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The Role of Market Orientation on the Perceived Performance of a Manufacturing Firm in Nigeria

OFOEGBU, O.E. Ph.D and AKANBI, PAUL AYOBAMI
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES, AJAYI CROWTHER UNIVERSITY, OYO, P.M.B. 1066, OYO STATE.
E-MAIL: eugeneofoegbu@yahoo.com: paulayobami@yahoo.com;

Abstract
Market orientation is the organization-wide generation of market intelligence about current and future needs of customers, dissemination of intelligence within the organization, and responsiveness to it. A market oriented firm has a superior capability in achieving higher profits compared to non- market oriented firm. This study investigated the role of market orientation on the perceived performance of manufacturing firms in Nigeria. The objectives of this study were to examine whether there would be a significant difference between market intelligence and perceived organizational performance and also whether intelligence dissemination could be associated with organizational performance. In addition, the study sought to determine whether market intelligence, intelligence dissemination and firm responsiveness were predictors of perceived organizational performance. A survey design was utilized to collect data from two hundred and nine respondents who were employees of Nigerian Breweries Plc, Lagos. The findings of the study indicated that there was a significant difference between market intelligence and perceived organizational performance. The result also showed that there was a significant relationship between intelligence dissemination and organizational performance. The study revealed further that the three measures of market orientation (market intelligence, intelligence dissemination and firm responsiveness) used in this study were predictors of perceived organizational performance. Based on the results obtained from the study, it was recommended among others that firms should strive to develop more customer and market oriented strategies that can bring about superior organizational performance.
Keywords: market orientation, market intelligence, intelligence dissemination, firm responsiveness and perceived organizational performance

Introduction

Market orientation (Mo) concerns learning about the market, in other words: developing an understanding of the market, and using it for marketing actions. Market orientation is conceptualized as a culture or philosophy on the one hand or a set of information processing activities on the other. Both conceptualizations are operationalised and used to investigate the relationship with business performance indicators. Most of these studies report a positive, and in some cases moderated, relationship between market orientation and business performance indicators for various markets (e.g. Avlonitis and Gounaris, 1997; Baker and Sinkula, 1999a; Baker and Sinkula, 1999b; Gatignon and Xuereb, 1997; Greenley, 1995; Han et al.,1998; Hurley and Hult, 1998; Jaworski and Kohli, 1993; Narver and Slater, 1990; Pelham and Wilson, 1996; Ruekert, 1992; Slater and Narver, 1994; Slater and Narver, 1996; Slater and Narver 2000). Market orientation is the business culture that produces performance by creating superior value to customers (Slater and Narver, 2000). Organizations must constantly innovate in every aspect of their business operations in order to compete and survive in the competitive market place.

Market orientation is philosophically founded in the marketing concept (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Narver and Slater, 1990). However, the marketing concept is not a sufficient philosophical foundation, because market orientation focuses not only on customers, but also on competitors, several organizational issues and numerous exogenous factors that influence the needs and preferences of customers (Hunt and Morgan, 1995). Market orientation has been approached from three different basic perspectives: market orientation as organizational cognition (i.e. as a business philosophy, knowledge and skills), market orientation as organizational behavior (Day, 1994b; Dreher, 1993), and market orientation as the combination (Avlonitis and Gounaris, 1997) or integration of these two perspectives (Cadogan and Diamantopoulos, 1995; Tuominen and Möller, 1996).

Market orientation is an aspect of organizational culture that is believed to have far-reaching effects on the firm. According to Deshpande and Webster (1989), the most relevant aspect of organizational culture from a marketing perspective is the marketing concept, which includes "a fundamental shared set of beliefs and values that puts the customer in the center of the firm's thinking about strategy and operations".

Although information on the external environment is obviously vital to sound managerial decision-making, the relevant external environment not only consists of customers, but competitors as well. In fact, Day and Wensley (1988) suggest that in addition to customer characteristics, the number and power of competitors could strongly affect the focus of the intelligence gathering activity. In the cultural perspective of market orientation, Narver and Slater (1990) defined market orientation as: the organizational culture that most effectively and efficiently creates the necessary behavior for the creation of superior value for buyers and, thus, continuous superior performance for the business. They view organizational culture as driver of behavior and only when the culture is defined with commitment to superior value for customers, market oriented behaviors manifest themselves in an organization (Matsuno et al., 2002).

Furthermore, Slater and Narver (2000) found that market orientation and business performance are positively related. Pulendran et al. (2000), and Tay and Morgan (2002) identified significant, positive links between market orientation and overall performance. Indeed, the vast majority of MO studies have examined the effect of MO on business performance, demonstrating its superiority as a strategic orientation (Hult and Ketchen, 2001; Kirca, Jayachandran, and Bearden, 2005; Zhou et al., 2005).

This study therefore examines the role that market orientation can play in organizational performance in manufacturing firms in the Nigerian context.

Hypotheses

Three hypotheses were tested in this study.

1.) There will be a significant difference between market intelligence and perceived organizational performance.
2.) There will be a significant relationship between intelligence dissemination and perceived organizational performance.
3.) Market intelligence, intelligence dissemination and firm responsiveness will jointly and independently predict perceived organizational performance

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

Strategic management (e.g., Dobni and Luffman, 2003; Hult and Ketchen, 2001) and marketing (e.g., Jaworski and Kohli, 1993) researchers posit that a market orientation (MO) provides firms with a source of competitive advantage. A recent meta-analysis supports a positive, significant, and robust link between MO and firm performance (Kirca et al., 2005). However, while there is mounting evidence concerning MO possession and firm performance, we have little understanding of how this market-based asset is deployed to achieve competitive advantage.

Kohli and Jaworski (1990) define market orientation as generation of market intelligence pertaining to current and future customer needs, dissemination of the intelligence across departments, and organization - wide responsiveness to it. Market intelligence is not only the information from customers about their needs and preference based on customer research but exogenous market factors (e.g., competition, regulation) that affect customer needs and preferences and current as well as future needs of customers (Kohli and Jaworski,1990). The definition focuses on organizational activities related to the generation of, dissemination of and responsiveness to market intelligence. On the other hand, Narver and Slater (1990) assert market orientation is the organization culture that most effectively and efficiently creates the necessary behavior for the creation of superior value for buyers. This perspective concentrates on organizational norm and value that encourage behaviors that are consistent with market orientation. Furthermore, Narver and Slater(1990) define the three behavioral components of market orientation such as customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interfunctional coordination. Judging from the above, it is apparent that the cultural perspective also takes into consideration the behaviors related to market intelligence generation (e.g. customers and competitors), dissemination and responsiveness (e.g. interfunctional coordination). So we can understand market orientation as the behaviors based on organizational norm and value that encourage for the generation of, dissemination of and responsiveness to market intelligence.

In the existing market orientation research, most definitions of market orientation were derived from the conceptualization of either Kohli and Jaworski (1990) or Narver and Slater (1990). Kohli and Jaworski (1990) compared three core elements of market orientation which are intelligence generation, intelligence dissemination, and responsiveness. In the same fashion, Narver and Slater (1990) postulated that market orientation has three components which are customer orientation, competitor orientation, and inter-functional coordination. The first component which is customer orientation involves the understanding of target customers and effectively deploying the skills and resources of the firm to satisfy customers by creating superior value. The second component which is competitor orientation has to do with creating superior value through understanding the principal competitors' short-term strength and weaknesses and long-term capabilities and strategies. The final component which is the inter-functional coordination involves getting all business functions working together to provide superior value (Slater and Narver,1994; Narver and Slater, 1990). Thus, market orientation salient dimensions, which are competitor and customer orientation, are considered important strategic orientations.

Organizational Performance can be seen as a multi-dimensional construct consisting of more than simply financial performance (Baker and Sinkula, 2005). Organizational performance is described as the extent to which the organization is able to meet the needs of its stakeholders and its own needs for survival (Griffin, 2003). Stoelhorst and Raaij (2004) describe market orientation as marketing's explanation of performance differentials between firms. Market orientation enhances a firm's performance by providing differentiation and cost advantages (Li and Zhou, 2010).

There are substantial empirical evidences that have linked market orientation with business performance. It is found from past researches that there is either a direct positive relationship (Kumar et al., 2011; Mahmoud, 2011; Zhou et al., 2009; Farrell et al., 2008; Martín-Consuegra and Esteban, 2007; Langerak, 2002; Deshpandé and Farley, 1998; Avlonitis and Gounaris, 1997 Jaworski and Kohli, 1993), or indirect influences (Agarwal et al., 2003; Han et al., 1998), or dual influences (Ramayah et al., 2011; Tsiotsou and Vlachopoulou, 2011), or no effects (Nwokah, 2008; Caruana et al., 2003; Greenley, 1995) between the two constructs.

In the market orientation literature, various measures of business performance have been utilized such as service productivity, return on assets (Sørensen, 2009; Narver and Slater, 1990), customer satisfaction(Chowdhury, 2011), employee satisfaction (Ramayah et al., 2011), service quality, market share (Zhou et al., 2009), sales, net income (Kumar et al., 2011), and size of the firm, age of the firm (Mahmoud, 2011) . In addition, the majority of the performance measurements identified focused on macro level-business performance (Martín-Consuegra and Esteban, 2007; Santos-Vijande et al., 2005), a more micro performance perspective is dealt with in several studies, for example, new product performance (Hsieh et al., 2008), financial performance (Lonial et al., 2008), retail performance (Panigyrakis and Theodoridis, 2007), and specific brand performance (O'Cass and Ngo, 2007). Kotler (2010) pointed that to measure an organization's performance; it shall consider customer satisfaction, customer preference, share of customer mind, customer perception, and so on. Organizational performance is the results of the operations performed by the members of the organizations (Ruey-Gwo and Chieh-Ling, 2007). Therefore, market orientation does not only affect many types of performance measures, but it also impacts performance on a number of different levels from the overall organization to individual brands to individuals within the organization (Liao et al., 2011).

Market intelligence relates to observing customer needs and preferences and that it also involves an analysis of how the needs and preferences might be affected by such factors as government regulation, technology, competitors, and other environmental forces. Market-intelligence generation refers to the collection and assessment of both customer needs/preferences and the forces (task and macro environments) that influence the development and refinement of those needs.

Intelligence dissemination refers to the process and extent of market-information exchange within a given organization. Attention should be balanced between both horizontal (interdepartmental) and vertical transmission of marketplace information because the dissemination's focal point is the entire strategic business unit (SBU). The dissemination of intelligence occurs both formally and informally (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). Jaworski and Kohli (1990) and Kohli and Jaworski (1990) maintained that intelligence dissemination extends beyond collecting information about customer needs and preferences to include information about an organization's entire task environment. They also suggested that intelligence dissemination relates to the communication and transfer of intelligence information to all departments and individuals within an organization through both formal and informal channels. Jaworski and Kohli (1993) and Slater and Narver (1994) indicated that market-intelligence dissemination has two distinct aspects.

The first aspect is sharing both existing and anticipated information throughout the organization (i.e., ensuring vertical and horizontal flows of information within and between departments) concerning the current and future customer needs, exogenous factors, and competition. The second aspect is ensuring effective use of disseminated information by encouraging all departments and personnel to share information concerning current and future customer needs, exogenous factors, and competitors.

Responsiveness is action taken in response to intelligence that is generated and disseminated. On the planning side, the focus is on the degree to which marketplace needs play a role in the evaluation of market segments and the development of marketing programs. Action on the basis of market intelligence concerns the speed and coordination in implementing marketing programs (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). Those authors observed that an organization accomplishes nothing if it does not respond to information. Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Kumar, Subramanian, and Yauger (1998) stated that an organization must communicate, disseminate, and oftentimes "sell" market intelligence to relevant departments and individuals in the organization in order to be market oriented.

They added that a market-oriented organization responds to or acts on the market intelligence that is gathered and disseminated. Kohli, Jaworski, and Kumar (1993) and Narver and Slater (1990) stated that responsiveness requires three distinct activities. They are (a) developing, designing, implementing, and altering goods and services (tangible and intangible) in response to the current and future needs of customers; (b) developing, designing, implementing, and altering systems to promote, distribute, and price goods and services that respond to the current and future needs of customers; and (c) utilizing market segmentation, product differentiation, and other marketing strategies in the development, design, implementation, and alteration of goods and services and their corresponding systems of promotion, distribution, and pricing.

Methodology

Research Design

The design for this study is a survey design with market orientation as independent variable which was measured by market intelligence, intelligence dissemination and firm responsiveness and perceived organizational performance as dependent variable.

Subjects

The respondents of this study were two hundred and nine employees of Nigerian Breweries Plc, Lagos who were selected using stratified random sampling technique.

Instruments

The study made use of questionnaire and the questionnaire was divided into five sections. The first section measured the demographic information, sections B to D measured market orientation in terms of market intelligence, intelligence dissemination and firm responsiveness respectively. The market orientation scale was adapted from a scale developed by Jaworski and Kohli (1993) and Eun Jin Hwang (2005) which was a 14 item scale with a Likert scale scoring format ranging from strongly disagree(1), disagree(2), indifferent(3), agree(4), to strongly agree(5). Market intelligence was measured in section B which is a three item questionnaire, intelligence dissemination was measured in section C which is a five item questionnaire ,and firm responsiveness was measure section D which is a three item questionnaire. Organizational performance was measured in section E which is a six item questionnaire. The organizational performance scale was adapted from a scale developed by Khandwalla(1977) and David Wan et al(2002) which is an eighteen item scale collapsed into six item with a Likert scoring format ranging from high (6) to very low(1). The scales were revalidated and the reliability values indicated 0.89, 0.80, 0.72 and

0.84 for market intelligence, intelligence dissemination, firm responsiveness and perceived organizational performance respectively.

Data Analysis

The demographic information was analysed using frequency counts and simple percentage. Hypothesis 1 was tested using t-test, hypothesis 2 was analysed using Pearson's Correlation while hypothesis 3 was analysed using multiple regression.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Analysis of Demographical Variables

SEX	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Male	95	45.5
Female	114	54.5
Total	**209**	**100.0**
Age	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
18-25	73	34.9
26-35	46	22.0
36-45	30	14.4
46-55	60	28.7
Total	**209**	**100.0**
Marital Status	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Single	79	37.8
Married	100	47.8
Divorced	13	6.2
Separated	17	8.1
Total	**209**	**100.0**
Educational Background	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Post graduate	38	18.1
BSC,HND	90	43.1
OND,NCE	44	21.1
SSCE	37	17.7
Total	**209**	**100.0**
Cadre	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Management staff	87	41.6
Senior staff	41	19.6

Junior staff	81	38.8
Total	**209**	**100.0**
Department	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Sales	25	12.0
Marketing	50	23.9
Personnel	50	23.9
Logistic	40	19.1
Production	44	21.1
Total	**209**	**100.0**

Source: field survey (2011)

Table1 shows that there were 91(36.4%) males and 159(63.6%) females, 63(25.2%) of the respondents were of the age range 18-25, 82(32.8%) were age ranged 26-35, 80(32.0%) were of age range 36-45, 25(10.0%) were of age range 46-55. The table also showed that 94(37.6%) of the respondents were single, the married were 144(57.6%), the divorced accounted for 10(4.0%) while the separated were 2(.8%).

The educational background of the respondents showed that 38(18.2%) had the Postgraduate certificates, 90(43.1%) had BSC, HND certificates, 44(21.1%) had OND, NCE certificates, while 37(17.7%) attained secondary school education.

The cadre of the respondent showed that 87(41.6%) were management staff, the senior staff were 41(19.6%) while 81(38.8%) were junior staff. The department of the respondents showed that the sales were 25(12.0%), the Marketing were 50(23.9%), the Personnel were 50(23.9%), the Logistic were 40(19.1%) while the Production were 44(21.1%) respectively.

Hypotheses Testing

H1: There will be a significant difference between market intelligence and perceived organizational performance.

Table 2: Summary of t-test analysis showing significant difference between market intelligence and perceived organizational performance.

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Crit-t	Cal-t.	DF	P
Market Intelligence	209	9.3589	2.6567	1.96	34.912	208	.000
Organizational Performance	209	25.9522	6.8611				

The above table showed that there was a significant difference between Market Intelligence and perceived Organizational Performance (Crit-t = 1.96, Cal.t = 34.912, df =208, P< .05 level of significance).The hypothesis is accepted.

H2: There will be a significant relationship between intelligence dissemination and perceived organizational performance

Table 3: Summary of Pearson Correlation showing the relationship between Intelligence Dissemination and Perceived Organizational Performance.

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Organizational performance	25.9522	6.8611	209	.222**	.001	Sig.
Intelligence dissemination	17.3397	3.6433				

Sig. at .01 level

It is shown in the above table that there was a significant relationship between intelligence dissemination and perceived organizational performance (r = .222**, N= 209, P < .01). This means that there is an association between intelligence dissemination and perceived organizational performance.

H3: Market intelligence, intelligence dissemination and firm responsiveness will jointly and independently predict perceived organizational performance

Table 4: Summary of regression analysis showing Market Intelligence, Intelligence Dissemination and Firm Responsiveness and Perceived Organizational Performance

Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	622.231	3	207.410	4.637	.004
Residual	9169.291	205	44.728		
Total	9791.522	208			

R = .252 R^2 = .064 Adj R^2 = .050

Table 4 shows that the joint effect of independent variables (Market intelligence, Intelligence dissemination, and Firm responsiveness) on Organizational Performance was significant ($F(3,205) = 4.637$; R = .252, R^2 = .064, Adj. R^2 = 0.050; P < .05). Therefore, market intelligence, intelligence dissemination and firm responsiveness jointly and independently predicted organizational performance.

About 6% of the variation was accounted for by the independent variables.

H3b: There will be relative effect of independent variables (Market intelligence, Intelligence dissemination, and Firm responsiveness) on Organizational Performance

Table 5: Summary of regression analysis showing the relative effect of Market Intelligence, Intelligence Dissemination and Firm Responsiveness on Perceived Organizational Performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	17.699	2.468		7.171	.000
Market intelligence	.354	.201	.137	1.760	.080
Intelligence dissemination	.349	.142	.185	2.453	.015
Firm responsiveness	-.118	.184	-.049	-.638	.524

The result above shows the relative contribution of each of the independent variables on the dependent: Market intelligence (β = .137, P >.05), Intelligence dissemination (β = .185, P <.05), and Firm responsiveness (β = -.049, P >.05), respectively. Hence, Intelligence Dissemination is found significant while market intelligence and firm responsiveness were not significant.

Concluding Remarks

A strong market orientation is required to focus the organization on those environmental events that are likely to influence their ability to increase customer satisfaction relative to competitors (Baker and Sinkula, 1999). Kohli and Jaworski (1990), for example suggest that market orientation may not have critical importance in turbulent environments. Technical turbulence moderates customer and competitor orientations' impact upon innovation performance (Liu et al., 2003).

In their study Kohli and Jaworski (1990) propose that the greater the market orientation of an organization, the greater would be the overall performance and that this relationship would be moderated by such several external forces like weaker economy, greater market turbulence and competition. The environmental context of an organization will probably influence its level of market orientation. Organizations in more competitive and dynamic environments may be expected to be more market oriented. As a result, the linkage between market orientation and performance depends on the environmental characteristics of an organization (Jaworski and Kohli, 1993). Three environmental characteristics have been proposed by Jaworski and Kohli (1993): Market turbulence (the rate of change in the composition of customers and their preferences), competitive intensity and technological turbulence. Organizations that work with rapidly changing technologies may be able to obtain a competitive advantage through technological innovation together with the market orientation.

The findings of the study indicated that there was a significant difference between market intelligence and perceived organizational performance. The result also showed that there was a significant relationship between intelligence dissemination and perceived organizational performance. The study revealed further that the three measures of market orientation (market intelligence, intelligence dissemination and firm responsiveness) used in this study were predictors of perceived organizational performance. Based on the results obtained from the study, it was recommended among other things that firms should strive to develop more customer and market oriented strategies that can bring about superior organizational performance.

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