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NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY OF COMMERCE

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MARKETING

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**An investigation of the impact of distribution efficiency:
A case Study of United Refineries Limited.**

STUDENT NUMBER: P006 2741M



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The major problem driving this research was the perceived distribution inefficiency at URL. The company was always inundated with complaints of product shortages, long delivery lead time on both raw materials and finished product and general lack of customer service. This research therefore wanted to find out whether the company's distribution was efficient in spite of the above prima facie issues.

The main objective of the research was to find out the extent to which the company's distribution efficiency elements which affect distribution efficiency such as lead time, stock availability, competitor performance versus URL customer perceptions on company product shortages and the impact of product support or merchandising were interrogated.

To give the project a thorough grounding in theoretical issues, a plethora of marketing textbooks were consulted. The main thrust was to concentrate on texts which touched on physical distribution and logistics. Various journals including the internet were also consulted

The research methodology basically looked at the data collection issues. For URL management employees, depth interviews were employed to get the data. For customers, sampling was done using the Pareto Analysis method. The questionnaire was the primary data collection instrument. Microsoft Excel was mainly used in the analysis of data through tables, Pie Charts and graphs.

The major conclusions drawn from the findings were that the company's distribution system is not very efficient as exemplified by the elements where it is falling short. Most customers are not happy with the company lead time, product availability and general customer service. The major recommendations were to exhort the company to pull up its socks in improving distribution efficiency by adopting such methods as Pareto Analysis,

improving stock situation, increasing product lines, carrying out enhanced competitor analysis and reintroducing the merchandising function.