STOCKHOLM SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS
MASTER THESIS IN MARKETING & MEDIA MANAGEMENT

Shaping the Market

- An investigation analysing the effect of engaging a network during the launch of a new pharmaceutical product

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Abstract

The pharmaceutical industry is changing and successful product launches are becoming even more important. This requires the usage of a new marketing and sales model among the pharmaceutical companies, as the old business model is perceived as ineffective. Pharmaceutical companies will have to work more closely with healthcare regulators, payers and providers, as these actors increasingly affect which pharmaceuticals the market accepts. In addition, the complex nature of pharmaceutical products might contribute to the need of modifying existing market structures in order to successfully launch a new product. Collaboration with a network of actors might be beneficial during the launch of a complex product.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the marketing and sales department at a pharmaceutical company in Sweden engages a network of actors during the launch of a new pharmaceutical product and how this contributes to shape the market. A qualitative research method is used consisting of in-depth interviews with a marketing and sales department at a pharmaceutical company in Sweden, specializing in diabetes treatments.

By analyzing the empirical data, relevant actors and the activities they are engaged in are identified. Furthermore, the analysis confirms that the activities that the marketing and sales department engages these actors in, contribute to shape the market. In addition, the analysis does also show that the marketing and sales department is pursuing activities in order to influence already existing market shaping practices performed by identified actors. Lastly, the analysis shows that different actors, activities and market practices are important at different points in time during the launch of a new pharmaceutical.

Keywords: Pharmaceutical Industry, New Product Launch, Network, Markets-as-Practice

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CONTENT

1. Introduction

The following chapter provides an introduction to the main subject of the study followed by a problem discussion, which leads to the identification of a purpose and related research questions that the study will address. The chapter ends with a clarification of the scope of the study and a discussion on how the study will be structured.

1.1 Background

The social, demographic and economic context in which the pharmaceutical industry is operating is undergoing considerable change (PwC, 2009b). Declining research and development productivity, rising costs of commercialization, increasing payer influence and shortened exclusivity periods have driven up the average cost per successful pharmaceutical launch and reduced the average expected returns on new investments (Gilbert et al., 2003). The global pharmaceutical industry's total investments in research and development, between 2000 and 2008, have risen from 47 to 75 billion EUR and have remained stable since then. The global investments in research and development in the period between 2006 and 2010 have resulted in a total of 151 new pharmaceutical substances being introduced on the global market, which are 60 less than between 1996 and 2000 (LIF, 2013b).

It is becoming increasingly apparent that the old business model, still used by large pharmaceutical companies, is under heavy pressure to change (Hedner et al., 2012). This recent transformation has been referred to as the end of the blockbuster era and experts argue that the future performance of pharmaceutical companies will become even more dependent on well coordinated and well managed product launches (Capgemini, 2007). Further, aspects such as early commercial input, key opinion leader involvement and increased awareness among physicians prior to launch will be of great importance (ibid.; IMS Health, 2011). This change is also acknowledged by scholars who state that a competitive environment increases the importance of successful product introductions in order for companies to meet new and continuously changing requirements (Hulthink et al., 1998). In addition, the launch process of a new pharmaceutical is especially cumbersome, compared to other products, because of the significant transparency characteristic for this industry.

"Interesting about this industry is that there is never any ability to surprise and launch something totally new. Usually, the whole industry is aware of a new pharmaceutical five years before it actually reaches the market." (Medical Adviser)

The complex nature of new pharmaceuticals might also create a need for extraordinary actions during a launch process. Because of the novelty or complexity of a new product, actors in the business environment might find it difficult to accept the new product and there might be a need to modify prevailing market structures in order to make the launch successful (Aarikka-Stenroos & Sandberg, 2009).

Moreover, it is also argued that in order to secure future success during product launches pharmaceutical companies need to adjust their marketing and sales model (PwC, 2009b) For example, aggressive marketing targeted only to doctors is becoming ineffective in order to stimulate demand for new therapies and overcoming reluctance to pay premium prices for pharmaceutical products (ibid.). Pharmaceutical companies will have to work more closely with healthcare regulators, payers and providers, as these actors increasingly are affecting which pharmaceuticals that are accepted by the market (Gilbert et al., 2003; IMS Health, 2011). The collaboration with a network of actors might also be beneficial during the launch of a complex product (Aarikka-Stenroos & Sandberg, 2009).

As the background indicates, the pharmaceutical industry is changing and successful product launches are becoming even more important. Further, due to the complex nature of pharmaceutical products, there might be a need to modify the existing market in order to achieve a successful launch. In addition, the changes in the industry and the complexity of the products require the usage of a new marketing and sales model in order to enable collaboration with other actors within the pharmaceutical sector. Hence, an investigation of how this collaboration is done practically and how this contributes in shaping the market seems highly relevant.

1.2 Problem Discussion

A majority of the collaborative models that exist are limited to research and development (PwC, 2009a). The use of networks in launch processes and other marketing functions have been neglected and only mentioned briefly in previous research. There are very few examples of where commercialization through networks is empirically illustrated (Aarikka-Stenroos &

Sandberg, 2009). The lack of research within this area is also supported by Talay et al. (2009) as they argue that collaborative ventures are one of the most unexplored areas in new product literature.

When examining previous research on shaping processes within the pharmaceutical industry, researchers acknowledge that market processes are driven by the interaction between actors and that changes in one actor's behaviour can cause great impact on the shape of the market (Steinby, 2005). In addition, the pharmaceutical industry with its diverse set of actors is argued to be an interesting context to pursue further research within, concerning shaping processes (Finch & Geiger, 2011).

Consequently, there is a need to study the use of networks during the launch of a new product and especially within the pharmaceutical industry. Furthermore, as pharmaceutical companies might need to modify the market during a new product launch it is also interesting to investigate how this network involvement might contribute to the shaping process.

In addition, the background indicates that it is the marketing and sales organisations within pharmaceutical companies that need to be developed and that it is regulatory changes that make it necessary to work more closely with new actors in the network. Hence, it is the marketing and sales departments use of a given network that is interesting to investigate further.

1.3 Purpose

The main purpose of the study is to investigate *how the marketing and sales department at a pharmaceutical company in Sweden engages a network of actors during the launch of a new pharmaceutical product and how this contributes to shape the market.* The market shaping process is defined as the activities performed by different actors that contribute to modify a market. Thus, in order to describe this process, relevant actors and how a pharmaceutical company engages them in different activities are being examined. The study will be based on the following research questions.

- *Who are the actors in the pharmaceutical company's network that are engaged by the marketing and sales department during the launch of a new pharmaceutical product?*

- *In what activities does the marketing and sales department at the pharmaceutical company engage the actors during the launch of a new pharmaceutical product?*

- *How do these activities contribute to shape the market in which the pharmaceutical product is launched?*

To investigate this subject, in-depth interviews with the marketing and sales department at a pharmaceutical company will be conducted. This will be complemented with relevant theory and literature studies. Furthermore, the Swedish pharmaceutical industry's sale amounted to approximately 31 million SEK in 2011, which represents less than one percent of the global market (LIF, 2013b). However, due to the structure of the Swedish market, it is one of the first to receive new pharmaceuticals. Thus, it is interesting to pursue an investigation in this market as trends and recent developments are expected to be evident here.

"The Swedish market is very small compared to US and Japan, but also compared to other markets within the EU such as the German. However, Sweden has always been one of the first countries to have new pharmaceuticals. The reason behind this is that, the Swedish market has been well structured, so that if a new pharmaceutical is well received here, the introduction to other European markets will probably be successful as well." (Market Access and Public Affairs Manager)

1.4 Delimitations

The scope of the study will be delimited to only include empirical findings describing the launch of pharmaceuticals used for the treatment of diabetes. Moreover, focusing on one company, in one country and the launch of one particular type of pharmaceutical will hopefully provide depth to the analysis, which is favourable considering the selected qualitative methodology. In addition, it is only the activities pursued by the marketing and sales department at the pharmaceutical company that will be described and analyzed. These findings will only be based on findings from internal interviews, hence from the company's perspective, although external actors might perceive the activities differently or suggest additional ones. This is done in order to be able to understand how the pharmaceutical company actively engage the surrounding network of external actors to succeed during a new product launch. Hence, internal coordination and activities is also excluded. The definition of the launch process studied is also important to account for. It is only the time between the final clinical trials of the pharmaceutical product until the pharmaceutical product can be prescribed to patients that is studied and analyzed. A final delimitation concerns the market shaping process, which in the study is defined as the activities performed by different actors that contribute to modify a market, rather than constitute it.

1.5 Disposition

The structure of the study from this point and forward will be as follows. In chapter two a pre-study is presented and a discussion of the results leads to the formulation of an additional research question. Chapter three summarizes the existing literature within the relevant research area and chapter four introduce the theoretical framework and research model used in the main study. Further, the fifth chapter elaborates on the methodological approach used throughout the study. In chapter six an overview of the context in which the study will be performed is presented. In chapter seven the empirical findings based on interviews with the company are presented and these are then analyzed in chapter eight in accordance with the proposed research model. Chapter nine contains a conclusion, summarizing the analytical results. Finally, the tenth chapter includes suggestions on what implications the analytical results provide and which subjects that might be relevant for future research.

2. The Complexity of the Swedish Pharmaceutical Industry

The following chapter will describe the purpose, design and findings of the pre-study that was conducted before the actual main study. Based on the findings, the chapter will end with a discussion where an additional research question is proposed.

2.1 Purpose of Pre-Study

A pre-study was conducted for primarily two reasons. The first objective was to gain an understanding of the Swedish pharmaceutical industry specializing in diabetic care and to examine if the transformation described in the background is evident in this market. Further, the pre-study provided initial suggestions of which actors that might be involved during the launch of a new pharmaceutical, and what activities they perceive themselves to be engaged in. These results were used to achieve the second objective, which was to investigate if there are any additional interesting aspects that are related to the main study and should be included in the research questions.

2.2 Design, Method and Process of Pre-Study

Due to the explorative purpose of the pre-study, a qualitative research method was used (Bryman & Bell, 2007). A qualitative research method has the benefit of providing an understanding for the overall context, which was one of the main objectives of the pre-study (ibid.). Interviews with a diverse set of actors formed the basis for the data collection. During the interviews a semi-structured approach was used in order to cover certain areas of interest, while still keeping the interviews as flexible as possible (ibid.). A majority of the interviews were conducted at the interviewee's office and only a few over telephone, due to a geographical distance. The interviewees represent important actors in the Swedish pharmaceutical sector specializing in diabetes, an overview is presented in *Table 1*. The three most influential groups are the different healthcare professionals, patients and regulators.

The National Diabetes Team, which is a non-political association that brings together professional and patient representatives on questions about diabetes, will represent the healthcare professionals and the patients. There are five different independent associations that form the National Diabetes Team, which all have been interviewed during the pre-study.

In addition, a senior physician, who also is a researcher within diabetology, has been interviewed.

The trade association for the research-based pharmaceutical industry operating in Sweden (LIF), represents one of the regulators. The members of LIF have adopted ethical rules and a self-regulation system, which controls all marketing activities related to pharmaceutical products.

In addition, based on initial results from the pre-study an interview with a representative from the therapy group specializing in endocrinology and diabetes within a regional recommending committee was conducted. The recommending committees are regional, meaning that there is one in each county of Sweden. It is the recommending committees that recommend which pharmaceuticals doctors should prescribe and thus, this interview does also represent the view of the regulators.

Name	Organisation	Position
Mona Andersson	The Swedish Society for Nurses in Diabetic Care	Former President
Karolina Antonov	The Pharmaceutical Industry Association	Policy Manager
Kerstin Brismar	Karolinska Institutet	Physician, professor and specialist in internal medicine, endocrinology and diabetology
Helene Holmer	The Recommending Committee (Skåne)	Member of the theraphy group within endocrinology
Mona Landin-Olsson	The Swedish Association for Diabetology	President
Fredrik Löndahl	The Swedish Diabetes Association	President
Svante Norgren	The Swedish Pediatric Society	President in the reference group for endocrinology and diabetes
Gunilla Willsteen	The Swedish Association of Clinical Dietitians	President in the reference group for diabetes

Table 1: An Overview of the Pre-Study Interviewees

Since a majority of the interviewed actors represent important associations, the first part of the interview focused on how the association that they represent, cooperate and interact with the pharmaceutical industry. The second part of the interview focused on what types of activities and interaction they, as a person or association, experience being a part of during a pharmaceutical company's launch of a new product.

In order to determine which aspects that are the most relevant to consider in the main study, features of a grounded theory approach were used as the general strategy to guide the collection and analysis of data (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Each interview was recorded and thereafter transformed into transcripts, which enabled an open coding practice that resulted in the identification of concepts (ibid.). New concepts were generated and further elements were added as more data was collected. Thereafter, through constant comparison of data and concepts, broad groups of similar concepts were turned into categories (ibid.).

2.3 Findings from Pre-Study

In the process of coding, conceptualizing and finally identifying categories, two categories stand out as of great importance to consider to be able to understand the Swedish pharmaceutical industry in general, and the Swedish pharmaceutical industry specializing in diabetes in particular. Further, from these categories an additional research question can be formulated, which will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

2.3.1 There Are Less Forums In Which Pharmaceutical Information Can Be Provided

The marketing activities performed by different pharmaceutical companies are very similar and the only actual difference between the companies´ marketing efforts is the time they spend on building personal relationships (Brismar, 2013; Andersson, 2013). A potential reason behind the similarity of the activities performed is the pharmaceutical industry's ethical regulations that put limitations on what type of activities that can be performed. Hence, companies that comply with these regulations tend to pursue the same type of activities (Antonov, 2013).

The strict ethical regulations do also affect the level of knowledge among practitioners.
During the eighties and nineties pharmaceutical companies invited practitioners, in leading positions, to trips together with other colleagues with the same responsibility at other hospitals or clinics. On these trips several discussions and lectures were arranged. Back home the practitioners held their own presentations, teaching others what they had learnt. It was often the pharmaceutical companies that provided the presentation material. Today, in accordance with the ethical regulations, pharmaceutical companies are prohibited to offer this kind of arrangements. However, presentations about a certain product can still be held, but they often only last for about 30 minutes along with a light lunch. In addition, pharmaceutical companies can also invite specialists to conferences, where they can assist by paying half of the registration fee, or try to arrange personal meetings with the healthcare professionals. Building personal relationships is also relevant for healthcare professionals, since this might result in better discussions regarding the product and areas of usage (Brismar, 2013). However, the process of building personal relationships is also limited by ethical regulations, as pharmaceutical companies are not allowed to invite or contact healthcare professionals

personally and must ask the manager of the clinic to distribute the invitations (Norgren, 2013). In the near future the pharmaceutical companies will also be obliged to officially report interaction or collaboration with individual professionals to LIF, which further will affect the possibility to build relationships. Today, such reporting only covers collaborations with associations or similar (Antonov, 2013).

Hence, new regulations have resulted in fewer activities, which in turn have resulted in less information dissemination among practitioners, and especially among those who have not specialized in a certain medical area (Brismar, 2013). Thus, all the activities that pharmaceutical companies still are able to engage practitioners in are of great importance since the practitioners need a broad base of knowledge and expertise in new treatment opportunities (Andersson, 2013). This is especially true since the Swedish healthcare does not have the ability to provide the economic means for equivalent professional training (Norgren, 2013), which the pharmaceutical companies claim they have observed during the last years when they have been forced to withdrawal because of more strict regulations (Antonov, 2013).

Another increasingly prominent group among the healthcare professionals, that also need continuous education, consists of the nurses that play an ever more important part in the treatment of patients with diabetes. Nurses are often responsible for a majority part of the contact and interaction with patients and their families (Andersson, 2013; Norgren, 2013). Nurses today are also given more responsibility, as they are able to get further education and specialize in a certain medical area, like diabetic care (Brismar, 2013). In many cases it is the responsible nurse that gives advice on which treatment to use, that later is prescribed by the doctor in charge (Andersson, 2013). Nurses' interaction with pharmaceutical companies is limited to the scheduled presentations that are held at the clinic, during which all personnel participate (Willsteen, 2013). Further, nurses seldom participate during additional conferences (Norgren, 2013).

To summarize, it is evident that the pharmaceutical companies are important providers of information regarding new studies and treatment opportunities. However, due to stricter regulations, the forums in which such information can be discussed are limited, although healthcare professionals recognize the importance of these. Following from this, there seems to be a contradiction between different actors in the market concerning what interaction that is necessary between pharmaceutical companies and healthcare professionals.

2.3.2 The Individual Prescriber Is Not The Decision Maker Anymore

The management of the health and medical care sector has changed, which have affected the individual doctors´ decision-making power. Every doctor does still have the same prescribing rights, but there are recommendations on what medications that should be prescribed. It is the Pharmaceutical Committee in each county that have the power to make such recommendations, in order to work for a reliable and rational drug use (Antonov, 2013). These recommending committees base their decisions on national, European and American guidelines, but also on costs and traditions within a particular county. The industry is invited to present new pharmaceuticals under very strict forms, meaning that they have limited time and that all members of the relevant sub-group specialized within the relevant therapeutic area should be present so that they all get the same information (Holmer, 2013). The decision to recommend a pharmaceutical is taken within the relevant therapy group, which later on is presented to the committee where the final decision is made (Holmer, 2013). However, there are some examples where these recommendations have had an inhibiting effect. In diabetic care the most prominent example is when a pharmaceutical company launched a new medicine for a special kind of eye problem that can arise as a consequence of diabetes. Although the new product was the only approved treatment on the market for this disease a few counties started to use another product because of its lower price. A problem with this, except for the fact that some patients got a less efficient treatment, is that it sent a signal to pharmaceutical companies that investments in research is unnecessary if the initial price of the product is expected to be high. Hence, there is no actual incentive to pursue pharmaceutical research although the interest among healthcare practitioners is strong (Löndahl, 2013).

Following from this, it seems as recent years focus on budgets and rational decision-making has made it difficult to bring innovative products to the market at profitable price levels. On the other hand, there is a strong interest among healthcare professionals for new treatment opportunities and a strong belief that all medications that improve the patients' well being should be introduced to the market. Thus, there is a contradiction among actors in the market regarding this subject as well, which is essential for pharmaceutical companies to take into consideration during the launch of a new product in order to succeed.

2.4 Key Takeaways From Pre-Study

The results from the pre-study support the initially proposed trends within the pharmaceutical industry and make it apparent that the Swedish market has been going through a transformation during recent years. Especially regulatory changes have forced pharmaceutical companies to adapt to new requirements. Further, the market is today perceived as very complex with many influential actors, which all have very different, and sometimes contradicting, needs and beliefs. During the launch of a new pharmaceutical a pharmaceutical company needs to consider all these actors, but it is also evident that the need to do so varies between different phases of the launch process. For example, it seems important to consider the recommending committees at an early stage while some groups of the healthcare professionals are more important when the product actually is on the market. Further, among the healthcare professionals there also seems to be some differences, especially the need to obtain information, but also in which forums this can be given. Following from this, it is interesting to further examine if the actors that are involved, how they are involved, and how this contributes to shape the market, changes over time during the launch of a new product. Hence, a fourth research question will be included to the analysis of how the marketing and sales department at a pharmaceutical company in Sweden engages a network of actors during the launch of a new pharmaceutical and how this contributes to shape the market.

- *Who are the actors in the pharmaceutical company's network that are engaged by the marketing and sales department during the launch of a new pharmaceutical product?*

- *In what activities does the marketing and sales department at the pharmaceutical company engage the actors during the launch of a new pharmaceutical product?*

- *How do these activities contribute to shape the market in which the pharmaceutical product is launched?*

- ***How do the actors, activities and their contribution to shape the market change over time during the launch of a new pharmaceutical product?***

3. Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of previous research related to the purpose of the study. Due to the scarcity of previous studies within this particular area, three adjacent research areas will be examined. The chapter will start with a brief summary of previous research on new product launches in general before narrowing down to focus on the same topic in the pharmaceutical industry. The next section includes a discussion regarding previous research on the involvement of networks within the pharmaceutical industry and thereafter follows a section concerning research that previously has been done on shaping processes within the pharmaceutical industry.

3.1 New Product Launch

As the society develops, companies in almost every industry are facing shorter product life cycles, faster rate of technology change and an increasing sophistication among buyers (Hulthink et al., 1998). This competitive environment increases the importance of successful new product introductions among companies, in order for them to meet the new and continuously changing requirements (ibid.). Crawford (1987) stress that there is a high failure rate associated with the introduction of new products. Following from this, there is a wide array of literature covering the concept of new product introductions in many different ways.

A majority of the literature has historically focused on new product performance. There are several studies on new product failures (Hopkins, 1980) but also on new product success (Cooper, 1976). Cooper and Kleinschmidt (1993) argue that the most interesting results are those from comparative studies where cases of new product success are evaluated in relation to cases of new product failures in order to identify key success factors (Cooper, 1979; Cooper & Kleinschmidt, 1986). Although interesting and useful, Cooper and Kleinschmidt (1993) highlight a major problem with this type of previous research. According to them the research is unfocused as it cuts across a broad array of industries, which leads to misleading results, as a success factor in one industry might be less important in another. To counteract the issue of unfocused research Cooper and Kleinschimdt (1993) continue their research with a study where they only focus on one industry in order to eliminate inter-industry differences and effects. To identify the factors behind success in the chosen industry the authors use a conceptual model called the new product success factors model where the new product's outcomes are the result of the interaction of the new product's strategy with both the new product's market and competition.

Furthermore, Beard and Easingwood (1996) focus on the whole product development process and identify the launch as a critical step. The authors analyse marketing action and launch tactics for high-technology products and argue that a successful launch is heavily dependent on how well marketing managers pursue the launch. The study does also show that marketers tend to emphasize the technological component of the new product and to focus on positioning and attack tactics rather than market preparation or targeting.

To summarize, it is evident that various research reports have been conducted on the topic of new product launches and that it is perceived as a critical stage for the success of new products. Furthermore, the outcome of the launch is dependent on both external factors in a company's environment as well as a company's internal capabilities.

3.1.1 New Product Launch within the Pharmaceutical Industry

Despite the thorough research on new product launches in general the research on new product launches within the pharmaceutical industry is scarce. Trim and Pan (2005) present a new product launch strategy model for pharmaceutical companies. The authors emphasize the fact that those involved in new product launch strategies are required to make both strategic and tactical decisions. In the model, strategic launch decisions made early in the new product development process are supposed to affect the tactical launch decisions made at a later date, which in turn determines the new product's performance. The new product launch strategy model does also suggest that the tactical launch decisions are influenced by industry specific factors such as regulations and product issues. The strategic launch decisions, on the other hand, are influenced both by internal factors as well as industry specific factors. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on the need for implementation of a strategic marketing concept within pharmaceutical companies.

Talay et al. (2009) discuss the importance of collaborative ventures in a process leading to the launch of new products in the pharmaceutical industry. The authors argue that collaborative ventures are one of the most unexplored areas in new product literature, even if it is of great importance for both scholars and practitioners. Further, the purpose of their study is to examine what characteristics of partner firms in collaborative ventures and what characteristics of the partnership that leads to a successful launch of a new product in the pharmaceutical industry. The study reveals that combined marketing resources contribute to the probability of an eventual product launch in a collaborative venture. However, Talay et al., (2009) do only study dyadic relationships and exclude all collaborative ventures that consist of more than two partners.

It is made clear that the launch stage is a critical step within the pharmaceutical industry as well. Nevertheless, there is a lack of new product launch research focusing on this particular industry. However, in the research conducted, internal as well as external factors influencing the outcome of the launch are stressed. In addition, collaborative ventures are put forward as contributing to positive outcomes of a new product launch.

3.2 Networks within the Pharmaceutical Industry

Within network theory there are basically two well-known schools of thought. The industrial network theory, represented by the Industrial Marketing and Purchasing Group (IMP), primarily focuses on the general characteristics of organically evolved networks (Törmänen & Möller, 2003), whereas a group of American based researchers primarily focuses on the creation and management of intentionally formed strategic networks (Tikkanen & Halinen, 2003). However, nowadays research on both types of networks within the pharmaceutical industry can be found within the IMP group, which further will be described, although the study focus on an organically evolved network.

Gebert Persson and Steinby (2005) view networks as open and argue that relationships evolve naturally, which they state is the foundation of the IMP approach. Further, they investigate how networks evolve under pressure from governmental authorities and how license applications impact the development of relationships and networks in protected industries. One of the case studies used in the research is based on the Finnish pharmaceutical industry. In the study it becomes apparent that the environment is a part of the business and that the intervention from governmental authority directly affects the network evolving processes.

Järvensivu et al. (2008) focus on intentionally formatted strategic business networks and the interplay between institutional environment and these strategic networks. The researchers conduct their study on Pharma Industry Finland, which is a trade association and a strategic network, and conclude that the strategic network and its institutional environment are closely intertwined and influence each other.

Studying the network approach within research on the pharmaceutical industry, the initial idea that a pharmaceutical company is affected by external actors in its network and therefore should try to collaborate with them is supported.

3.3 Shaping Processes within the Pharmaceutical Industry

Steinby (2005) puts forward what previous researchers have emphasized and state that market processes are driven by the interaction between actors and that markets can be seen as continuously constructed by actors. Based on this view of markets-as-networks, Steinby (2005) uses the concept of market practice to study how new market forms and structures have developed within the pharmaceutical distribution in Finland. She further investigates what actors and action that has taken place and how these actions together have resulted in the development of pharmacy chains. The case also illustrates how minor changes in an actor's behaviour and market practice can have great impact on the shape of the market. In an additional study Steinby (2006) analyzes a process in which well-set routines within the pharmaceutical industry are changed when new market practices are created that shape the market. The focus in the study is on the introduction of pharmaceutical generic substitutes in Finland. The study shows that actors are actively involved in creating new practices and that new regulations result in new routines in the market.

Similarly, Chakrabarti et al. (2012) investigate changes in the pharmaceutical distribution network in the United Kingdom. In the research the authors argue that networks can be understood with market-as-practice theory and defines this as network-as-practice. By using this approach they investigate how a network had to adapt its practices to react to a particular distribution decision by one focal actor within the network.

Finch and Geiger (2011) do also study the decisions taken by focal actors and focus on the work that market actors undertake in order to stabilize or de-stabilize market objects in the market space. The work is referred to as objectification and describes the activities that market actors undertake to make an object and shape the space, in which they present, position and exchange this object. The authors examine the pharmaceutical industry and investigate how two companies addressed the difficult marketing problem of distinguishing new versions of their products from established ones. Finch and Geiger (2011) argue that this is especially interesting to examine within pharmaceutical marketing as pharmaceutical companies' marketing communication and new product development strategies are designed to create legitimate markets for their products. Pharmaceutical markets are not ready-made into which pharmaceutical companies launch their products, but subject to creation by market actors with an interest in the existence and shape of a particular market (ibid.). The variety of market actors within the pharmaceutical industry is also expected to be interesting, as pharmaceutical companies face a diverse set of actors that all contribute to the existence and shaping of these markets (ibid.). Based on their findings, Finch and Geiger (2011) conclude their research by suggesting that researchers should recognize that behind every market object, there is a lot of and often very interesting market work, and that many aspects of this work remain to be explored.

To summarize, previous researchers have emphasized that markets can be seen as continuously constructed by actors and that actors are actively involved in creating new practices in the market. Shaping processes are also recognized in relation to new product introductions and it is argued that the pharmaceutical industry provides an especially interesting context for further investigations of the subject.

3.4 The Research Gap

Various research reports have been conducted on the topic of new product launches and verifies that it is a critical stage for the success of new products and that the pharmaceutical industry is no exception. Further, it is also evident that both external and internal factors affect the outcome of a new product launch. Researchers studying the phenomenon within the pharmaceutical industry do also emphasize this, although such research is scarce.

Building on the importance of considering external factors during a new product launch, previous researchers acknowledge the need for pharmaceutical companies to take external networks into account. However, there is little research concerning this in the context of a new product launch and especially the use of these networks to aid in such a process. Further, previous researchers focusing on networks and shaping processes within the pharmaceutical industry show that one focal actor in a network can have great impact on the shape of a market and that actors might need to shape the space, into which they launch a product. It is argued that this subject would be very interesting to investigate further within the pharmaceutical industry.

Consequently, in order to contribute to the existing knowledge gap in research, this study aims to study and analyze how the marketing and sales department at a pharmaceutical company in Sweden engages a network of actors during the launch of a new pharmaceutical and how this contributes to shape the market.

4. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter the theoretical frame of reference of the study is presented in three parts, which all are closely related to the research questions. Each theoretical part described will end with a brief discussion of how the specific area of theory relates to the main study. The first theory presented is general theory regarding stakeholders along with a model that can be used to identify important stakeholders in a company's environment. The next part considers network theory and how actors in a company's environment can be used to aid the process of commercialisation. The chapter ends with an introduction to market-as-practice theory, where practices are defined as activities that contribute to constitute a market, which thus can be used to describe market shaping. Lastly, an analytical research model connecting the theories and research questions is developed and discussed.

4.1 Stakeholder Theory

The insight that organizations have obligations to a wide community of actors has resulted in the development of stakeholder theory, which recognizes the diverse groups an organization interacts with and the responsibilities it may have to these (Hoek & Maubach, 2005). Freeman (1984) argues that Dill (1975) was the first researcher to extend the stakeholder concept beyond groups of shareholders and customers, to integrate all groups that are thought of as having contradictory relationships with the firm. Freeman (1984) further suggests that this research was the first to demonstrate the importance of the stakeholder concept within strategic management. Recent research has proved that stakeholder theory also can be extended and used to review, evaluate and guide in marketing decision-making (Hoek & Maubach, 2005). However, many of the researchers developing stakeholder theory have concentrated on defining the stakeholder concept or classifying stakeholders into categories that provide an understanding of individual stakeholder relationships (Rowley, 1997). Nevertheless, it is Freeman's (1984) definition of a stakeholder as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm's objectives" that still is most accepted and commonly known (Fassin, 2009; Rowley, 1997). The same can be said about the stakeholder model, used to identify and classify stakeholders, developed by Freeman (1984).

4.1.1 Stakeholder Identification and Classification

The original stakeholder model proposed by Freeman (1984) puts the firm in the center of seven stakeholders, which all are affected by the firm's activities and with which the firm is suggested to have interdependent two-way relationships.

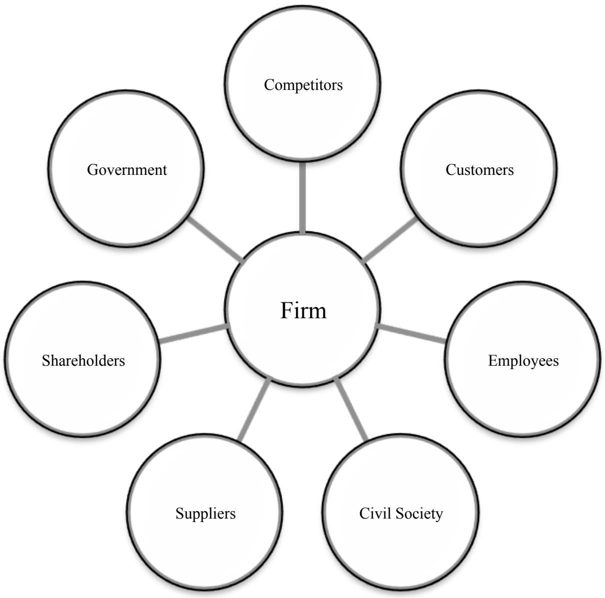

Figure 1: The Original Stakeholder Model (Freeman, 1984)

Fassin (2009) argues that the classical stakeholder model recognizes the different levels of a firm's environment inadequately and that the boundaries are not clearly defined. Stakeholders around the firm, both in the immediate business environment and those in the broader environment, are confused. Further, the ambivalent position of pressure groups and regulators and the assumption of interdependent two-way relationships between the firm and its stakeholders are additional shortcomings.

Post et al. (2002) propose a new graphical model where they use the dimensions of a company's strategic setting and a network approach as the starting point for stakeholder classification. Further, they use the concept of an extended enterprise, meaning that the firm is engaged in diverse functions at multiple locations and linked with numerous other entities and individuals. The authors argue that the focal firm should be seen as the hub within a network of interrelated stakeholders and that it not only is the focal firm's interactions with other businesses that should be included, but also its relationships with other stakeholders. The long-term survival and success of a firm is argued to be determined by its ability to establish and maintain relationships within the entire network of stakeholders as any stakeholder relationship may be the most critical one at a particular time or on a particular issue. Following from this, Post et al. (2002) choose to integrate three dimensions of strategic activity in their stakeholder view, which are the resource base, the industry structure and the social-political setting. Together these dimensions create a new framework for the identification of stakeholders in a company's environment.

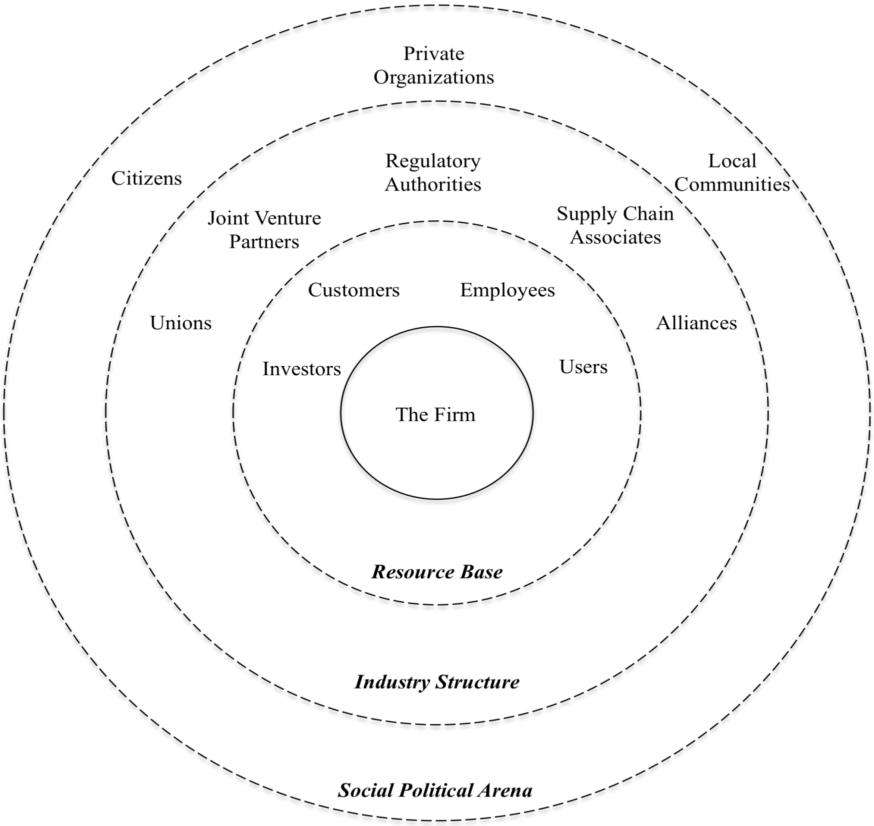

Figure 2: The Stakeholder View of the Corporation (Post et al., 2002)

The arguments put forward by Post et al. (2002) is also supported by Rowley (1997) who emphasizes the network approach and claim that in order to understand how organizations respond to stakeholders, researchers must take the multiple and interdependent interactions that simultaneously exist in stakeholder environments into account, as each firm faces a different set of stakeholders, which results in unique patterns of influence.

4.1.2 The Stakeholder Concept in the Main Study

The definition of a stakeholder as any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm's objectives (Freeman, 1984) along with the stakeholder model developed by Post et al. (2002), which emphasizes the network surrounding each focal firm, will be used in the study to identify the actors that the company engages in different activities in order to shape the market.

4.2 Network Theory

In business-to-business settings, dyadic relationships between firms with focus on the transaction and exchange have traditionally been of great interest (Andersson et al., 1994). However, research suggests that in order to understand these relationships, the environment where these dyadic business relationships take place must also be considered (ibid.). Further, empirical research has shown that relationships of a company are connected, meaning that a relationship affects or is affected by things happening in other relationships (Håkansson & Snehota, 1995). This connectedness between different business relationships implies that there is a certain structure surrounding each firm, which can be defined as a business network (ibid.). A business network can provide benefits to a company in terms of the functions they perform and the resources and other relations they provide access to (Ritter et al., 2004).

4.2.1 The Network Structure

A significant contributor to the development of theory and research with an industrial network approach is the Industrial Marketing and Purchasing (IMP) group. The industrial network theory primarily focuses on the characteristics of organically evolved networks and the network model proposed by Håkansson and Snehota (1995) can be used to analyze the connected business relationships within this type of networks (Törmänen & Möller, 2003). In the model, business networks are seen as structures formed by business relationships consisting of three different layers of substance with respect to the kind of effects they produce (Håkansson & Snehota, 1995). These layers are activities, resources and actors. The structure is also affected by the connections between these layers (ibid.). Hence, the network can be described in terms of which activities that are performed in the network and the ways in which they are linked to each other, the resources used in the network and the patterns of adaption between them and finally the actors in the network and how they are related to each other (Andersson et al., 1994).

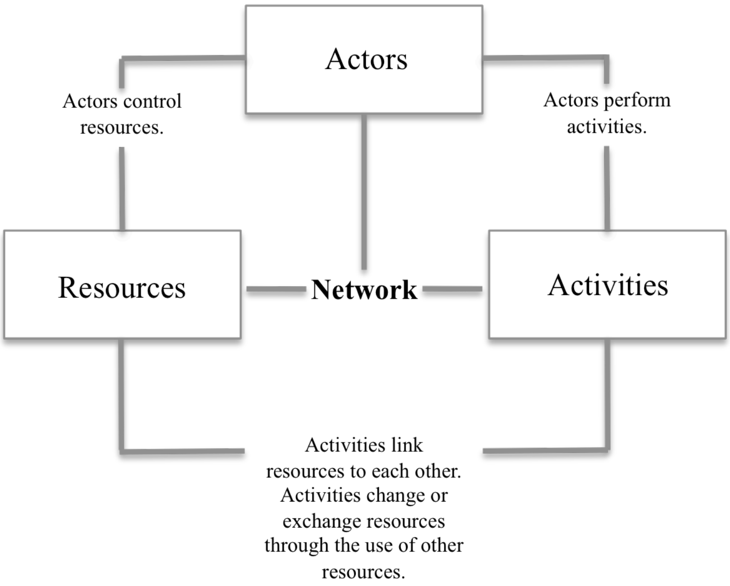

Figure 3: The ARA-Framework (Håkansson, 1990)

4.2.2 A Network Approach Used in the Launch Process

Urban and Hauser (1993) argue that the product launch is the most important step in a new product process, as this part requires the largest commitment in time, money and managerial resources. Especially when a company develops a product for a market that is not well defined or does not exist, actors in the business environment might find it difficult to accept the new product (Aarikka-Stenroos and Sandberg, 2009). Aarikka-Stenroos and Sandberg (2009) suggest that collaboration through a network may help firms to overcome the challenges of commercialisation as an integration of the network's resources and relations can aid in the process of creating or modifying a market for the product. For example, firms may benefit from indirect ties as direct relations to certain actors offers indirect relation to those actors´ relations, which considerably increases the resources available (ibid.). Further examples, put forward by Aarikka-Stenroos and Sandberg (2009) of how the network can be used, is to reduce perceived risk as supporting brands can act as a reference partner to enhance the innovator firm's reputation as a credible actor in the market. In addition, some brands and products does also seem to benefit from word-of-mouth communication

In accordance with the framework put forward by Håkansson and Snehota (1995), Aarikka-Stenroos and Sandberg (1999) describe the network structure in terms of activities, resources and actors. In the case of innovations, Aarikka-Stenroos and Sandberg (2009) assume that trust creation, credibility establishment, awareness building, customer education, trial opportunities, distribution and complementary offerings are the most important activities in a commercialization net. Aarikka-Stenroos and Sandberg (2009) do also emphasize that resources used, often relate to technological competence, knowledge, customer knowledge, market knowledge and relations. Further, the network actors engaged in these activities with these resources are described as persons, business units, firms or other organizations, with which interaction can be based on business or non-business exchange.

4.2.3 The Network Approach in the Main Study

The network approach used in the process of commercialization, as proposed by Aarikka-Stenroos and Sandberg (2009), will further be used to analyze how the pharmaceutical company engages actors in its environment to shape the market during a new product launch. The model developed by Håkansson and Snehota (1995), where the network is described in terms of activities, resources and actors and the connections between these elements, will provide the basis for such analysis. The actors in this model will be represented by the stakeholders, which are indentified with the help of previously presented model by Post et al. (2002).

4.3 Market Practice

Kjellberg and Helgesson (2007) argue that by studying market practice, researchers might be provided with a better understanding of how markets are shaped. Market practice is defined as all activities that contribute to constitute a market, which includes both efforts to shape markets as well as efforts to market in markets, such as, promote, advertise and sell. Further, Kjellberg and Helgesson (2007) presents a conceptual model of markets as constituted by practice, where markets are the ongoing results of three interlinked type of practices, which are exchange practices, representational practices and normalizing practices.

According to Kjellberg and Helgesson (2007), exchange practices refer to all activities related to a specific economic exchange, such as specifying and presenting products and negotiating prices and terms of delivery. In addition, activities that contribute to shape individual exchanges, such as advertising and comparative product testing should also be included. Common for all activities, referred to as exchange practices, is that they all contribute to temporarily stabilize certain conditions, so that an economic exchange becomes possible. Representational practices are described by the authors as activities that depict markets and how they work, as they argue that markets are abstract entities and that it is necessary to produce images of this market, in order to be able to speak of a market for a certain type of good. Examples of representational practices are the collection and processing of sales statistics in order to develop promotion practices and the formulation of a market strategy in order to establish preferable directions for certain actors. Normalizing practices establish normative objectives and include all activities that contribute to create guidelines for how a market should be shaped and work according to certain actors. Hence, all attempts to affect markets in specific directions. Further examples put forward by Kjellberg and Helgesson (2007) include efforts to specify general rules of competition and marketing and the application of such rules to specific cases, but also the shaping of voluntary standards and activities related to strategic planning. Kjellberg and Helgesson (2007) argue that an increase in normalizing activities is typical in markets in transition, where rules are under change or when the existing ones are poorly specified.

However, in order to really understand what constitutes markets it is of great importance to explore how these market practices are interlinked. Kjellberg and Helgesson (2007) argue that the practices are linked through translations, which refers to a social process through which something, such as, an idea, a rule, a text, a product, a technology or a claim is spread across time and space. In total there are six types of links between the three types of practices which all constitute markets.

Normalizing practices may result in rules that are translated into tools that partake in exchange practices and voluntary standards, including fair trade and eco-labelling, which also are becoming more influential. Further, Kjellberg and Helgesson (2007) claim that it is difficult to find any market where representations of actors and exchanges do not partake in exchange practices, as actors engaging in exchange take the results of previous exchanges into account and alter their exchange practices accordingly. Representations of markets and their actors are also argued to affect normalizing practices as efforts to establish norms depend on images of the situations that the norms are intended to regulate. Interests arising in ongoing exchange situations might also affect normalizing practices as this can result in support or resistance towards certain reforms. The final translations concern representational practices. Norms concerning what to measure and how to measure affect these practices and the exchange practices provide measurements and are hence also affecting what is being represented.

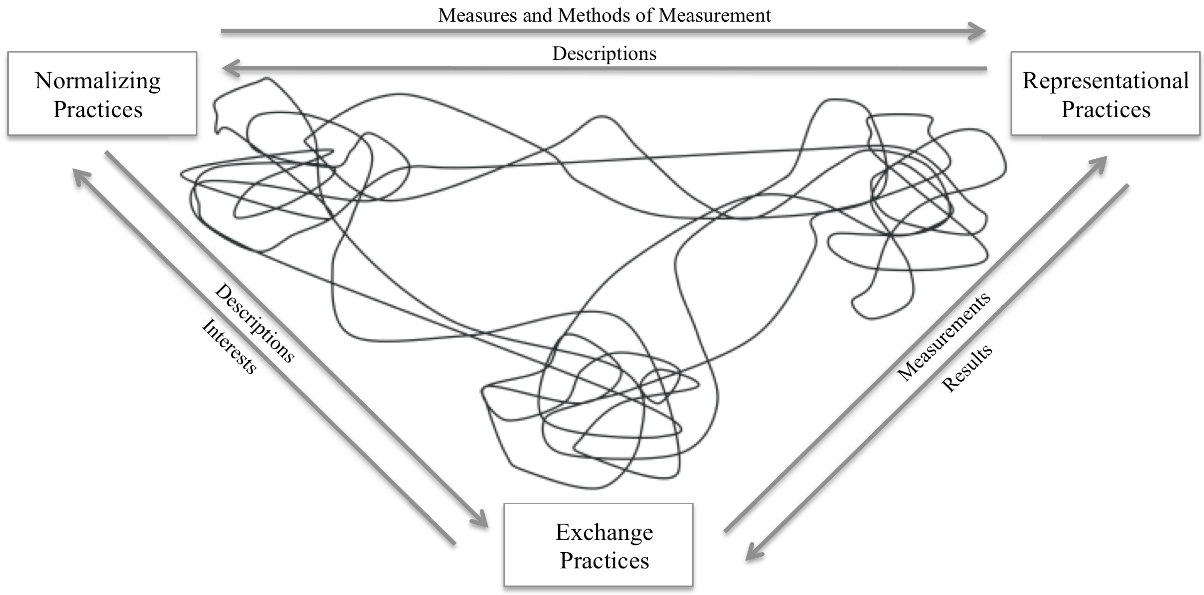

Figure 4: Translations and Intermediaries in Market Practice (Kjellberg & Helgesson, 2007)

To summarize, Kjellberg and Helgesson (2007) mean that markets are shaped by activities performed by different actors, which intersect and affect the individual economic exchanges that take place, the images of markets that are produced and the objectives that actors establish for themselves and others.

4.3.1 Market Practice in the Main Study

The market practice theory will be used in order to understand how the activities that the marketing and sales department engages actors in contribute to shape the market. In the context of the study, the market practice concept will be used to describe all activities that contribute to modify a market, rather than constitute as proposed by Kjellberg and Helgesson (2007). Further, the activities analyzed will be based on the activities identified in the network model developed by Håkansson and Snehota (1995).

4.4 The Research Model

Based on the research questions, the pre-study and the theoretical framework a research model is developed as shown in *Figure 5*. The model will be used to structure and analyze the empirical data. Further, an elaboration of the model will be described, as well as some delimitations relating to the usage of the model in the context of this study.

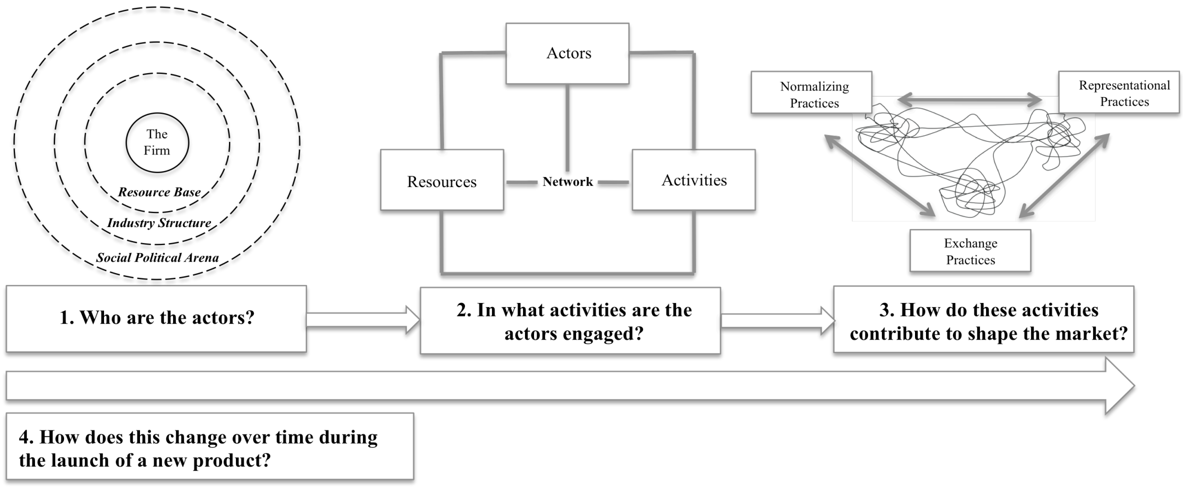

Figure 5: Research Model

4.4.1 An Elaboration of the Research Model

The model consists of four major parts, where the first three combines a research question and a theoretical model. The first part considers the actors, who they are and how they can be defined. The stakeholder model using the three levels of a company's strategic setting (Post et al., 2002) will be used for this identification in order to give the most comprehensive overview as possible. The stakeholders identified in the first step will then be transferred into the next part of the research model where they represent the actors. Further, the second part of the model considers how the marketing and sales department at the pharmaceutical company engages these actors in different activities during the launch of a new pharmaceutical product. The resources used in these activities will also be described in accordance with the network model proposed by Håkansson and Snehota (1995). In the third part the activities identified will be analyzed through the market-as-practice framework (Kjellberg & Helgesson, 2007) with the purpose of understanding how these activities contribute to shape the market. The final consideration in the research model relates to the final and fourth research question, which concerns how the process described in the three first parts of the research model changes over time during the launch of a new product.

4.4.2 Delimitations of the Research Model

The theories combined in the proposed research model represents three large research areas. Thus, the model can be seen as quite overwhelming in relation to the scope of this study and there might be a concern that the analysis will become superficial. However, based on the delimitations of the main study there will be delimitations regarding the use of the research model in the analysis as well.

The analysis will only be based on findings from the marketing and sales department at the participating company. Further, the focus will be on the launch process, previously defined as the time between the final clinical trials of the pharmaceutical until the pharmaceutical can be prescribed to patients. Hence, all other actors or activities that might be associated with the company at all other times will be excluded. This particular study will also only examine the general launch process concerning the launch of a new type of insulin used for the treatment of diabetes, which will delimit the scope of the analysis further.

5. Methodology

In this chapter the methodology of the main study will be described. First, research strategy and research design will be discussed, followed by a clarification on the selection of a case and interviewees. Further, the data collection and data analysis will be explained. Lastly, the chapter ends with an evaluation of the research quality.

5.1 Research Strategy

5.1.1 An Abductive Approach

In business research, a distinction is often made between a deductive and inductive approach concerning the relationship between theory and research. In a deductive approach, theoretical considerations result in a number of hypothesises that are empirically tested and guide the research (Bryman & Bell, 2007). In contrast, with an inductive approach, theory is the outcome of the research where generally applicable conclusions are drawn out of empirically gathered observations (ibid.).

To take advantage of both the systematic character of the theoretical world and the systematic character of the empirical world, an abductive approach is used in this study. During the usage of an abductive approach, the original framework is successively modified as theoretical insights and empirical findings are gained (Dubois & Gadde, 2002).

5.1.2 A Qualitative Research Strategy

This study seeks to investigate how the marketing and sales department at a pharmaceutical company in Sweden engages a network of actors during the launch of a new pharmaceutical and how this contributes to shape the market. Due to the depth and explorative purpose of the study a qualitative research method is used (Bryman & Bell, 2007). This choice is further supported as Bryman and Bell (2007) argue that qualitative research is useful to obtain an intensive and detailed examination of a phenomenon and to provide an understanding for the overall context. In qualitative research there is also an emphasis on the processes and how patterns unfold over time, which is in line with the purpose of the study (ibid.).

Furthermore, as the aim of the study is to provide a deep understanding of the context and implications of social relations, a quantitative orientation that view social reality as an external reality and accent testing of theories is not applicable (ibid.).

5.2 Research Design

Due to the complexity of the process investigated, a case study is found to be the most suitable research design for this study (Merriam, 1994). According to Yin (2009) a case study aims to explain causal links, describe contexts and illustrate common topics. Further, Yin (2009) argues that a case study is appropriate when the purpose is to analyze an organisational and managerial process where the variables being studied cannot be separated from the context as it retains a holistic perspective. Furthermore, the study can be categorized as a descriptive case study according to Merriam (1994) and an intensive examination of the launch process will create an in-depth understanding of influencing factors and reveal the contextual characteristics.

In order to provide a richer and broader picture, a multiple case study design was considered initially. Yin (2009) argues that there are many advantages of studying more than one case where the main argument is that it improves theory building, as the analysis and conclusion will be more substantial and powerful than when a single case is used. However, after careful considerations only one case is examined in this study. There are primarily two reasons behind this choice. To start with, an initial examination of two separate cases within the participating pharmaceutical company did not show any substantial differences that could not be easily explained. Secondly, a multiple case study based on two cases from two different pharmaceutical companies was not an alternative as the data gathered for the purpose of the study contains a lot of sensitive information.

5.2 Selection of Case and Interviews

5.2.1 Case Selection

Based on a careful consideration of the purpose of the study and the related research questions, along with a discussion with the participating company, a relatively recent launch is chosen to represent the general launch process at the company and is thus used as an example during the interviews (Yin, 2009). Further, a targeted selection method is employed where the case is chosen with the intention to maximise the learning (Merriam, 1994). Further, because of the sensitivity of the issues that are explored in the study, the participating company and all interviewees will be anonymous.

5.2.2 Interview Selection

Due to the purpose of the study, the data will only include findings from one particular company and only from the Swedish market. Consequently, interviews were held with representatives from the Swedish head office. Further, in order to gain a deep understanding, a wide range of interviewees with different roles and background in the launch process were selected (Holme & Solvang, 1997). Furthermore, the chosen five interviewees have different positions and responsibilities within the company and all of them are assumed to have valuable information on the process that is investigated (ibid.).

5.3 Data Collection

The data collection process consisted of mainly three sources of data; interviews, public and internal documents and observation. Using more than two sources of data is referred to as triangulation and makes it possible to crosscheck data from different sources, which increases the credibility of the study (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Triangulation is therefore known to result in more convincing and accurate conclusions (ibid.; Yin, 2009). This section will further discuss these three sources of data used in the study.

5.3.1 Interviews

The purpose of the interviews was to obtain a general but detailed description of the launch of a new product conducted by the pharmaceutical company, with an emphasis on the interviewees' own perspectives and what they consider as important steps and activities. Further, due to the initial results from the pre-study, additional main areas of what to address during the interviews were relatively clear. Consequently, to be able to focus on these subjects a semi-structured approach was used during the interviews (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Furthermore, the interview guide used was based on the pre-study findings, along with relevant theoretical concepts. Appedix I provides an overview of the complete guide.

In addition, all of the interviews conducted in the main study were of in-depth character. The interviewees were asked about facts and their own opinions and perceptions about events, which provided insights on certain occurrences (Yin, 2009). The interviews were also conducted face-to-face, when possible, to be able to engage in observation of the respondents and to collect complementing information during the visit. The length of the interviews in the study ranged from 60 minutes to 90 minutes and both authors were present during all interviews, which is something that Bryman and Bell (2007) put forward as especially beneficial during semi-structured interviews. Further, the interviews were recorded to enable more thorough examination of the answers (ibid.). Bryman and Bell (2007) do also argue that recording allows the interviewer to focus completely on the interview and follow up interesting points while also correcting for natural limitations of memory. The recordings were transcribed shortly after each interview and the notes were later sent to the relevant interviewee for evaluation and verification of accuracy, a technique that Bryman and Bell, (2007) refers to as respondent validation.

5.3.2 Documentation

The interviews were complemented by various public and internal documents that provide valuable information in relation to the research questions. The public data collected includes sales material, advertisements, annual reports and reports to shareholders. The internal documents included launch plans, promotional material and internal presentations. Both the external and internal documents were of great importance for the study and provided valuable insights regarding the process and the involved actors.

5.3.3 Observation

An additional source of primary information in this study is observation. Merriam (1994) argues that observations are beneficial as they, in contrast to interviews, provide a direct experience of the situation being studied. Participating and observing the interactions between different actors in the industry during Diabetesforum 2013, which is a yearly fair and congress for the industry, healthcare professionals and patients, provided interesting complementing data to the findings from interviews and documents.

5.4 Data Analysis

Due to the qualitative strategy used in the study, features of a grounded theory framework were used during the collection and analysis of the data (Bryman & Bell, 2007). In this process the collected data was examined in accordance with an open coding practice, which further resulted in the identification of concepts (ibid.). The process was iterative meaning that the collected and analysed data provided implications for the subsequent steps of the data collection and that new concepts were generated and further elements were added as more data was collected (ibid.). Furthermore, through a constant comparison of data and concepts, categories where generated. In the process of analyzing relationships between the categories, hypotheses about the connections between them were developed (ibid.). This was a repetitive process that continued until theoretical saturation was achieved, meaning that the categories were confirmed and the hypotheses had been tested (ibid.).

5.5 Quality of Research

Reliability and validity are criteria that often are used to assess the quality of quantitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2007). However, the concepts relevance for qualitative research is frequently discussed (ibid.). Qualitative studies have the ambition to reach an understanding while quantitative research seeks to test hypotheses (Merriam, 1994). Based on this, the criteria for assessing quality of research should be different between the two research strategies (ibid.). Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that qualitative studies should not be evaluated based on reliability and validity and that trustworthiness and authenticity provide a better base for evaluation.

5.5.1 Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest four different criteria that fall under the concept of trustworthiness that all will be described briefly.

5.5.1.1 Credibility

Guba and Lincoln (1994) present several techniques that make findings and interpretations more credible, where triangulation of sources is one of the recommended techniques as multiple sources of the social reality increase the credibility. Three sources of data were gathered for this study, including interviews, internal and public documents as well as observations. These different sources of data were crosschecked against each other, which hence increase the credibility of the study (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

Further, all interviews have been recorded and transcribed shortly after the interview occasion to increase the credibility. The transcribed notes were also sent to the respective interviewee for confirmation in order to ensure that the situations and events were interpreted correctly. This technique is often referred to as respondent validation and enables the researcher to confirm that the findings and impressions are congruent with the views of the people being interviewed (ibid.).

5.5.1.2 Transferability

Guba and Lincoln (1994) state that transferability is a common problem in qualitative research since the data collection often is based on small samples. Therefore the authors emphasize that qualitative researchers should focus on thick descriptions which provides a database for others to make judgements regarding transferability to other areas (ibid.). This study aims to provide extensive information of the process pursued by the marketing and sales department at a pharmaceutical company in Sweden during the launch of a new product, in order for the study to be transferable.

5.5.1.3 Dependability

Dependability is equivalent to reliability in quantitative research, meaning that another researcher should be able to follow the documentation of the procedures and arrive at the same findings and conclusions (Yin, 2009). In line with Guba and Lincoln's (1994) suggestions to increase dependability, documentation of all phases and methodological decisions of the research process has been made. Further, the results including the data, findings and interpretations have been verified and checked for internal coherence to ensure dependability.

5.5.1.4 Conformability

The concept of conformability emphasizes that while complete objectivity is impossible in business research the researchers should prove that they have been acting in good faith (Bryman & Bell, 2007). To increase the level of conformability it is vital that researchers strive to not let personal values or theoretical tendencies influence the findings of the research (ibid.). Several actions have been taken to minimize potential bias and increase the objectivity of this study. The detailed documentation of the process, the thorough examination of the data and the triangulation of sources contribute to the conformability of the study.

5.5.2 Authenticity

The other main criterion proposed by Guba and Lincoln (1994) is authenticity, which emphasizes the wider political impact of research. According to Bryman and Bell (2007) the criteria includes aspects such as whether the data fairly represents different viewpoints among members of the social setting and if the data provides the members with a better understanding of the social setting. The study includes interviews with people on several different levels within the investigated company, which increases the authenticity. However, the main study does not include any interviews with external actors.

6. The Context

This chapter will provide an overview of the context in which the study will be performed. Since the study is focusing on the pharmaceutical industry there are some regulatory aspects that must be taken into consideration in order to understand how the marketing and sales department at the pharmaceutical company studied operates and what limitations there are. The chapter will start with a brief overview of how the health and medical care in Sweden is governed, followed by a section that briefly describes the ethical rules that apply to the marketing activities pursued by pharmaceutical companies.

6.1 The Health and Medical Care in Sweden

The responsibility for health and medical care in Sweden is divided between the state, county councils and municipalities (Government, 2011). The state is responsible for the overall health and medical care policy and provides general government grants to county council health and medical services (ibid.). Further, the respective responsibilities of county councils and municipalities can be found in the Health and Medical Services Act (ibid.). In addition, the National Board of Health and Welfare is a government agency, which supervises health and medical care services staff and ensure that county councils comply with the requirements of the health care guarantee and monitors the introduction of care choice systems (ibid.). The National Board of Health and Welfare does also issue national guidelines to help decision makers within each county to decide how to allocate resources on health care and social services in order to maximize the benefits (Socialstyrelsen, 2013).

There are 20 county councils in Sweden, including the regions of Gotland, Halland, Skåne and Västra Götaland (Government, 2011). County councils are responsible for organizing the health care within their county, which is funded by the county council tax (ibid.). Each county council makes its own decisions on the tax rate and how to allocate the tax revenues (ibid.). Further, each county is required by national law to have a pharmaceutical committee that shall give recommendations to healthcare professionals in order to work for a reliable and rational use of medicines in the county (SKL, 2013). The recommending committees must also acknowledge the national guidelines provided by the National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen, 2013). Further, within each pharmaceutical committee there are a number of therapy groups with in-depth knowledge in a specific field such as endocrinology and diabetes for example (SKL, 2013).

6.2 Ethical Regulations Affecting Marketing and Sales

The trade association for the research-based pharmaceutical industry in Sweden (LIF) has 80 members and the associations mission is to enhance the Swedish health care system and to foster the development, access and correct use of innovative medicines and vaccines (LIF, 2013a). This is done through partnerships with the government, national agencies and key healthcare providers. Since 1969 the association has maintained a self-regulating system in the pharmaceutical sector in order to make sure that the information supplied by pharmaceutical companies follows the ethical rules for the pharmaceutical industry (ibid.). For example, information about pharmaceuticals that need to be prescribed cannot be directed to the public. Further, these ethical regulations include conditions for interaction between the industry and the public health and medical care, which has been developed together with the counties and municipalities in Sweden, but also rules for co-operation between companies and user organisations or interest groups.

7. Empirical Findings

In this chapter the marketing and sales department at the pharmaceutical company will be followed through the launch of a new pharmaceutical. The empirical findings build on interviews, internal and external documents and observations and will be divided into four different phases, which are illustrated in the model below (*Figure 6*). In addition, each phase will be divided intro three main themes defined as purpose, target and activities.

"Within the pharmaceutical industry the term pre-launch can only be used when your product has been accepted by the EMA (European Medicines Agency). If you do not have a product that is legal in the EU, then you cannot really talk about a pre-launch of that product." (Sales Manager)

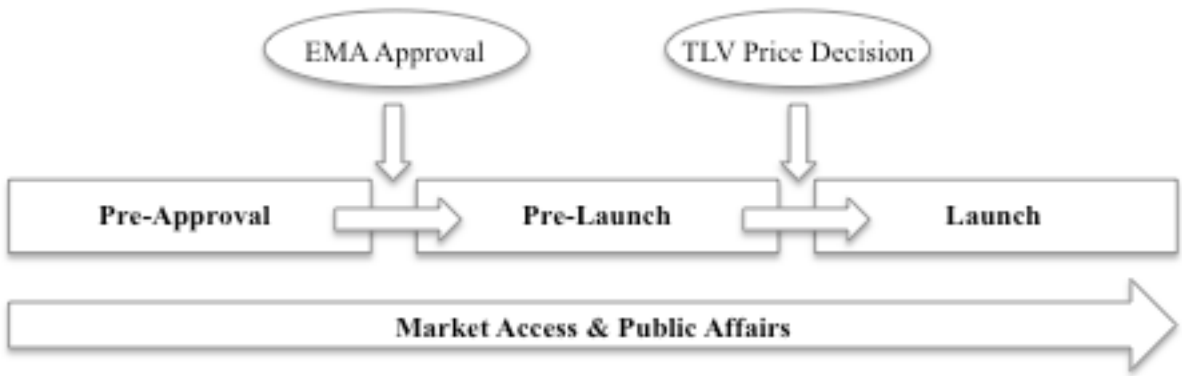

Figure 6: Model for Empirical Findings

7.1 The Pre-Approval Phase

In the pre-approval phase the company has applied for approval from the EMA for its new product, which determines if the product can be sold within the European Union. Before approval the company is not allowed to talk about the new product and the product is known by its generic name that has been used during the clinical trials that have been the basis for the application.

7.1.1 Purpose

The marketing and sales department considers the pre-approval phase as a pre-phase to the actual pre-launch since a majority of the activities pursued by the department in this phase are done in order to create disease awareness but also awareness around the therapeutic class that the new product belongs to.

"Before the actual approval, you are not allowed to use the brand name, without stating that it only is a proposed brand name. On the other hand you do not want to use the generic name too much so that it becomes its own brand." (Medical Adviser)

7.1.2 Target

The main focus for the activities pursued in the pre-approval phase is national key opinion leaders within diabetes or endocrinology, which normally are specialists within the same areas. The company uses a top down model, illustrated as a pyramid, where specialists perceived as key opinion leaders within the therapeutic area are at the top.

Furthermore, there are primarily two reasons to why this group needs to have the information early and why they are at the top of the pyramid. The first major reason is that when the product is approaching approval, the key opinion leaders must be able to consult segments of healthcare professionals further down in the pyramid, such as specialists and later also the more general practitioners. Secondly, as the key opinion leaders are perceived as the experts within the therapeutic area they do also expect themselves to be the first to get new information.

"The specialists perceived as key opinion leaders are often very interested in participating at an early stage, since they usually are very curious about the outcome of the clinical trials." (Medical Adviser)

Thus, in this initial stage it is of great importance to identify these key opinion leaders and to be able to provide them with the necessary knowledge in order for them to understand why the area of disease should be acknowledged. Further, the marketing and sales department believes that an individual needs approximately five to nine different opportunities to take in and really comprehend new information and thus it is also critical to identify five to nine opportunities where the chosen key opinion leaders can be presented with the new science. If the department succeed in this, there is a possibility of creating or finding advocates of the therapeutic class that the new product belongs to, which can be beneficial in later phases.

"It is important to work with key opinion leaders management internally. For example a key opinion leader might decide that he or she only will meet with a certain number of people from one particular pharmaceutical company. Hence, the company needs to make sure that

the person that this key opinion leader meet is a person who actually is working with selling the new product." (Market Access & Public Affairs Manager)

7.1.3 Activities

Since the marketing and sales department is not allowed to talk about a specific product during the pre-approval phase a lot of the market activities at this stage focus on clinical data that stress the benefits of the therapeutic class that the new product is supposed to belong to. This data is presented at international symposiums or congresses, where key opinion leader from different countries are able to meet and have scientific discussions. This might also be followed up by national symposiums where the same topics are discussed but on a national level. However, the company argues that the forums in which these scientific debates can be held are fewer today, because of regulations.

An additional important activity in the pre-approval phase is advisory boards, where the identified key opinion leaders are invited to discuss the clinical data and which parts of the new product's clinical profile that will be the most valuable to patients.

During all of the activities in this initial phase the company tries to use the information they have strategically and only share small parts of it during each activity. This is primarily done because they want the people they meet to be able to really grasp the information, but also because the company want to be given the opportunity of an additional meeting.

"It is relatively easy to arrange meetings during the first and the second phase, because then you have new attractive information and if you use it strategically you will get an opportunity to come back." (Sales Manager)

7.2 The Pre-Launch Phase

In the pre-launch phase the new product has been approved by the EMA, meaning that it can be legally sold within the European Union. This means that the marketing and sales department is allowed to market the product. However, as soon as the product has been approved the company sends in an application for pricing and reimbursement to TLV (The Dental and Pharmaceutical Benefits Agency), which is a central government agency. TLV decides whether the product should be eligible for reimbursement status and included in the high-cost threshold. If the product is eligible it will be subsidized by the state, which will lower the price that the health care has to pay for each individual usage. This process normally takes about six months.

7.2.1 Purpose

After the approval the focus in all communication is the product. However, it is important that this is done in line with the communication from the previous phase. Hence, the therapeutic class that is emphasized in the first phase is still important and data from the clinical trials is still used, although it is more focused on to the actual product than in the previous phase.

"The goal is to give people a broad spectrum of the characteristics of the product so that they easily can summarize the clinical profile of the product." (Sales Manager)

7.2.2 Target

The communication after the approval is directed towards the level below the key opinion leaders in the top-down pyramid, which are the more regional and local specialists with the power to influence on a regional basis. To reach this group it is also important to use the key opinion leaders from the previous phase. Especially key opinion leaders that have turned into advocates of the therapeutic class are very helpful as they can talk to these other specialists and convince them of the benefits.

"That they get the knowledge is equally important as that the key opinion leaders get it, as the regional specialists, in turn, are the carrier of the information down to next level of the pyramid, which consists of the general practitioners and nurses." (Sales Manager)

7.2.3 Activities

When the new product is approved, one of the first things that the marketing and sales department does is to send out reservation letters, which are invitations where the company offers to come out to clinics and health care centers and present the new product. Additional activities include direct mailings to specialists, advertisements in trade journals and national scientific symposiums with scientific discussions. Further, the sales people and especially the company's specialists in diabetes are talking to specialists in both face-to-face meetings with individuals and smaller group meetings. The marketing and sales department always prefers meetings with single individuals since that often leads to better discussions when they are able to talk about things that are really relevant for the person they meet.

7.3 The Launch Phase

The actual launch of a new product starts when the company has received a price decision from TLV. However, the decision on whether the product will be subsidized and thus have a lower price, can be different for different groups of patients. For example, a new product can be subsidized for patients with diabetes type 1 but not for patients with diabetes type 2 and vice versa. The decision depends on if TLV considers that there is enough data to show that the product is beneficial from a health economical perspective in both groups. The same criteria apply to the group of patients under 18 years old, meaning that TLV will make a separate decision for this group as well.

"New pharmaceuticals are always more expensive but there is a certain tolerance among authorities to pay a higher price if the benefits of the new product are worth it. Meaning that it is considered as cost effective compared to existing treatments and adds value to patients and society" (Medical Adviser)

7.3.1 Purpose

The main purpose in the actual launch phase is to sell the product, hence to get a broad spectrum of prescribers to start to use the new product on their patients. In order to do so, practical aspects from the clinical trials are emphasized.

7.3.2 Target

When the company has received a price from TLV, the focus shifts downwards in the pyramid used for segmentation. The relevant level of the pyramid consists of more general practitioners, which may not necessarily be specialized in a relevant therapeutic area. However, which specific group of prescribers to target in this phase depends on the characteristics of the new product. For example a product that is primarily suitable for people with diabetes type 2 is more interesting for prescribers within the primary care since a lot of the patients with diabetes type 2 are taken care of there. On the other hand, products that mainly will help people with diabetes type 1 are more interesting for physicians at hospitals since they take care of a majority of those patients.

"Usually we have two different campaigns, one that targets the practitioners at the hospitals and one that target the practitioners at health centers since the patients they treat are somewhat different." (Medical Adviser)

Segmentation and targeting within this level of the pyramid is important as each pharmaceutical company only have approximately two opportunities per six months to meet with general practitioners, as they have many different therapeutic areas to cover.

"It is critical that we address the persons to which we actually have access. For example some health care centers are not accepting any invitations from the industry at all." (Sales Manager)

Further, the nurses specializing in diabetes are also important to consider since they usually are taking care of all practical things with the patients. In addition, they often have a lot of experience and can give advice to the doctors based on their contact with the patients.

7.3.3 Activities

When a new product has been approved and has been given a price for the Swedish market a letter, with this information, is sent out to every healthcare professional that will get in contact with the new product. Thereafter there is generally a launch symposium, where international speakers are invited, which usually attracts a lot of people.

"Historically, the launch symposium has been of great importance. Today, however, it is less important since a lot of the healthcare professionals already have gotten the information elsewhere." (Sales Manager)

Further, the primary activity within the launch phase is the regular sales meetings, which can be with a single individual or as a lunch meeting where several healthcare professionals are invited. During a lunch meeting it is usually about ten to twelve doctors and a few nurses attending while the marketing and sales department offers lunch and present their new product.

"Today, because of regulations, it is very difficult to meet healthcare professionals in face-to-face meetings. To be standing in front of a group while they are eating lunch is not the same at all, some of them are only there for the lunch, while others are totally uninterested. The few who actually are interested do not have the opportunity to ask all the questions they want." (Medical Adviser)

Additional activities might include direct mailings, advertisements and local scientific meetings where specialists, which have been informed in the previous phase, are invited to talk can share their experience with the general practitioners and nurses.

7.4 Activities Relating to Market Access and Public Affairs

Activities relating to market access and public affairs are relatively new within the marketing and sales department. The development is a direct result of new and stricter regulations, which regulates the possibility of interaction between pharmaceutical companies and their counterparties. The activities related to market access and public affairs do not belong to any particular phase during the launch of a new product and are instead perceived as important in all the phases described.

7.4.1 Purpose

The purpose of the market access and public affairs related activities is to work proactively and keep a constant dialogue with important actors in order to be able to access the company's direct counterparties, which are the healthcare professionals. For example one of the tasks is to arrange more venues where the industry can meet with healthcare professionals, politicians and patients.

Another important task is to create discussions around health economical aspects so that the company's counterparties get a holistic view of new pharmaceuticals and what value they can add in the long-term.

"We are a part of a researching company and new pharmaceuticals are generally relatively expensive compared to generic drugs. Therefore, we need to address the holistic view and emphasize the long-term benefits." (Market Access & Public Affairs Manager)

7.4.2 Target

The gatekeepers of the pharmaceutical industry's counterparties can be everything from managers of clinics at local health centers to pharmaceutical recommending committees and national or regional politicians. These groups consist of people that the company usually does not have an agenda with, since the company's primary target is the people who actually prescribe their products to patients.

7.4.3 Activities

One of the main activities is to arrange forums in which the industry can meet and discuss with representatives of the counterparties. There are a few examples where this has been done successfully.

A few years back the marketing and sales department started to collaborate with the trade journal called Dagens Medicin. Together the two organizations started to create attention around the international World Diabetes Day but on a national level. In this process they realized that the pharmaceutical industry specializing in diabetes need to have a group representing the industry's counterparties so that they can collaborate with them in order to create awareness around subjects that do not only concern the pharmaceutical industry but also the patients and the healthcare professionals working within the therapeutic area. Hence, a formation of a national team with representatives from different associations started. The result was the National Diabetes Team. Together all parties arrange a, now yearly, conference on the World Diabetes Day. In addition, the National Diabetes Team does also arrange a yearly fair and conference called Diabetes Forum, during which the industry, healthcare professionals and patients have the possibility to interact.

"As a large pharmaceutical company it is important to be humble and to not create projects just to get attention, then it is better to work a little bit behind the front in order to be accepted by the society." (Market Access & Public Affairs Manager)

Another example of a new attempt to create a forum is the marketing and sales department's participation during the political week in Almedalen where representatives from the Swedish political parties as well as other interest groups meet to discuss societal issues. This is an important forum for the department since all the politicians responsible for the health care in Sweden are gathered here. During this week it is essential to arrange meetings and discussions and to find subjects that both parties can benefit from.

"It is of great importance to not overstep. Our task is to present our products and to explain why they are good, not to take over the politicians role as a coordinator of projects for the healthcare professionals. We do not have that competence." (Market Access & Public Affairs Manager)

Further, an ideal situation would be if forums where both the industry and the representatives could meet would be arranged not only on a national level but also on a regional or even local level. The company has participated in attempts to arrange such meetings. For example, when the World Health Organization arranged a conference the marketing and sales department, among others, decided to implement the same agenda on a national level and later also on a regional basis.

In relation to the launch of a new product activities relating to market access and public affairs are also important. One of the major activities is to talk to and inform the people in each county that is in charge of that county's horizon scanning, which normally are the recommending committees. A horizon scanning means that the county looks at the clinical profile of a new pharmaceutical product and then tries to estimate how many patients the county has that would benefit from the new product and how much that it would cost. It is important that the marketing and sales department gives information about the importance of the therapeutic class and the product at an early stage so that each county can prepare and allocate enough money. Normally the department is invited by each to county to do this.

The marketing and sales department is also looking at how they can use the material provided by the recommending committees in marketing. The material provides the physicians with algorithms they can use in order to decide when to put in a certain treatment on a patient. This is especially used by general practitioners within the primary care, which have a lot of therapeutic areas to cover. Hence, if the department use this material while presenting for physicians this might affect the physicians´ understanding of the product and probability of prescription.

"If we have a good position in those algorithms it is much better for us to use them in our communication than a branded sales campaign." (Market Access & Public Affairs)

7.5 The Launch Process

"So basically, there is a scientific dialogue and meetings before the pre-launch period, where key opinion leaders are the most important, then in the actual pre-launch the focus should be on specialists and then finally in the actual launch a broad spectrum of prescribers and general practitioners should be targeted." (Sales Manager)

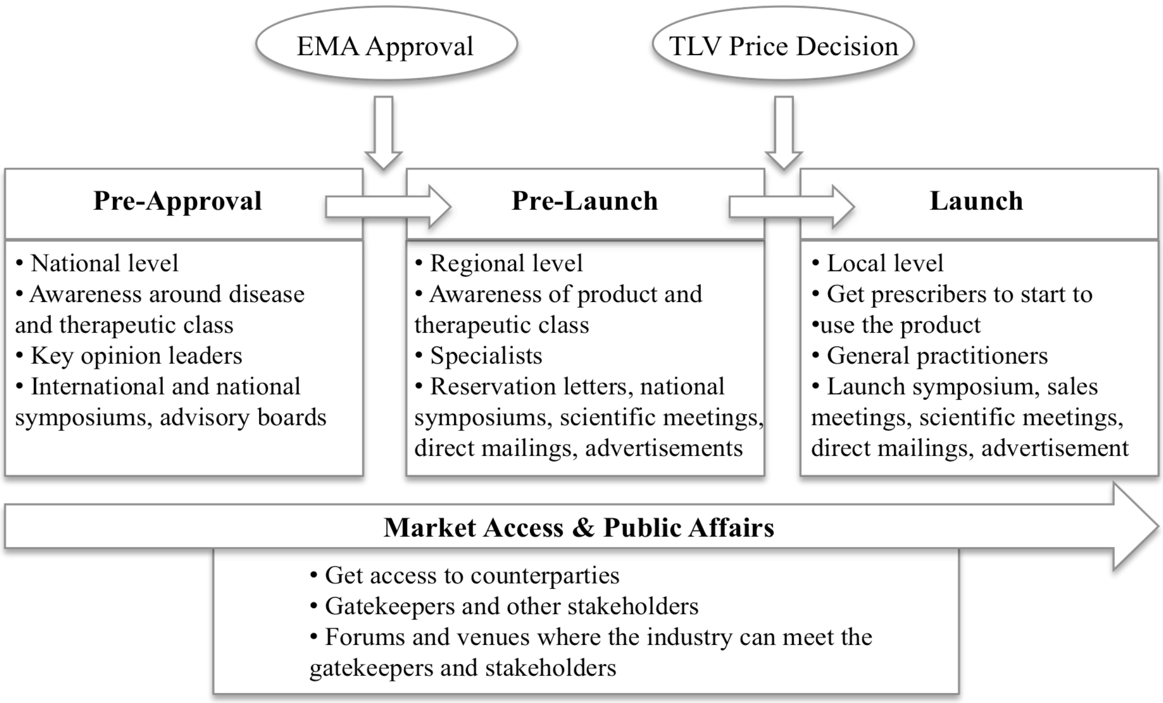

Figure 7: Summary of the Launch Proces

8. Analysis

The analysis will be structured in accordance with the research model. Hence, the first part of the analysis will consider the actors and the second part how the marketing and sales department at the pharmaceutical company engages the relevant actors in different activities during the launch of a new pharmaceutical product. In the third part the activities identified will be analyzed through the market-as-practice framework with the purpose of understanding how these activities contribute to shaping the market. The final part of the analysis will describe how the previous parts can be integrated in order to understand how the engaged actors, in what activities they are engaged and how this contributes to shaping the market change over time during the launch of a new pharmaceutical product.

8.1 The Actors

The stakeholder approach as proposed by Post et al. (2002) provides a tool for the identification of various external actors in the pharmaceutical company's environment. The model enables categorization in relation to the three dimensions of the company's strategic setting.

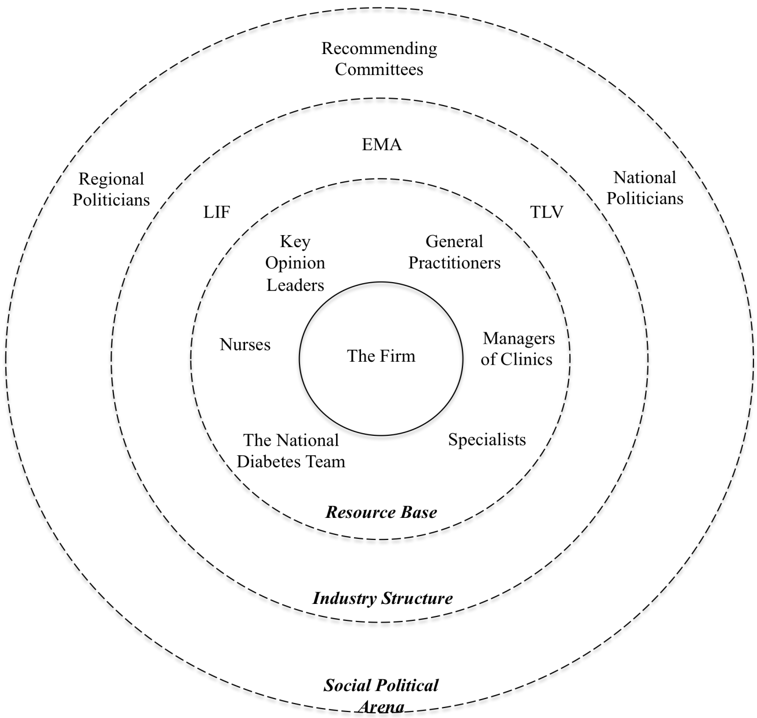

Figure 8: The Identified External Actors

8.1.1 The Identification of Relevant Actors

Starting with the resource base, this strategic level usually consists of customers and users (Post et al., 2002). However, the pharmaceutical industry's marketing activities are limited by ethical regulations and prohibited from targeting patients, who are the ultimate customers and users of the pharmaceutical company's products. Following from this, the prescribers are categorized as the main group of stakeholders at this level. Furthermore, the marketing and sales department segments the group of prescribers based on knowledge and power to influence. Hence, key opinion leaders, specialists and general practitioners are all considered to represent different groups of stakeholders at this first level. Nurses' possibility to influence prescribers makes them represent a significant stakeholder group as well. Further, the managers of clinics through which invitations to other healthcare professionals must pass are also considered to be within the resource base. In addition, the National Diabetes Team can be categorized as a stakeholder belonging to this level since the members represent important associations related to the other stakeholder groups at this level, such as the doctors, nurses and even patients with which the pharmaceutical company normally does not have any interaction.

At the second level described as the industry structure (Post et al., 2002) it is evident that the highly regulated pharmaceutical industry has many regulatory authorities to acknowledge. The EMA, giving approval for sale within the European Union and TLV, making decisions on subsidization are important stakeholders. Furthermore LIF, regulating the marketing activities pursued by pharmaceutical companies, is highly relevant.

The final level of stakeholders is denoted as the social political arena (Post et al., 2002). At this level the relevant stakeholders mainly consists of politicians, both national and regional. Further, the recommending committees in each county that decides, which pharmaceuticals that are included on their lists, are highly relevant stakeholders as their decisions affect the actions taken by many other stakeholders, especially the prescribers at the resource level. This is in line with the reasoning put forward by Rowley (1997) who emphasizes the network approach and argue that companies must take the multiple and interdependent interactions that simultaneously exist in stakeholder environments into account.

8.1.2 The Involved Actors

The empirical findings indicate that not all of the actors identified are involved during the launch of a new product. A majority of the stakeholders characterized as belonging to the resource base are engaged by the marketing and sales department in a launch process, the same applies to the social political arena. However, the department does not actively appoint the stakeholders within the industry structure. The main reason to this is that the industry structure mainly consists of regulatory authorities with which that type of involvement is not allowed. Further, the interaction the pharmaceutical company actually has with these organizations is the same that all other pharmaceutical companies have. One example of such interaction is when a pharmaceutical company send in data from clinical trials to get a new product approved by the EMA. Hence, this interaction appears to be rather standardized and is thus not done in order to shape the market.

As the marketing and sales department is unable to influence the stakeholders within the industry structure, they will not be analysed going forward. The same applies to managers of clinics, as they not are actively involved in any activities pursued by the pharmaceutical company. Consequently, all groups of healthcare professionals, the National Diabetes Team, national and regional politicians and the recommending committees are stakeholder groups that have been identified as possible to involve and will from now on represent the actors which will be used in further analysis.

8.2 Involving a Network of Actors

Håkansson and Snehota (1995) describe the structure of a network in terms of actors, resources and activities. Aarikka-Stenroos and Sandberg (1999) apply this framework to describe how a company can engage other actors in a company's network to make the launch of a new product successful. The framework proposed by Håkansson and Snehota (1995) will therefore be used in order to analyse how the marketing and sales department at the pharmaceutical company involves the identified external actors and their resources in different activities in order to shape the market.

8.2.1 The Individual Actors, Resources and Activities

The following section will include a description of each identified group of actors, what resources they are considered to have and what activities the marketing and sales department engages them in. The examination builds on the critical activities and resources put forward by Aarikka-Stenroos and Sandberg (2009).

8.2.1.1 Healthcare Professionals

The empirical findings indicate that it is crucial to create awareness around the disease and therapeutic class that the new pharmaceutical belongs to. Aarikka-Stenroos and Sandberg

(2009) do also stress the importance of awareness creation as an activity. In order to create such awareness the marketing and sales department invites identified key opinion leaders to both international and national symposiums where clinical data that stress the benefits of the therapeutic class is emphasized. Hence, the key opinion leaders' market and customer knowledge are important resources in this phase, as these are needed to be able to really comprehend the benefits of the data presented. Furthermore, the same resources are also considered during the advisory boards, in which the marketing and sales department invites the key opinion leaders in order to get their opinion on the clinical profile of the new pharmaceutical and which aspects that will be the most valuable to future patients.

Later on in the launch process the marketing and sales department shifts focus to the product and aim at providing healthcare professionals with a good understanding of the clinical profile of the product. In order to succeed, the key opinion leaders are engaged again as they are able to share their experience and educate the new target, which are the specialists. Hence, the key opinion leaders are involved because of their ability to establish credibility and trust, but also because of their ability to educate other segments of healthcare professionals. The key opinion leaders are considered to have these abilities because of their relations with the specialists, but also as the specialists are expected to trust the key opinion leaders´ market and customer knowledge. The group of specialists which are targeted and educated at this stage, during national scientific symposiums or sales meetings, are also engaged indirectly since the educational activities that they are invited to are done in order to prepare them for interaction with the next target group.

Even further on in the launch process the purpose is to get a broad spectrum of prescribers to start to use the new product. As described, the previously engaged specialists are used to create awareness, credibility and trust and to educate general practitioners and nurses. Hence, it is the specialists' relations with these professionals and their market and customer knowledge that are the considered resources. Further, as the general practitioners and nurses are invited to regular sales meetings and local scientific meetings it is their close relationship with a large group of potential patients that is considered as a resource of great importance in further awareness building. Aarikka-Stenroos and Sandberg (2009) do also argue that some brands might benefit from word-of-mouth communication, which can be achieved if the large group of general practitioners and nurses are engaged.

When analysing the healthcare professionals it is evident that they are engaged to support the launch process in two steps. To start with, they are engaged to create awareness around the product and to confirm the benefits and credibility of it. Secondly, the direct relations they have with patients, who in this case are both the customers and users, are of great importance. This is especially true, as the pharmaceutical company is not allowed to have any interaction with patients in terms of marketing. Hence, this resource is particularly important for the marketing and sales department to consider and use in activities pursued. Further, the different healthcare professionals relationships with each other is also an important resource that is considered by the department in all activities, as each group of actor is engaged in order to, in turn, engage an additional group of actors. This finding is supported by Håkansson and Snehota (1995) that argue that firms may benefit from indirect ties, as direct relations to some actors offers indirect relations to their relations, which considerably increases the resources available.

8.2.1.2 The National Diabetes Team

The National Diabetes Team is working actively to create awareness and attention in the industry for topics that are of interest for the associations that the team represent. Another aspect identified, is that the National Diabetes Team, because of the team's market knowledge, is expected to have the power to influence the agenda of national and regional politicians. To be able to influence the National Diabetes Team's activities, the marketing and sales department tries to arrange and participate in forums during which the team is participating. The national conference on the World Diabetes Day and the yearly Diabetes Forum are examples of such forums. Further, the findings reveal that the National Diabetes Team is not appointed at any particular time during the launch of a new product. Instead, the marketing and sales department's interaction with these actors can be seen as an on-going project that is necessary in order to sustain and enhance the company's reputation as a credible actor in the market, which will affect all current and future launches. The team's relations with other actors are also seen as an important resource, which increase the importance for the marketing and sales department to interact with the team.

8.2.1.3 National and Regional Politicians

When analysing the marketing and sales department's interaction with national and regional politicians it is evident that it is similar to how the National Diabetes Team is approached. Thus, they are not appointed at a particular time during the launch of a new product. Further, apart from producing rules and regulations, the national and regional politicians are expected to have the ability to draw attention to certain topics because of their relations with other actors in the sector, which is an important resource to the marketing and sales department. Interaction with national and regional politicians might also increase both reputation and credibility of a company. In order to access the resources of national and regional politicians the marketing and sales department tries to arrange and participate in forums during which these actors also participate, where the political week in Almedalen is an example of such a forum. During this week the marketing and sales department arranges meetings and discussions that both parties benefit from, with the purpose of influencing the topics the politicians perceive as important, but also to increase the whole pharmaceutical company's credibility and reputation.

8.2.1.4 Recommending Committees

Every county in Sweden has a recommending committee, which is responsible for the horizon scanning pursued by the county, due to their expected market knowledge. The horizon scanning provides the basis for the county's pharmaceutical budgets. In addition, recommending committees do also act as decision makers in many cases as prescribers are encouraged to follow their recommendation lists. Hence, the lists create awareness of a pharmaceutical and increase both the trust in and the credibility of the product. Another important aspect to consider is that the recommending committees, with their lists, also provide access to prescribers. This resource is not put forward by Aarikka-Stenroos and Sandberg (2009) but seems to be of great importance when considering the pharmaceutical industry and important resources needed in a successful commercialization network. Based on this, it is important that the marketing and sales department tries to engage and educate the committees as early as possible during the launch of a new product, in order to increase the possibility of getting the new pharmaceutical recommended and to be a part of the awareness and credibility creating activity that the lists are the result of. The information given relates both to the importance of the therapeutic class and the product. Further, the recommendation lists do also provide prescribers with algorithms that are used in order to decide when and to which patient it is appropriate to prescribe a certain pharmaceutical. The marketing and sales department is trying to use the algorithms in their interaction with prescribers, as they are perceived as a credible source of information.

8.2.2 The Interconnected Actors, Resources and Activities

Andersson et al. (1994) argue that the network should be described in terms of which activities that are performed in the network and the ways in which they are linked to each other, the resources used in the network and the patterns of adaption between them and finally the actors in the network and how they are related to each other. Aarikka-Stenroos and Sandberg (2009) support this as they argue that it is the integration of a network's resources and relations that can aid in the process of launching a product. Hence, not only the individual actors, their resources and how they are engaged in different activities should be considered but also how the different actors are linked to each other and how the marketing and sales department can combine their resources and link the activities.

To start with, it is evident that all the described activities are linked to each other and that they combined together contribute to the success of the launch. The activity pursued in the beginning of the launch process, where the key opinion leaders are engaged to create awareness, is linked to the activity later on in the process where the key opinion leaders educate the specialists and establish credibility and trust among them. This is in turn linked to the activity where the specialists educate, create awareness and establish credibility among general practitioners and nurses. Hence, it is the resources of all these actors that contribute to the awareness creation and credibility establishment in the market. Also, as earlier mentioned it is the actors' relations with each other that may be especially beneficial for the marketing and sales department, as direct relations with one actor offers indirect relations to its relations.

Further, the activities initiated by the marketing and sales department to influence national and regional politicians as well as the National Diabetes Team are linked to the activities pursued with all of the healthcare professionals, as the politicians and the team set the agenda for what is being considered as important. In addition, interaction with these groups of actors does also establish credibility, which is necessary in order to be able to motivate the healthcare professionals to get involved. Furthermore, the activities in which the recommending committees are engaged or influenced do also affect other activities, as the recommending committees will decide whether or not the healthcare professionals will be able or willing to prescribe the product.

To conclude, the analysis of the empirical findings make it clear that some of the activities that the marketing and sales department involve actors in have a direct influence on the launch of a new pharmaceutical. However, it is also obvious that some of the activities that the marketing and sales department are initiating not engage or directly involve any actors, but instead are done in order to be able to influence the activities that these actors already are pursuing on their own.

8.3 Shaping the Market

Kjellberg and Helgesson (2007) argue that markets are shaped by market practices, which are the activities performed by different actors in order to constitute or reconfigure a market. When examining the identified actors and activities it is evident that some of the activities initiated by the marketing and sales department can be analyzed as practices in accordance with the definitions put forward by Kjellberg and Helgesson (2007). Thus, when the marketing and sales department takes the initiative to these activities it is actively shaping the market. However, as previously described it is also obvious that some of the activities that the marketing and sales department initiate only are done in order to influence already ongoing activities. Hence, these activities do not contribute to shape the market directly and it is the actors that already are pursuing these activities that are doing the market shaping.

8.3.1 Actors Engaged in Market Practice

The following sections will describe how various activities that the marketing and sales department engage external actors in can contribute to shape the market. Further, the market shaping practices that individual actors already are engaged in will also be analyzed and a discussion on how the marketing and sales department can influence these will be brought forward.

8.3.1.1 Healthcare Professionals

The empirical results reveal that the marketing and sales department engages the healthcare professionals in awareness creating and credibility building activities. Before the product is approved, the key opinion leaders are involved in the process of creating disease awareness and an understanding of the therapeutic class. In this activity problems with the disease are highlighted and reasons to why this therapeutic class is so important are put forward. Hence, these activities provide a description of the market, which can be considered as a representational practice. Further, as the specialists are educated and involved and later on also the general practitioners and nurses, the focus is gradually shifting towards the product rather than the therapeutic class and the purpose is to give all healthcare professionals a good understanding of the clinical profile of the product in terms of usage and benefits. This can be described as exchange practices as the product is specified and stabilized in order to get prescribed.

8.3.1.2 The National Diabetes Team

From the empirical findings it is evident that the National Diabetes Team is pursuing its own market practices. The team represents different associations, including all the different groups of healthcare professionals and patients, and consequently the team has a good view of the existing market and their agenda is based on this. Based on this, the team is trying to raise awareness around subjects that they consider relevant for the whole sector and to influence national and regional politicians based on this. One example of such an activity is the yearly national conference Diabetes Forum, where practitioners and pharmaceutical companies are invited to discuss the agenda set by the National Diabetes Team. The team is thus pursuing representational practices as the team's activities contribute to the image of the market. Further, this activity can also be seen as normalizing as the team is trying to influence the market in certain directions, according to the team's agenda.

The sales and marketing department at the pharmaceutical company is trying to affect the practices pursued by the National Diabetes Team in order to shape the market. By keeping a constant dialogue and trying to arrange and participate in forums where they can meet with the team, the department can affect the team's focus and hence how they choose to represent the market but also the normalizing activities that they initiate.

8.3.1.3 National and Regional Politicians

National and regional politicians have the ability to draw attention to certain topics that contribute to depict the market, which is a representational activity. National and regional politicians do also pursue normalizing practices in terms of the rules and regulations that they enact. Although the interaction with this type of actors is limited, the marketing and sales department at the pharmaceutical company tries to influence the practices pursued by the politicians. For instance the department arranges and participates during forums in which these actors also participate, the political week in Almedalen is an example of such a forum. Further, the marketing and sales department is actively trying to raise interest for relevant issues from a health economical perspective in order to get the politicians attention.

8.3.1.4 Recommending Committees

When analyzing the empirical findings related to the recommending committees, it is apparent that these actors are initiating their own market shaping practices. To start with, the recommending committees are responsible for horizon scanning, which will lay the ground for future pharmaceutical budgets. This can thus be viewed as a representational practice. Further, the recommending committees also provide recommendation lists that affect the acceptance of a new pharmaceutical. The lists include the pharmaceuticals that each county advice the doctors to prescribe and is a voluntary standard, which thus can be seen as a type of normalizing effort. Finally, the recommending committees also provide material that include algorithms that give indications of which type of patient a specific pharmaceutical is suitable for. As these algorithms specifies the product and contribute to stabilising the conditions for prescription this can be described as exchange practice.

Studying the involvement with the recommending committees initiated by the marketing and sales department at the pharmaceutical company it is evident that the company tries to influence the committees already ongoing practices. During the horizon scanning the marketing and sales department pursue representational practice, as they try to convince the committees about the need in the market, but also exchange practice as the company tries to convince the committees about the benefits of the product. Further, the department does also use the algorithms provided by the committees.

8.3.2 Translations Between Practices

Kjellberg and Helgesson (2007) emphasize that in order to really understand what constitutes markets it is of great importance to explore how market practices are linked through processes of translations. How the identified practices are linked and how this contribute to shape the market will therefore be described in the remaining parts of this section of the analysis.

8.3.2.3 Exchange and Representational

The first activities in which actors are engaged by the marketing and sales department at the pharmaceutical company are characterised as representational practices. The main objective is to create disease awareness and an understanding of the therapeutic class, mainly involving the key opinion leaders. As the market for the new pharmaceutical is portrayed through these representational practices, this will affect the current exchange practices of the involved actors as they are expected to alter their exchange practices as the representation of the market changes. Further, the exchange practices initiated by the marketing and sales department at a later stage during the launch are necessary in order to stabilise the market and provide conditions for exchange for the product. As more and more healthcare professionals start using the new pharmaceutical the image of market for the product will become more apparent and thus link back to representational practices.

8.3.2.1 Representational and Normalizing

The National Diabetes Team is trying to affect both national and regional politicians by emphasizing certain aspects of the market, which is characterized as a representational practice. The goal is to alter or influence the normalizing practices pursued by national and regional politicians as descriptions of the market affect what is being regulated. Further, the same interlink can be seen, when considering how the regional politicians are connected to the recommendation committees. The committees provide descriptions of the market, which can be viewed as representational practices with the purpose to provide a base for the normalizing activities later pursued by the regional county when they set the pharmaceutical budget. Further, the recommending committees and the National Diabetes Team do also perform normalizing activities of their own. The recommending committees provide recommendation lists that affect the diffusion of a new pharmaceutical and the National Diabetes Team is trying the affect the market in certain directions, according to the team's agenda. By keeping a constant dialogue with these actors, the marketing and sales department can influence the actors´ view of the market and how they pursue their normalizing practices. Considering the recommending committees the marketing and sales department does also pursue direct representational practices that affect the normalizing practices, as the department tries to convince the committees of the need in the market during meetings in relation to the committees horizon scanning. In addition, the interaction with both of the actors influence the representational practices pursued by these actors, which in turn translates into the possibility to influence the normalizing practices pursued by politicians as well.

8.3.2.2 Normalizing and Exchange

Normalizing practices, translate into rules and tools that shape the market in a certain way, which in turn will affect the exchange practices and hence the sale of the pharmaceutical company's product. The regulations and norms provided by national and regional politicians, but also from the recommending committees through their recommendation lists, are two examples of normalizing activities that influence the exchange practices in the market. On the contrary, interests that arise during current exchange practice are interlinked to what is being regulated through normalizing practices. For example, during the last phase of a launch the focus of the communication, sent out by the marketing and sales department, is on the product, which previously has been characterized as an exchange practice. Further, as more and more healthcare professionals are becoming engaged in this practice interest will arise which will affect the normalizing practice conducted by recommendation committees and they will make a decision regarding whether or not the new pharmaceutical will be on their list.

8.4 An Integrated Analysis

In this section the previous parts of the analysis will be combined in order to investigate if the actors, activities and their contribution to the shape of the market change over time during the launch of a new pharmaceutical. The section will start with an overview where the previous analytical results are categorized in accordance with the empirically identified phases that make up the launch process. This will be followed by a discussion where patterns of change are clarified. The section will end with a brief discussion on how the conducted analysis relates back to the initial research questions and how the analytical findings can be used to the described the structure of the investigated launch process.

8.4.1 An Overview

Table 2 provides an overview of the analytical results categorized in accordance with the empirically identified phases that the described launch process consists of. It is only the activities that directly contribute to the shape of the market that are considered.

Phase	Actor	Activity	Practice
Pre-Approval Phase			
	Key Opinion Leaders	Awareness for disease and theurapeutic class	Representational
	Reccomending committees	Horizon Scanning	Representational/ Exchange
Pre-Launch Phase			
	Key Opinion Leaders	Create awareness for theurapeutic class and educat	Representational
	Specialists	Create awareess for the theurapeutic class	Representational
	Specialists	Create awareess for the product	Exchange
	Reccomending committees	Use algorithms	Exchange
Launch Phase			
	Specialists	Create awareness for the product and educate	Exchange
	General Practitionaers and nurses	Create awareness for the product	Exchange
Activities related to Market Access and Public Affaris			
	National and Local Politicians	Establish guidelines	Normalizing
	Reccomending committees	Provide reccomendation list	Normalizing
	National Diabetes Team	Affect the market in certain directions	Normalizing

Table 2: An Overview of the Analytical Results

8.4.2 The Launch Process

The analysis of the empirical findings illustrates that the actors involved, the activities they are involved in or pursue themselves and how this contribute to shape the market vary over time during the launch of a new pharmaceutical. Consequently, this next section of the analysis will try to clarify this pattern of change by making use of the empirically identified phases that make up the launch process.

8.4.2.1 The Pre-Approval Phase

In the pre-approval phase the purpose it to create awareness around the disease and the therapeutic class that the new pharmaceutical product belongs to. Hence, the sales and marketing department at the pharmaceutical company focus on engaging key opinion leaders in representational practices, by inviting them to international and national symposiums and advisory boards, where the aim is to establish a representation of the market in which the new pharmaceutical product will be sold.

During the pre-approval phase it is also crucial to engage the recommending committees as they pursue representational practices on their own by performing horizon scanning to provide the county the represent with a view of the pharmaceutical market. Based on this, the marketing and sales department tries to influence these representations of the market by pursuing their own representational practice and exchange practice. The department emphasizes the importance of the therapeutic class and the benefits of the new product during the meetings they are invited to with different committees.

To summarize, the initial phase is dominated by representational practices. The marketing and sales department engages the key opinion leaders in awareness creating activities that can be described as representational practices and the department is also pursuing representational and exchange practice in order to influence the representations of the market provided by the recommending committees.

8.4.2.2 The Pre-Launch Phase

In the pre-launch phase the new pharmaceutical is approved and the marketing and sales department shifts focus to the product and aim at providing healthcare professionals with a good understanding of its clinical profile. However, in this phase data from clinical trials is still used, meaning that the importance of the therapeutic class still is emphasized, although the focus is on the product. This indicates that this phase is characterized by overlapping practices.

Firstly, the key opinion leaders are engaged again in representational practices, as they share their experience from the previous phase with the new target, which are the specialists. The group of specialists, which are targeted and educated in this stage, are also engaged indirectly since the symposiums and sales meetings they are invited to are executed in order to prepare them for interaction with the next target group. Secondly, the pre-launch phase is also a subject to exchange practices that focus on specifying the product and emphasizing practical aspects of clinical trials. More and more material provided by the marketing and sales department emphasizes the product instead of the importance of the therapeutic class.

Another important exchange activity to consider during the pre-launch phase is the use of algorithms that are provided by the recommending committees. These give indications of which type of patient the pharmaceutical is suitable for, which specify the product and contribute to stabilising the conditions for prescription. The marketing and sales department is trying to use these during their interaction with the healthcare professionals, as they are a very credible source in the commercialisation of a new product.

It is evident that the pre-launch phase is characterized by overlapping market practices. The marketing and sales department are still engaging actors in representational practices, although the involvement of specialists is new. However, exchange practices are becoming increasingly important in order to ensure that the new pharmaceutical is prescribed when available on the market.

8.4.2.3 The Launch Phase

The main purpose of the launch phase is to create conditions for the new pharmaceutical to be accepted by the market and ultimately prescribed by a broad spectrum of healthcare professionals. The earlier described exchange practices that specifies the product and under what conditions it should be used will continue to be pursued, but now by involving the specialists in the education of general prescribers and nurses at local scientific meetings or regular sales meetings.

The launch phase is characterized mainly by exchange practices that aim to create conditions for the new pharmaceutical to be accepted by the market and ultimately prescribed by practitioners.

8.4.2.4 Activities Relating to Market Access and Public Affairs

The analysis of the empirical findings clarifies that the marketing and sales department does not initiate any normalizing practices on its own. Instead the department is constantly trying to influence and affect normalizing practises that already exist in the market. Hence, these efforts cannot be linked to any specific phase of the launch process, as they are a part of a constant ongoing project.

The national and regional politicians pursue activities that clearly can be viewed as normalizing activities that contribute to establish guidelines for how the Swedish pharmaceutical market is shaped. The marketing and sales department is trying to affect these practices directly, where the participation during the political week in Almedalen has been brought forward as an example. Further, since the pharmaceutical company's interaction with politicians is limited, the marketing and sales department is also trying to influence these normalizing through the use of indirect relations which the departments has access to through the National Diabetes Team and the recommending committees.

The empirical findings have also clarified that the recommending committees and the National Diabetes Team perform normalizing activities of their own. The recommending committees provide recommendation lists and the National Diabetes Team is trying to affect the market in certain directions with the use of different activities. The marketing and sales department are keeping a constant dialogue with these actors in different settings in order to affect their agenda and in turn, how they pursue their normalizing practices.

8.4.3 Returning to the Research Model

Returning to the research model, it is now possible to see connections between the four main areas of research starting with (1) who are the actors, followed by (2) in what activities does the marketing and sales department engages the actors and (3) how do these activities contribute to shape the market. The final part of the analysis does also clarify (4) how the actors, activities and their contribution to the shape of the market change over time during the launch process. Building on these analytical results with support from pre-study findings and previous research, a brief attempt to explain why the described launch process is built the way it is, will be made. Emphasis will be put on the market shaping aspects.

Starting with a reflection of the three empirically identified phases, described as the pre-approval, the pre-launch and the launch, the analysis confirms that certain practices dominates each phase. The pre-approval phase can be seen as a preparatory phase. The phase is dominated by representational practices aimed at emphasizing a representation of the market, where the need for the therapeutic class that the new product belongs to is evident. The pre-launch phase is a critical and overlapping phase. The phase only lasts for about six months, between the approval from the EMA and decision regarding price from TLV. In addition, both the market need and the benefits of the pharmaceutical product needs to get well established, which means that the marketing and sales department needs to take initiatives to both representational and exchange practices. The launch phase is dominated by exchange practices, which is in line with the marketing and sales department's purpose of the phase, as they want a broad spectrum of prescribers to start to prescribe the new pharmaceutical product to their patients.

Apart from the recommending committees and the horizon scanning in the pre-approval phase, the healthcare professionals are the only actors engaged in representational and exchange practices. These are also the only practices that can be linked to specific phases of the launch process. Further, a reason to why the recommending committees are able to engage is due to the fact that the marketing and sales department actually gets invited to forums in which it is possible to engage these recommending committees.

Continuing with the normalizing practices, the analysis confirms that the marketing and sales department does not initiate this type of practices on their own. Instead the department is constantly trying to influence the many normalizing practices that already are being executed by other actors in the network, such as the national and regional politicians. Further, the pre-study findings confirms that the Swedish pharmaceutical market has been going through a transformation during recent years and that regulatory change is the main driver which have forced pharmaceutical companies to adapt to new requirements, especially the marketing and sales departments. Kjellberg and Helgesson (2007) argue that an increase in normalizing activities is typical in markets in transition, where rules are under change or when the existing ones are poorly specified. Gebert Persson and Steinby (2005) claim that the intervention from governmental authority directly affects network-evolving processes. Hence, the regulatory change that the Swedish pharmaceutical market is experiencing might be a reason to why the marketing and sales department now needs to consider new actors in the network that surrounds the company, but also to why the department needs to work actively to influence normalizing practices that contribute to shape the market. Further, Steinby (2006) argue that well-set routines within the pharmaceutical industry are changed when new market practices are created that shape the market and that new regulations might result in new routines in the market. Hence, the marketing and sales department's relatively new focus on activities relating to market access and public affairs can also be explained by this change. Furthermore, a potential reason to why the marketing and sales department is not initiating any normalizing practices on their own, is that the department does not have the mandate to pursue such practices or any forums in which this can be done, which is brought forward by the market access and public affairs manager.

"As a large pharmaceutical company it is important to be humble and to not create projects just to get attention, then it is better to work a little bit behind the front in order to be accepted by the society." (Market Access & Public Affairs Manager)

The lack of forums in which the marketing and sales department can influence the normalizing practices performed by the National Diabetes Team, the national and regional politicians and the recommending committees is also the reason to why these activities cannot be linked to any particular phase during the launch process.

9. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the marketing and sales department at a pharmaceutical company in Sweden engages a network of actors during the launch of a new pharmaceutical product and how this contributes to shape the market. By studying the actors engaged, in what activities they are engaged, how this contributes to shape the market and how all these aspects change over time during the launch of a new pharmaceutical product, several interesting aspects have been identified.

To start with, the analysis of the empirical findings indicates that the marketing and sales department does not involve all of the actors, in the given network that surrounds the company. The primary groups of actors that are considered by the marketing and sales department during the launch of a new pharmaceutical product are healthcare professionals including different sub-groups, the National Diabetes Team, national and regional politicians and the recommending committees representing the counties in Sweden.

It is confirmed that the marketing and sales department engages a few of the identified actors in activities, but also that the department makes an attempt to influence already existing activities initiated by some of these actors. The healthcare professionals are engaged in awareness creating and credibility building activities, the National Diabetes Team and the national and regional politicians are approached in an attempt to influence their agendas. The recommending committees are influenced by representational and exchange practices pursued by the marketing and sales department in relation to horizon scanning. These committees are also involved in the marketing and sales departments exchange practices, as the algorithms provided by the committees are used in the department’s interaction with healthcare professionals.

When further analysing the empirical results, it is clear that the market investigated is an on-going result of a network of translations that link normalizing, exchange and representational practices. An additional finding is that the activities, that a few of the identified actors already are performing, contribute to the shape of the market and that the activities that the marketing and sales department pursue in an attempt to affect these activities is an attempt to affect the shape of the market. However, it is also confirmed that the activities that the marketing and sales department are the initiators of and engage actors in can contribute to the shape of the market.

Lastly, the empirical findings show that different actors, activities and market practices are relevant at different points in time during the launch of a new pharmaceutical. The pre-approval is dominated by representational practices. The pre-launch phase is a critical and overlapping phase characterized by both representational and exchange practices. In the launch phase exchange practices are highly evident. In these phases, the healthcare professionals are the primary actors involved. Further, the analysis indicates that the marketing and sales department does not initiate any normalizing practices on their own. Instead the department is constantly trying to influence the normalizing practices that already are being executed by the National Diabetes Team, the national and regional politicians and the recommending committees.

To conclude, it is evident that the empirical findings and the analysis of the thesis provide both fascinating contributions to existing research and an interesting foundation to build future research on. In addition, the study does also give rise to important managerial implications.

10. Discussion

In this chapter the managerial implications of the empirical findings and the analytical results will be discussed. Further, some reflections regarding the generalizability and the limitations of the study will be presented. The chapter ends with some suggestions on how future research can be developed.

10.2 Managerial Implications

The empirical findings and the analytical results provide managerial implications for managers that are involved during the launch of a new pharmaceutical product in Sweden. The study may help managers to acknowledge the potential of identifying relevant actors in the network that surrounds a company and engage them in activities that can contribute to shape the market in which the new pharmaceutical is launched. Further, they may also acknowledge the importance of working actively to influence the activities actors already are performing and that also contribute to the shape of the market. The challenge lies in engaging the right type of actor in activities that shape the market in a desirable way. The study can be used to identify relevant actors with valuable resources as well as critical activities that the actors should be engaged in.

Another important managerial implication is that managers need to consider engaging different actors in different activities at different times during the launch process. The findings suggest that it is essential to pursue and engage actors in representational practices during the initial phase of a launch. Later on in the process, exchange practices are required to provide favourable conditions for exchange. Further, as there are few normalizing practices that a pharmaceutical company can engage actors in, it is instead important to identify how a company can influence other actors' existing normalizing practices.

10.3 Generalizability

The generalizability of the findings from the study is in general limited. The applicability to other industries is low due to the study's narrow scope and the fact that the study builds on findings from one specific market that is characterized by a complex structure of actors. Some aspects and insights might however be generalizable to other highly regulated markets where the actors in the relevant network are influential. Further, the study's applicability on pharmaceutical industries in other countries is limited due to significant differences in national laws between countries. However, the findings can be generalized to other therapeutic areas within the pharmaceutical industry in Sweden, as the network structure is expected to be similar. In addition, although the study is based on a case study form one company the findings are likely to be applicable to other companies in the industry as the pharmaceutical companies' activities are expected to be similar due to ethical regulations that limit the type of activities that can be initiated (Brismar, 2013).

10.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The conducted study builds on a qualitative research strategy. However, a quantitative study investigating the same aspects based on data from a large number of firms could be an interesting complement as this would help in determining the generalizability of the findings and provide robustness to the results.

Another potential limitation of the study is the fact that it only builds on activities pursued by the marketing and sales department at the investigated pharmaceutical company. Even if it contributes to the depth of the findings it might be of interest for future researchers to consider other departments at a pharmaceutical company as well. A study exploring how other internal departments are involved in engaging actors in the launch process could be relevant. Future research could also investigate other parts of a launch process at a pharmaceutical company, for example the process from research and development to launch.

Further, the three combined theories in the used research model represent large research areas. The conducted study reveals several smaller areas in which interesting aspects for future research can be found. For instance, normalizing practices have become increasingly influential and dominate the pharmaceutical market today. Due to their increased importance and impact on the industry structure, additional studies on this specific subject would be interesting, especially for practitioners. Moreover, this study emphasizes the importance of engaging external actors in the launch process, but limited focus is put on what actually motivates actors to participate. This calls for studies that elaborate on how the company should motivate different types of actors. It might also be of relevance to perform a similar study from the perspective of external actors as the findings in this study is based on the company's perspective.

Despite the limitations, this study contributes to the understanding of how the marketing and sales department at a pharmaceutical company in Sweden engages a network of actors during the launch of a new pharmaceutical product and how this contributes to shape the market. The study also reveals that the investigated subject covers an area of increasing interest, which calls for future research on related topics.

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Appendix I

Interview Template for Main Study

The Interviewee

- Background within the company
- Position and responsibility within the company today

The Launch Process

- Describe the new pharmaceutical used as an example and its position on the market at the time of the launch
- Describe the launch process:
  - o Each step?
  - o Target groups?
  - o Activities?
  - o Critical events?
  - o Problems that occurred? Why?
  - o What was the outcome of the launch?

Relations to External Actors

- Were external actors engaged during the launch?
  - o Which type of actors?
  - o How did they contribute to the launch?
  - o How did the marketing and sales department work with them?

- How did the marketing and sales department interact with national and local politicians?

- How did the marketing and sales department interact with the recommending committees?

- How did the company interact with healthcare professionals?