

## **TRUST IN INTERNATIONAL HEALTH SERVICES MARKETING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

Maria Fregidou- Malama and Akmal Hyder

University of Gävle

This paper deals with the internationalization of health care services focusing on trust building and developing marketing strategy. The paper analyzes how trust is achieved when marketing a Swedish health care service in Egypt, Brazil, China, Hong Kong, the Philippines and Russia. The study examines the relationship between trust, networks and marketing strategy. Trust is the confidence between business partners and is important for establishing relationships in foreign markets and creating contacts in the local environment. By developing trust, long term business relationships can be enhanced. Through trust, service providers communicate with costumers, understand and satisfy their needs. Findings reveal that trust is built on three levels : a country level, company level, and personal level. Country of service origin creates initial trust by being an organized society and trustworthy. Company reputation is enhanced by training employees, service quality and customer support. Trust on a personal level depends on the company representatives' experience, competence and their business contacts. Trust evolves as the understanding between service provider and local customer improves. However, the development of trust is also affected by the marketing strategy as the service provider and local customers improves. However, the development of trust is also affected by the marketing strategy as the service provider adapts to local customers' tastes, habits and preferences. A marketing strategy based on standardization can damage trust in the local market, whereas a marketing strategy based on adaption can damage worldwide. Our research establishes the importance of building trust and the critical impact of marketing strategy on trust and network development.