Market Orientation as a Strategic Driver of Individual Customer Orientation

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study is to investigate the effect of market orientation on individual customer orientation through a theoretical framework. This study also examines the outcomes of individual customer orientation. The suggested theoretical framework was tested using the data obtained from a random sample of marketers from a wide spectrum of businesses. The final sample consisted of 189 usable responses. No nonresponse bias was found since there were no differences between the mean responses of the first and the last quartiles (Armstrong and Overton 1977). Principal component analysis was conducted on each construct of the model to verify a single factor structure. The reliability of each construct was higher than the cutoff value of 0.70 recommended by Nunnally (1978). A confirmatory factor analysis (Joreskog and Sorbom 1993) was used to estimate the model parameters, to assess the model fit, and to test the suggested hypotheses. The fit between the suggested model and the sample data was found to be very good. According to the study results, there is a significant positive relationship between market orientation and customer orientation. The study results suggest that higher levels of customer orientation lead to higher levels of relationship development and individual performance. Managerial implications of the study results were also discussed and future research suggestions were provided.

INTRODUCTION

Organizations may have different types of business orientations such as customer orientation, goal orientation, management orientation, sales orientation, marketing/market orientation, and so on. All these orientations can be assessed both at the organizational and individual levels. They may be critically important for firms both in national and international markets. In general, the purpose of these orientations is to generate more profit, more sales, more satisfaction, and so on. Especially, customer orientation has been increasingly emphasized by both academics and practitioners as a beneficial business orientation for the last three decades. The concept of customer orientation can be evaluated from the two perspectives: organizational-level customer/market orientation versus individual-level customer orientation.

Employees of a market-oriented firm are ideally expected to be also market-oriented or customer-oriented. Market orientation motivates employees to become more customer-oriented, more committed to their company and their job, and more satisfied with their job (Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Siguaw, Brown, and Widing 1994). It has been empirically shown that, in a market-oriented organization, employees are likely to have more esprit de corps and organizational commitment (Jaworski and Kohli 1993; Jaworski and Kohli 1996). Since a marketer has a significant impact on the creating demand and establishing trust between the organization and the customer, the actions and behavior of a marketer and his/her orientation towards the customer become very significant and central from the organizational standpoint. If an organization aims to establish and/or maintain a competitive position in the marketplace and to develop long-term satisfactory relationships with its customers, it should emphasize on understanding the factors that influence the customer-orientedness of its marketers.

The possible relationship between overall market orientation of the firm and the customer orientedness of the firm’s marketing employees may have important implications for businesses. Maintaining a strong customer orientation in each employee, especially in a marketing employee, is critical for the success of almost any types of businesses. Few studies have investigated whether a high level of the organizational-level market orientation results in a high level of
customer orientation exhibited by the firm’s employees at different organizational levels (e.g., Siguaw, Brown, and Widing 1994). Siguaw, Brown, and Widing (1994) found a positive and significant relationship between organizational-level market orientation and individual-level customer orientation. Recently, Brown et al. (2002) noted that “Despite the apparent importance of employees’ customer orientation to the implementation of the marketing concept in the market-driven company, research on the construct has been limited” (p.111).

The purpose of this study is to fill this void in the literature by examining the effect of organizational market orientation on individual-level customer orientation and exploring performance outcomes of individual-level customer orientation within the marketing context. The majority of the studies on the individual-level customer orientation have used samples of salespeople and/or sales managers and/or customers (e.g., Joshi and Randall 2001; O’Hara, Boles and Johnston 1991; Saxe and Weitz 1982; Siguaw and Honeycutt 1995; Thomas, Soutar and Ryan 2001). The research that focuses on marketers as potential target respondents in the investigation of the individual-level customer orientation has been almost nonexistent. This study attempts to fill this gap in the relevant literature by using a sample of marketers in the investigation of the link between market orientation and the individual-level customer orientation.

ORGANIZATIONAL-LEVEL CUSTOMER/MARKET ORIENTATION

Customer orientation has been a part of the important stages of modern marketing’s evolution. This evolution is characterized by four distinctive eras by some marketing texts (e.g., Berkowitz, Kerin, Hartley, and Rudelius 1994). These eras include, in chronological order, the Production Era, the Sales Era, the Marketing Concept Era, and the Market Orientation Era (Berkowitz et al. 1994; Wilkie and Moore 2003). This periodization framework is widely acknowledged by scholars. According to this well-known framework, the first era, the Production Era, is commonly extended from about 1870 to 1930. The major emphasis of management in this era is on production rather than distribution (Fullerton 1988). This era gave very little attention to marketing (Fullerton 1988). The Production Era was followed by the Sales Era in 1930s. In this era, personal selling was backed by research and advertising (Webster 1988). Until the mid-1950s, “marketing” was seen as “selling”. Under this conventional view of marketing, it was believed that greater sales volume was the key to profitability. The main focus was on products, not on customers (Webster 1988). In 1950, the Marketing Concept Era which is based on customer orientation started (Webster 1988). A consumer orientation approach has proved more profitable (Webster 1988). Customer orientation is one of the foundational elements of the marketing concept. According to Bell and Emory (1971), the marketing concept consists of the three dimensions which are customer orientation or customer focus, integrated effort, and profit direction or market-driven. The last era is the Market Orientation Era which starts in the 1980s and lasts to present time. Since market orientation is accepted as the implementation of the marketing concept (Kohli and Jaworski 1990), customer orientation has also been an integral part of a market orientation.

There are two widely-acknowledged views of market orientation in the literature. These are a cultural perspective (Narver and Slater 1990) and a behavioral /activities /process perspective (Kohli and Jaworski 1990) of a market orientation (Jaworski and Kohli 1996). From the cultural perspective, Narver and Slater (1990) defined market orientation as “the organization culture that most effectively and efficiently creates the necessary behaviors for the creation of superior value for buyers and, thus, superior performance for the business” (p.21). Market orientation was characterized by the three dimensions which are (1) customer orientation, (2) competitor orientation or focus and (3) cross-functional coordination. From the behavioral/ activities/ process perspective, Kohli and Jaworski (1990) described market orientation as follows: “Market orientation is the organization-wide generation of market intelligence pertaining to current and future customers needs, dissemination of the intelligence across departments, and organization-wide responsiveness to it” (p.6). Market orientation consists of the three dimensions which are (1) intelligence generation, (2) intelligence dissemination, and (3) responsiveness (Kohli, Jaworski, and Kumar 1993).

Both the marketing concept and market orientation have been mainly studied at the organizational level in the literature. The effect of market orientation on organizational performance has been widely investigated by scholars in different business contexts (e.g., Baker and Sinkula 1999; Jaworski and Kohli 1993; Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Matsuno and Mentzer 2000; Narver and Slater 1990; Voss and Voss 2000). This effect was mostly positive and significant
(Deshpande, Farley, and Webster 1993; Jaworski and Kohli 1993; Han, Kim and Srivastava 1998; Narver and Slater 1990).

It would be fair to say that the antecedents, consequences, and/or effects of the organizational-level customer/market orientation have been relatively well-documented compared to those of the individual-level customer orientation. The previous organizational-level market orientation research showed that market orientation may lead to a number of individual-level favorable outcomes such as: enhanced employee esprit de corps and organizational commitment (Jaworski and Kohli 1993; Jaworski and Kohli 1996), customer orientation, role stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment of salespeople (Siguaw, Brown, and Widing 1994; Jaworski and Kohli 1996). Employee consequences of a market orientation have received a very limited attention from researchers (Jaworski and Kohli 1996).

INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL CUSTOMER ORIENTATION

Even though customer orientation is accepted by both practitioners and scholars as a critical element for the success of almost every business, past research has not given a specific attention to this subject much. The previous research has mainly treated customer orientation as an important component of the marketing concept (e.g., Bell and Emory 1971) and/or market orientation (e.g., Narver and Slater 1990). Customer orientation has mainly been examined at the organizational level in combination with the other dimensions of the marketing concept and/or market orientation (e.g., Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Lucas and Ferrell 2000; Narver and Slater 1990). In the literature, the number of individual-level market/customer orientation studies is limited (e.g., Sax and Weitz 1982; Siguaw, Brown, and Widing 1994; Williams and Spiro 1985) and most of these studies have been conducted in the selling context.

A group of studies have examined the factors that affect the degree of customer orientation of individuals (e.g., Brown et al. 2002; O’Hara, Boles, and Johnston 1991; Siguaw and Honeycutt 1995; Siguaw, Brown, and Widing II 1994; Williams and Attaway 1996). O’Hara, Boles and Johnston (1991) tested job tenure, supervisor/employee relations, job involvement, organizational commitment, and personal characteristics (i.e., gender) as antecedents of customer orientation. Siguaw and Honeycutt (1995) investigated the links among job satisfaction, organizational commitment, role conflict, role ambiguity, and salesperson’s performance over a sample of 1644 salespersons with a response rate of 16.4%. Siguaw, Brown, and Widing II (1994) explored the effect of market orientation, as viewed from the salesperson’s perspective, on the salesperson’s customer orientation and job attitudes using random samples of 585 sales personnel and 353 sales/marketing managers. Williams and Attaway (1996) examined the relationships among organizational culture, customer orientation, and buyer-seller relationship development. Customer-oriented behavior was used as a mediating variable between buyer’s/seller’s organizational cultures and buyer-seller relationships. A selling firm’s organizational culture is the significant predictors of customer orientation and relationship development. Brown et al. (2002) investigated the effects of basic personality traits on the customer orientation of employees.

There are not many studies that have examined the antecedents and consequences of the customer-orientedness of an individual in different business contexts including marketing, advertising, retailing, and so on. The possible link between market orientation and individual-level customer orientation is a vital research topic. The number of studies on this issue has been limited to a few (e.g., Boles, Babin, Brashear and Brooks 2001; Jones, Busch, and Dacin 2003; Siguaw, Brown and Widing, II 1994, Menguc 1996). The past research investigated the effect of the firm’s market orientation (Jones, Busch, and Dacin 2003; Siguaw, Brown and Widing, II 1994, Menguc 1996) and the impact of the organizational-level customer orientation (Boles et al. 2001) on the individual-level customer orientation of salespersons and/or sales managers. Departing from the literature, this study investigates the antecedents and consequences of customer orientation in the marketing context.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The suggested model attempts to find answers to the following two research questions: (1) what are the strategic determinants of individual customer orientation? and (2) what are the possible individual performance outcomes of
individual customer orientation? The model variables are market orientation, customer orientation, buyer-seller relations, and individual performance. Figure 1 displays the model variables and their suggested theoretical links.

**Market Orientation and Customer Orientation**

The limited number of studies has explored the effect of organizational market orientation on individual customer orientation (e.g., Boles et al. 2001; Jones, Busch, and Dacin 2003; Siguaw, Brown and Widing II 1994). Market orientation was conceptualized by both Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Narver and Slater (1990). Their conceptualizations are well-known and acknowledged by researchers. Both conceptualizations include an element which requires all of the firm’s employees to focus on needs, wants, and preferences of their customers. These sub-dimensions are called ‘customer orientation’ (Narver and Slater 1990) and ’market intelligence generation’ (Kohli and Jaworski 1990). Either of these alternative dimensions is the key to a strong market orientation in an organization.

A strong market orientation leads to more satisfied employees who are more committed, motivated, and productive (Day 1998). A market-oriented organization requires its employees to be close to its customers and responsive to their needs and wants. Since employees of a market-oriented organization are generally highly motivated and committed (Day 1998), they are expected to implement the requirements of their employer completely. Thus, they are likely to become more customer-oriented or customer-focused. Also, Flaherty, Dahlstrom, and Skinner (1999) found that “employees perceiving a highly customer-oriented organization are likely to engage in those same types of customer-oriented behaviors themselves” (Flaherty, Dahlstrom, and Skinner 1999, p.11; Kohli and Jaworski 1990).

Siguaw, Brown, and Widing II (1994) argued that “the firm possesses the means of influencing the customer orientation of its sales force and is rational in expecting the sales force to behave and respond to customer needs in a manner that is congruent with the firm’s market orientation. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that the market orientation of the firm has a strong influence on the customer orientation of the sales force” (p.107). From the empirical aspect, Siguaw, Brown, and Widing II (1994) showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between market orientation and customer orientation. Also, Boles et al. (2001) reported the existence of a significant, positive relationship between a firm’s customer orientation and customer-oriented selling. However, Jones, Busch, and Dacin (2003)’s study revealed that there is no relationship between the firm’s market orientation and salesperson’s customer orientation. In brief, the findings of the past research on the nature of this relationship contradict. On the basis of the evidence presented above, the following hypothesis is suggested to define the nature of the relationship between market orientation of the firm and customer orientation of marketers.

H1: The greater the level of market orientation of the firm, the greater the level of customer orientation of its marketers.

**Customer Orientation and Buyer-Seller Relations**

A possible link between customer orientation and relationship development has been explored by only a few studies (e.g., Williams and Attaway 1996). Williams and Attaway (1996) argued that “individual sales representatives
can positively affect the organization’s performance by utilizing a customer-oriented approach in establishing and maintaining relationships with customers” (p.39). Williams and Attaway (1996)’s argument suggests the existence of a positive connection between a customer-oriented approach and the establishment and maintenance of good relationships with customers. Moreover, Rust, Zahorik, and Keiningham (1996) indicated that “personal interaction component of services is often a primary determinant of the customer’s overall satisfaction” (p.391). If the employee’s interaction with customers is characterized as being customer-oriented or customer-focused, overall customer satisfaction may be achieved. In turn, better customer satisfaction may lead to better long-term relations with customers. Empirically, Williams and Attaway (1996) found out that there is a positive and significant relationship between the salesperson’s customer orientation and the development of buyer-seller relationship. In their study, they considered the salesperson’s customer orientation as an antecedent of development of buyer-seller relationship.

Macintosh et al. (1992) claimed that “empirical evidence of the antecedents and process of relationship development is practically non-existent” (p.23). Therefore, it is believed that the investigation of customer orientation as a potential antecedent of relationship development would be a significant contribution to this line of research. On the basis of the empirical and conceptual evidence explained above, the following hypothesis is suggested:

**H2**: The higher the level of the marketer’s customer-oriented behavior, the higher the level of relationship development.

**Customer Orientation and Individual Performance**

MacKenzie et al. (1993) think that performance is a representation of “a salesperson’s overall contribution to the success of an organization” (p.70). The number of studies that have investigated the link between customer orientation and performance is relatively large. In general, the past research found a positive and significant relationship between customer orientation and sales performance (Boles et al. 2001; Brown et al. 2002; McIntyre et al. 2000). According to Williams and Spiro (1985), “Successful selling depends on successful interpersonal communication” (p.434). Salespeople who are able to communicate and interact with their customers better are more likely to score high on sales performance. Customer-oriented salespeople better understand and satisfy needs and wants of their customers. High customer satisfaction may result in customer loyalty, a high customer retention rate, or repeated sales. In sum, the past research suggests the existence of a positive connection between customer orientation and performance. Therefore, the following hypothesis appears to be appropriate to suggest in defining the customer orientation-performance link.

**H3**: The higher the level of the marketer’s customer orientation, the higher the level of his/her performance.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**Data Collection**

A mail survey was conducted over a random sample of 2,000 companies operating within the U.S. The sample included a broad range of manufacturing and non-manufacturing businesses. This characteristic of the sample increases the applicability and generalizability of the study results to a large number of businesses. *D & B Million Dollar Database* was utilized as the company information source for this research study. The target respondent was the marketer from each company. A mail survey package which consisted of a cover letter, a questionnaire booklet, and a postage-paid reply envelope was sent to each of the selected marketers. The cover letter explained the purpose and importance of the research study, mentioned the rewards that were offered for full participation, and asked the respondent to participate in the survey. In order to improve response rate, quality and speed, monetary incentives (i.e., a random lottery drawing and cash award) and a brief summary of the study results were offered to those who would respond to the questionnaire in a timely manner. A promise of anonymity was also made. In general, only one person from each company received the survey package. But, there were cases of multiple respondents (2 or 3 marketers) from the same company receiving the survey packages. The purpose of using multiple respondents was to reduce the respondent’s bias. The reminder postcards were sent to those companies that did not return the completed questionnaires within three weeks of the initial mailing. A total of 189 usable responses were obtained. The resulting response rate was 9.5%. This response rate is acceptable compared to those of the major studies in this field.
All of the model variables were measured using multiple-item scales borrowed from previous studies. Customer orientation was assessed using the 24-item SOCO scale developed by Saxe and Weitz (1982) for measuring the customer orientation of salespeople. The wording of its items was slightly modified to make them applicable to marketers. Market orientation was measured by the 20-item MARKOR scale developed by Kohli, Jaworski and Kumar (1993). In terms of outcome measures, individual performance was evaluated on a 3-item scale designed by Rich (1977). The wording of this scale was adapted to marketers. Finally, buyer-seller relations was measured by a 4-item composite scale adapted from Williams and Attaway (1996) and Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990).

Sample Characteristics
Marketing managers were the largest group within the sample with 41.8 percent and followed by VP marketing (24.9%), sales manager (13.8%), marketing staff (13.8%), sales staff (3.7%), VP sales (1.1%), and other (1.1%). The respondents had an average of about 11 years of job experience and an average of about 22 years of work experience. The range of job experience changes between 1 to 37 years. The average age of the survey participants was about 45. In terms of the employee size, the average size of the sample companies is approximately 217 employees. The sample includes small, medium, and large companies. This characteristic of the sample enhances the generalizability and applicability of the study findings to a variety of businesses in any size.

Assessments of Unidimensionality, Reliability and Validity
To estimate the effect of non-response bias, the responses from the first quartile were compared with the responses from the fourth quartile. Since there were no differences between responses of the first and the last quartile, it was concluded that there was no nonresponse bias (Armstrong and Overton 1977)

A principal component analysis with varimax rotation and Eigen value of 1 was conducted on each construct of the model to verify a single factor structure. For each construct, only one factor structure was extracted. This indicates the evidence of unidimensionality of the model constructs. Table 1 exhibits the summary results of principal component analysis performed on each construct.

Reliability of each construct was evaluated using the coefficient or Cronbach Alpha (α). The coefficient alpha of each construct was compared to the cutoff value of 0.70 recommended by Nunnally (1978). The coefficient alpha for each construct was well over the cutoff value.

After the assessments of unidimensionality and reliability of the model constructs, the item scores of each construct were added together to obtain a single score for each construct of the model. This is a method that is often utilized for models that have a large number of constructs and indicators (Babin and Boles 1998). A close examination of bivariate correlations of the observed variables provides evidence of discriminant validity. If the confidence interval of the correlation coefficient between two constructs does not include 1, this provides evidence of discriminant validity between those two constructs (Shankarmahesh 1999). In the current model, discriminant validity should be established for customer orientation and market orientation. The correlation coefficient between the observed variables of these two constructs is 0.385 (s.d.=0.05). The confidence interval of the correlation coefficient between these constructs is 0.285 (0.385 - 2*0.05) to 0.485 (0.385 + 2*0.05). This interval does not include 1. This suggests that customer orientation and market orientation are distinct constructs. Overall, all of the model constructs are distinct constructs since the confidence intervals of their correlations coefficients do not include 1.
Table 1: Summary of Principal Component Analysis of Construct Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Construct</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Number of Factors Extracted</th>
<th>Percentage of Variance Extracted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market Orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence Generation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence Dissemination</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Orientation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>68.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Buyer-Seller Relations</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>65.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Performance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Model Fitting and Hypothesis Testing**

A structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis via LISREL was used to estimate the model parameters, to assess the model fit, and to test the suggested hypotheses (Joreskog and Sorbom 1993). A moment covariance matrix of the observed variables was used for the analysis. Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation was utilized to estimate the model parameters. The fit between the suggested model and the sample data was found to be very good. Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) was 0.95 (greater than 0.90); CFI was 0.96 (greater than 0.90); and NFI was 0.96 (greater than 0.90). Table 2 presents information related the suggested hypotheses, parameter estimates and their associated t-values. These hypotheses were evaluated on the basis of the critical t-values of 2.3, 1.6, and 1.3 at the significance levels of, respectively, 0.01, 0.05, and 0.10.

Table 2: Parameter Estimates for the Hypothesized Links of the Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesized Link</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>t-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(+) market orientation to customer orientation</td>
<td>H1</td>
<td>0.2163*</td>
<td>3.216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) customer orientation to relationship development</td>
<td>H2</td>
<td>0.5045*</td>
<td>7.378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(+) customer orientation to individual performance</td>
<td>H3</td>
<td>0.3285*</td>
<td>4.326</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*) Significant at the 0.01 level.

**DISCUSSION OF STUDY RESULTS**

In terms of the effect of market orientation on individual customer orientation, the study results revealed that high levels of organizational market orientation result in high levels of individual customer orientation. A strong organizational market orientation can be established and sustained through a strong customer orientation adopted by each individual within the organization. Thus, an organization with a high degree of market orientation is expected to actively encourage its employees to adopt the customer-oriented thinking and behavior.

The study results suggest that higher levels of customer orientation result in higher levels of relationship development. This result is in agreement with Williams and Attaway (1996)’s finding that there is a positive and significant relationship between the salesperson’s customer orientation and the development of buyer-seller relationship. Based on this finding, it is possible to argue that a strong customer orientation (i.e., personal interaction with customers) leads to better overall customer satisfaction (Rust, Zahorik, and Keiningham 1996) which, in turn, results in improved buyer-seller relationships.

It was found that there is a significant positive relationship between customer orientation and performance. This finding is consistent with the past research that found a positive and significant relationship between customer orientation and sales performance (Boles et al. 2001; Brown et al. 2002; McIntyre et al. 2000). This finding indicates that marketers who are able to communicate and interact with their customers better will have better performance scores.
Marketers who have a strong customer orientation emphasize and better identify needs and wants of their customers.

**CONCLUSIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Since the study was conducted over a sample canvassing a wide spectrum of businesses, the study results may be generalized and applicable to a wide range of companies. The study results provide valuable insights and practical implications for company managers. They provide prescriptive guidelines for top management to follow in increasing their employees’ customer orientation.

The study results suggested a positive relationship between market orientation of the organization and customer orientation of its marketers. This finding implies that developing a strong market orientation can benefit the organization by increasing its marketers’ customer orientation. Marketing personnel has a profound role in connecting the organization to its customers (Ruekert and Walker 1987). Marketers’ attitudes toward customers can directly affect customers’ perceptions of the organization. Marketing personnel with a strong customer orientation are likely to create favorable perceptions of the organization in the minds of customers. This may lead to high levels of customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and customer retention rate.

**FUTURE RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS**

This study has some limitations that should be taken into consideration in future research studies. First, cross-sectional data was employed in the investigation of the suggested links in the model. Cross-sectional data shows the links among the model variables at one point in time (Siguaw, Simpson, and Baker 1998). In fact, some of these suggested links might be dynamic. Causal relationships, or dynamic links, or lagged effects among the model variables can be investigated via longitudinal studies.

Second, in general, one respondent was surveyed from each company in this study. Different departmental groups might perceive the level of market orientation differently within the same organization. Measuring these constructs through the perception of a single respondent from each company may lead to an uncertain level of informant bias. Also, gathering data from a single respondent may involve common method bias or variance (Matsuno and Mentzer 2000). The specific nature of the target respondent in this study significantly restricted the use of a multiple-respondent approach. The same model should be tested over a sample consisting of pairs of marketing and non-marketing professionals from each participating company in order to offset individual response bias and reduce measurement error resulting from surveying a single respondent from each participating company.

Additionally, future research studies can shed light on potential moderators of the market orientation-customer orientation relationship and investigate additional consequences of customer orientation such as job tension, job turnover rate and customer retention rate.

**REFERENCES**


