

THE PRODUCT LIFE CYCLE AND THE PRACTICALITY OF THE IMPERMANENCE CONCEPT OF BUDDHISM

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Introduction

The idea of the product life cycle was first described in the 1960s. It explains 4 main stages of a product from deriving product idea to obsolescence. The lifetime of a product divided into several time phases and those have been named as introduction, growth, maturity and decline stages. The purpose of dividing into such stages is to maximize the profit and the lifetime of the product. It simply says we can extend growth and maturity stages by using effective strategies. But this idea reveals every product eventually reach to its decline stage. Then it's impossible to revise the growth of the product and inevitably the marketer has to give up on the product or brand.

This concept is however has the similarity to an idea of Buddhism; "impermanence". It reveals no matter how strong and effective your strategies; you have to give up on the product/life eventually. Buddhism clearly states the impermanence of life and its' each aspect. According to the teachings of Lord Buddha, all of us will die eventually no matter the best medications we try to take and all the belongings we try to posses will decay even the products and brands. It is inevitable truth of the universe.

Impermanence also called *Anicca* or *Anitya* is major part of teachings in Buddhism and it is said as unavoidable. In this research, it tries to compare the concept of product life cycle and the concept, impermanence of Buddhism and tries to find truthfulness and the practicality of this Buddhist teaching.

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Literature review

The product life cycle developed by the economist Raymond Vernon firstly in 1966. Now it's a widely used model in economics and marketing. According to Vermon a product has its own lifetime which when launched to the market and gradually starts to disappear after some point of time. The lifetime of the product will begin from the development and in the end it decline. But length of the product life cycle depends on the nature and type of the product. Some stays in their growth stage while others in their maturity stage. Some spend 100 of years to decline but some declines after few years it has launched.

The introduction stage

When a manufacturer derived a product idea, he starts to develop the product through whole long process by investing. After few sample surveys, it will commercialize locally or internationally. To increase the demand of the consumers, the promotion campaigns can be held. After increasing the consumer awareness they start to buy. At this stage, profits are very low and competitors are few. If the marketer able to sold more and more products it will enter to the next stage automatically.

The growth stage

In this stage, sales will increase rapidly. The costs will reduce and profits can be generated highly.

The maturity stage

In this stage, the product is widely known and there are loyal consumers to the product. There are lots of competitors to the brand in the market.

The decline stage

At some point of time, the product sale starts to decline. It becomes unpopular in the market. Eventually marketers have to stop releasing the product to the market.

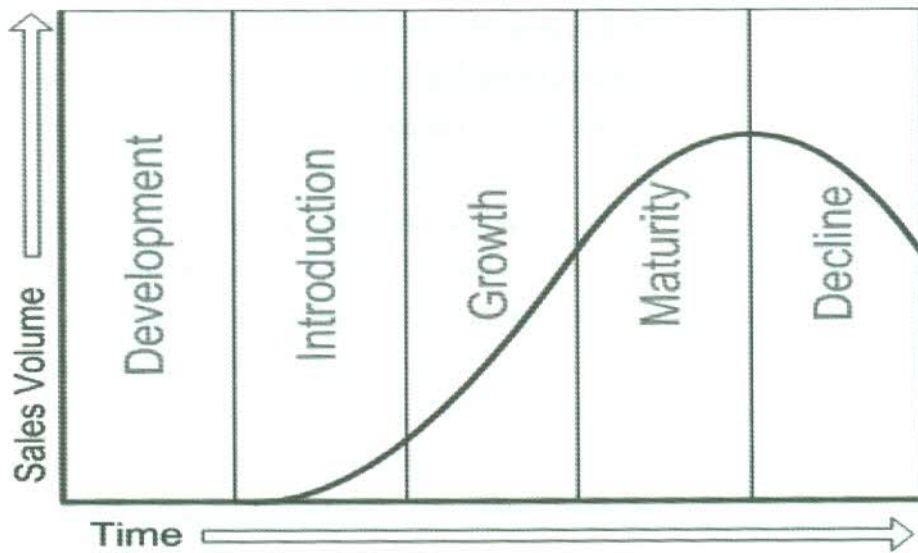


Figure 1 - The product life cycle model

“All compounded things are impermanent” – Lord Buddha

How Buddhism deals with the stages of lifetime and impermanence

“The three kinds of feelings, O monks, are impermanent, compound dependently arisen, liable to destruction, to evanescence, to fading away, to cessation – namely, pleasant feeling, painful feeling and neutral feeling” (Anicca Sutta)

The Buddha noted the impermanence is inevitable. He stated three forms of *Anicca* named compounded, constructed or fabricated which points out to the undeniable fact of human existence nothing on earth was ever free. The Buddha explained that every living being is aggregated with impermanent things. Buddhism categorized five distinct stages of lifetime.

1. Growing old
2. Falling sick
3. Dying and destruction
4. Decay of perishable things
5. The passing away of that which is liable to pass

“The Buddha explained that we should not become too attached to our bodies and their sensual experiences and thoughts that arise from them, because attachment to our bodies and to life causes us great dukkha,

suffering and misery. Sense contact brings us sense experiences which we then term as desirable or undesirable. From this judgment arises the desire to re-experience similar sensual experiences, which lead directly to attachment.”

“Impermanent indeed are all conditioned things: they are of the nature of arising and passing away. Having come into being, they cease to exist. Hence their pacification is tranquility” –Buddhism Today

Conclusion

None can avoid this aspects until one achieve *Nirvana*. The various stages of a man, the childhood, the adulthood, the old age are changing every time. Child will change to young man when he grows up, and then he become senile.

It would seem that living things struggle to defy change, defy anitya, to resist change.

We have to nourish our insight into impermanence every day. If we do, we will live more deeply, suffer less, and enjoy life more. Living deeply, we will touch the foundation of reality, nirvana, the world of no-birth and no-death. Touching impermanence deeply, we touch the world beyond permanence and impermanence. We touch the ground of being and see that which we have called being and non called being are just notions. Nothing is ever lost or fails. Nothing is gained.

Keywords : impermanence, product life cycle, Buddhism, practicality, anicca sutta

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