0.4491	1.0948
	Restaurant	Training Center	- 0.32609*	0.13049	0.038	- 0.6374	- 0.0148
		ENT SARL	- 0.77196*	0.13529	0.000	-1.0948	- 0.4491

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
Source: Nasse, Data Analysis (2015).

Table 7. Test of multiple comparisons (Repurchase).

Test	(I) Enterprises	(J) Enterprises	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower bound	Upper bound
Games-Howell	Training Center	ENT SARL	- 0.23381*	0.08214	0.014	- 0.4289	- 0.0387
		Restaurant	0.17391	0.10669	0.240	- 0.0813	0.4291
	ENT SARL	Training Center	0.23381*	0.08214	0.014	0.0387	0.4289
		Restaurant	0.40772*	0.11341	0.002	0.1369	0.6785
	Restaurant	Training Center	- 0.17391	0.10669	0.240	- 0.4291	0.0813
		ENT SARL	- 0.40772*	0.11341	0.002	- 0.6785	- 0.1369

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
Source: Nasse, Data Analysis (2015).

therefore the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and hypothesis 2 is confirmed.

Third, the statistics analysis of the training center, of ENT SARL and of the restaurant show that there is a link between internal equity, customer satisfaction, the degree of repurchase; for instance, the relationship between internal equity and customer satisfaction is statistically significant; also, the relationship between internal equity and product repurchase is statistically significant. Furthermore, variability in the degree of satisfaction or the degree of repurchase can be explained by the variability of internal equity perceived by the customer. The degree of internal equity perceived not only has a dampening effect on satisfaction, but also on the degree of repurchase: internal equity influences the growth of the business turnover, thus the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and hypothesis 3 is confirmed.

The results of this study show the relevance of the concept of internal equity in the Customer Relationship Management. The research on the three companies revealed that, internal equity is a factor of sales growth, thus of corporate economic profitability. Many authors who argued that for businesses to be successful, they must have fair practices (Perreti, 2004; Hondeghem and Perry, 2009; Nasse, 2012; Akouwerabou and Bako, 2014) are right. The perception of equity by the individual leads him/her to adopt some behaviors that are profitable to the company. Thus, the perception of fairness by customers in an exchange, leads the customer to engage in some behaviors that are benefitable to the company (Perreti, 2004; Nasse, 2012; 2014). Except for the company ENT SARL, the two other companies namely the training center and the restaurant have difficulties in conceiving an offer in which internal equity is truly perceptible by all the customers. One may suggest that activities in education sector and activities in restaurant sector are more challenging to be truly fair offers.

The choice of the organizational structure compared to the company size can be another factor that explains the fact that a company is innovative in terms of fair offer than the other (Ouédraogo, 2006). The company ENT SARL can better satisfy its customers than the other two companies.

An observation on the different forms of hybridization within the three different companies (Table 8) may help one to understand why fair practices are more

Table 8. Forms of management hybridation.

Companies	Types of organisations	Importation of management tools	Types of managers	Norms of social relations	Hybridation
Training center	International SME	Weak	The boss is the owner Local senior executives and some senior executives trained abroad	Localism "open"	Weak
ENT SARL	Local SME	Weak	The boss is the owner No senior executives	Localism "open"	Weak or null
Restaurant	Local VSE	Null	The boss is the owner No senior executives	Localism "null"	Null

Adapted from Shamba and Livian (2014).

observable in one company than the other.

Conclusion

First, the main contribution is the enrichment of the concept of internal equity. This concept has already been defined in English and French literature; although there are other definitions of internal equity, this research contributes to enhance this definition. So, there is internal equity when the customer perceives that the price of a product is proportional to the quality of the product they are buying. Under such conditions, the customer perceives that the offer is fair (Peretti, 2004; Nasse, 2012). This means that internal equity is perceived by customers when the product or the service is adequate or equitable. Internal equity in the Customer Relationship Management must not be restricted to the concept of "fair price"; it must include a fair management, a fair governance, a fair compensation, a fair valuation of the business exchange situation between a company and its customers. Second, this research has identified the creation of measurement tools to measuring internal equity, customer satisfaction and the degree of repurchase. These tools were developed thanks to the literature. Thirdly, this research highlights internal equity effects on customer satisfaction and their repurchase intentions. Behaviors and attitudes listed when customers receive a fair and an impartial exchange are: the willingness to invest again, the intention to sacrifice his/her money, the intention not to change partner and intention not to stop buying (Perreti, 2004; Nasse, 2012). This research has demonstrated different perceptions of equity by customers and it chiefly contributes to company management by proposing the best management practices not only, but also by taking into account some specific factors of success in the context of Burkina. In a word, this research brings some new information which contribute to enlighten the equity theory, what enhances the methodological approach (Takougang, 2010). The final model is depicted in Figure 2.

The concepts of internal equity and external equity are particularly difficult to handle. The concept of equity is used in many disciplines and in different ways. It was hard to find the best concept of internal equity perceived by the customer in the field of marketing, a research that had been done very rarely, especially in the African context and specifically in Burkina. The development of a quantitative questionnaire has also been a particular choice by setting items in French, which is suitable for the context. The concept of satisfaction required a lot of attention when handling it. So, it has not been easy to find an appropriate definition to the concept of customer satisfaction. The choice of the variables and the choice of the questionnaire are related to the unique context of Burkina, what could lead to bias in generalizing the results.

The research clarifies the concept of equity in general and specifically that of internal equity perceived by the customer and it shows that internal equity has an influence on customer satisfaction, repurchase intentions, and sales growth of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Very Small Enterprises (VSEs). The effects of the perception of internal equity may be positive or negative for the company in terms of repurchase (Perreti, 2004; Nasse, 2012). Also, the effects of the perception of internal equity may be positive or negative for the company (Perreti, 2004; Nasse, 2012) in terms of growth in sales.

Consideration of internal equity in the exchanges between a company and its customers will increase the sales of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Very Small Enterprises (VSEs) in Burkina. Finally, banishing immoral business practices increases the quality of companies' product and service. This helps to strengthen their competitiveness (Akouerabou and Bako, 2014).

Implications for the development of companies

Bourgoin (1984) shows that in the African context companies fails because of mismanagement and this is why managers should apply new forms of management in the African context. Thus, avoiding unfair practices can rebalance business exchanges between customers and companies by significantly reducing customer loss. In the same way, the reactivity of a company should be high and efficient in repairing unfair practices, in order to anticipate the negative effect such as customer loss, reduction of income and sales growth, and some conflictual situations. For this, a company has to know how to use its resources to diagnose and resolve problems related to the management of its customers (Friedrich, 2014).

Implications for the authorities and for a sustainable development of Burkina Faso

In the context of Burkina Faso, encouraging companies for ethical and fair practices is vital for the companies' welfare and for the whole economy growth. Companies' unfair practices have always shown some negative consequences (Akouwerabou and Bako, 2014) both towards the whole economic system of a country and also towards a real sustainable development.

Future research

The study was performed in the specific sector of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Very Small Enterprises (VSEs) in Burkina. It would be useful to extend it in big companies to check whether the results will be the same. It is also necessary to complete this exploratory quantitative study by a confirmatory qualitative study. It is important to extend the study in another African sociocultural context.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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