

Measuring the Impact of Market Orientation on the Success of Marketing Activities of Small Iraqi Organizations

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Abstract - The purpose of this research is to establish a relationship between the two variables that have been defined as "market orientation strategy and business success of small and medium-sized organizations." **Key Points/Methods/Strategy:** The study's data was collected via a questionnaire in addition to in-person interviews. Since it was the most appropriate approach for the research, a descriptive and analytical technique was used. **Findings:** According to the results, a company's market orientation strategy is an independent variable that affects its bottom line. Small and medium-sized organizations (SMEs) play an essential role in the expansion of Iraq's domestic and international trade as well as the country's commercial sector. This research aims to shed light on their role and conduct a more comprehensive analysis of research initiatives targeting this sector. This article seeks to shed light on Iraq's small and medium-sized firm (SME) sector, which is unique in that it functions independently of the government.

Keywords: Go-To-Market Strategy, Business Success, Small and Medium-Sized Organizations

I. INTRODUCTION

Economic, social, political, and cultural variables all contribute to the ever-changing nature of the competitive environment in which small and medium-sized enterprises operate (Wasim, et al., 2022). As a result, things become more complicated and chaotic, which puts more strain on their commercial operations and makes a lot of problems worse, which might make it harder for them to succeed in certain areas (Mukif et al., 2020; Tamhane, & Talebi, 2023). Furthermore, Iraq is an open market country. However, these organizations face numerous challenges, such as the current situation, a lack of interest in business, and the country's reliance on oil exports (World Bank: 2012). As a result, they are constantly seeking the right mechanisms to succeed in their businesses, which is important for both local and global trade (Wilson, & Liguori, 2023). We think these firms use a variety of methods, one of which is a focus on the market, which is directly related to their performance (Wakjira, & Kant, 2023). As a measure of how far a business takes the marketing notion, "market orientation" is a word often used by marketing practitioners. Finding out what people want and then providing it to them better than the competition is, according to marketing, the key to reaching goals like

increasing market share, sales, and profits. (Gladson Nwokah, 2008), market-oriented organizations are believed to have better market sensing and customer connection capabilities, which should lead to higher profits than less market-oriented organizations. Despite a few studies that have looked at the performance of small and medium-sized organizations (SMEs), such as Pitt et al., (1996), Langerak, (2004), Bahari et al., (2023), and Guerra & Camargo, (2023), the number of studies that have looked at their success has decreased significantly. Since SMEs have an obvious effect on the amount of local and international commerce, this research intends to provide more insight into their performance. As Fritz (1996) points out, there is little proof that marketing guarantees a company's success. Consequently, the primary focus of the research is on the potential for market orientation to lead to commercial success for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Consequently, the study's overarching goal is to help businesses succeed in the market, rather than just boost their performance (Sørensen, 2009).

This study's overarching research question seeks to answer the following: Does market orientation lead to successful company outcomes? For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Najaf Governorate, Iraq, can a focus on customers, an awareness of competitors, and cooperation within departments lead to success?

Due to their obvious influence on the economic growth of different nations, including other emerging nations, the research aims to use two critical characteristics that assist different types of company firms, especially SMEs, to function correctly in order to get success (Taghvaei & Talebi, 2023).

A key finding of the study was that managers of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Iraq should focus on developing market orientations that will help their companies thrive in the face of intense competition from a wide variety of imported goods.

First: The Relationship Between Market Orientation and Business Success

When compared to other strategic orientations, market orientation is crucial for boosting organizational performance and attaining success Gurudiwan et al., (2025). An essential marketing notion for contemporary management and strategy, it plays a pivotal role in company growth (Margaretha & Suryana, 2023; Sobha Rani, (2019). There are three parts to this behavioral approach, all of which are focused on the long term and profitability: customers, competitors, and interventional coordination. Establishing a focus on the market is the first and most important step in developing a marketing strategy (Malbašić, 2021); (Selvakumar et al., 2025). According to Farrell & Oczkowski, (1997), this theory provides the scientific basis for effective marketing practices, based on the premise that, all else being equal, businesses with an eye toward the market would strive to enhance their performance in the market. An organization's market orientation can be defined as its proficiency in three areas: generating, disseminating, and responding to market information. This proficiency allows the organization to outperform competitors by recognizing and meeting customer needs and wants at the right time and in the right place. The study conducted by Wasim et al. in 2022. As the central part of marketing, consumer focus refers to a way of thinking about how a business should run in order to meet the demands and wants of its target audience to the best of its ability (Kaliappen & Abdullah, 2013).

An organization with a market orientation is one whose members are fully dedicated to providing exceptional value to customers at all times. This is the foundational concept of market orientation, which states that all employees should be aware that their work has an impact on the company's ability to reach its objectives via the acquisition of relevant information and expertise. (The Narver Group, 1998). Aligning the organization with the external world may be accomplished in a number of ways. Businesses may choose to pay more attention to their consumers or their rivals, depending on the occasion, or they can try to keep an eye on both at the same time and with similar intensity (Heiens, 2000).

Organizational members are able to work together more effectively and come up with more creative solutions thanks to a market orientation (Moriano et al., 2018; Fritz, 1996). This could be especially true for business-to-business companies, as they often target more niche customers. According to Liao et al., (2011), this suggests that a market-oriented approach may lead to successful businesses. Profitability, sales growth, trust and commitment, business performance overall, employee organizational commitment, product development, cross-functional teamwork, employee satisfaction, and customer service and retention are all positively correlated with success (Farrell & Oczkowski, 1997). Companies that are market oriented make it their mission to always find new ways to provide exceptional value to their customers. Margaretha & Suryana, (2023) found that it works best when used to build a pivotal position in order to

provide outstanding value for buyers and performance in different types of enterprises. The goal of a market-oriented approach is to find out what customers want now and in the future, share that information both vertically and horizontally inside the company, and then use it to make decisions (Kohli et al., 1993). In the end, it's up to the company to improve its data collection and utilization capabilities, formulate a plan to address consumer requests, and put that plan into action while keeping customer wants and requirements in mind (Guerra, & Camargo, 2023). A reaction system should be in place to supplement this information, which should be sent vertically throughout the company's organizational structure. Businesses that are ready to adapt to changing market conditions and environmental factors tend to do better in the long run (Wasim et. al., 2022).

Hypothesis 1: There is an Impact of Market Orientation on Business Success

Secondly: The Relationship Between Customer Orientation and Business Success

Companies may be said to be customer-centric if they prioritize customer-centricity and data collection above competitor-centricity. According to several academics, customer centricity is the key to success in marketing and an essential part of market orientation as the marketing idea promotes prioritizing consumers' interests. As stated by Heiens (2000) An organization's customer orientation is a good indicator of its responsiveness to client needs and market shifts. An organization's capacity to do this is substantial. In order to remain relevant in the face of ever-changing consumer preferences and fierce global competition, businesses must maintain close relationships with their target audiences at all times. Customer centricity necessitates that every aspect of the business revolves around comprehending the present and future requirements of consumers, and it is imperative that every person in the firm be cognizant of this. Their work and those of their coworkers helps identify consumer wants and requirements so that businesses may provide superior products and services (El Manzoni, et al., 2023). Focus on the customer. Managers consider customer attention to be the most important part of market orientation; hence it is essential to succeed in this regard (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). Knowing what drives consumer actions is essential, as is familiarity with the social and psychological elements at play. Once the marketer has this knowledge, they may do research to determine what customers really need (Pitt et al., 1996). In order to increase customer satisfaction and maybe get differentiating advantages, customer orientation entails studying consumer wants and preferences. On the other hand, it might result in savings if it helps with cost management and responding quickly to marketing campaigns from competitors. According to Quang Hung et al., (2023), customer orientation's efficacy might change based on the state of the market. Innovations in technology that address the demands of important consumers are made possible by customer orientation, which has a beneficial influence. Differentiation is increasingly challenging in highly competitive markets.

Companies may take advantage of rising market possibilities by introducing innovations to new and underserved sectors. Therefore, customer-focused businesses aim to lead the market with more creative goods as consumer tastes shift quickly (Laforet, 2008). By responding creatively to changes in the market, customer orientation strengthens a company's position. To improve their company's performance, customer-centric organizations place an emphasis on data and learning to discover unspoken consumer demands (Grinstein, 2008). Organizations that put their customers first utilize market intelligence to make better decisions and stand out from the competition. Therefore, businesses with an eye toward the market are devoted to gathering feedback from clients and rivals in order to improve products and services and get an edge in the marketplace (Wilson, & Liguori, 2022). The capacity to learn and come up with new ideas that can be adapted to meet the needs of customers or utilized in response to market intelligence to succeed in business is greatly improved when organizations have a shared vision and a dedication to learning (Wilson, & Liguori, 2022). If a company wants to succeed, it has to adopt the habits that will lead to higher value creation, and a market orientation may assist with that. Achieving this goal motivates the firm to establish and maintain a customer-centric approach (Conduit, & Mavondo, 2001). Therefore, it is important to build and get a deeper knowledge of consumer needs in order to generate value for customers and to establish market strategies that take into account the strengths and weaknesses of rivals (Irawan, & Mahjudin, 2002). According to customer-centric theory, a company will be successful if its leaders can accurately gauge its target market's wants, requirements, and perceptions, and then meet those demands via strategic product development, clear and compelling communication, reasonable pricing, and other means (Judd, 2003).

Hypothesis Two: There is an Impact of Customer Orientation on Business Success

Thirdly: The Relationship Between Competitor Orientation and Business Success

According to Pitt et al. (1996), one of the main goals of competitor orientation is to provide businesses with the necessary knowledge about their present and future rivals so that they can effectively meet the demands of their target market. An organization's capacity to accomplish its goals in volatile, competitive marketplaces might be thwarted by rival organizations, which is why competitor orientation is critical and essential (Lado, et al., 1998). As a result, enhancing company quality is where its true value is. As a result, some businesses have concentrated on streamlining processes, while others have rethought their operations and developed new methods. According to Slater and Narver et al., 1995, the organization's objective is accomplished by surpassing its rivals. With a competitor orientation, a business meticulously plans its actions to counteract the advantages and disadvantages of existing and future rivals by studying their short- and long-term strategies, skills, and strengths (Eibe, 2009). It is also useful for keeping tabs on the

competition, their strategies, and their long-term potential. According to Kalaippen and Abdullah (2013), businesses that focus on competing with others in the market use their rivals as a yardstick to measure their own performance. By studying the products of successful rivals and learning from their mistakes, the firm may gain a competitive edge (Wong, & Tong, 2011). In order to identify, assess, and appropriately react to their rivals' plans, competitor-oriented businesses often keep a close eye on them. Keeping an eye on client demands is crucial for competitor-oriented businesses to avoid losing consumers to rivals. Such businesses also have an incentive to learn as much as they can about the market so they can be proactive and remain ahead of the curve (Seilov, 2015).

Hypothesis Three: There is an Impact of the Orientation Towards Competitors on Business Success

Fourth: The Relationship Between Coordination with Functions and Business Success

A company can't succeed in business without first gaining a thorough understanding of the market. For this to be a reality, the organization's resources must be put to good use in order to fulfill its principal objective. Here, interfunctional coordination is critical to the performance of the company, since the integration and coordination of all the key and crucial parts of the organization are necessary for success. To guarantee the success of its market orientation, the organization must now steer all of its operations and divisions in the right direction. Departments must be well-informed on their responsibilities and work together in harmony with one another and with other parts of the organization if this orientation is to be realized. The overarching goal of the organization is to outperform competitors by meeting customer demand for high-quality products in sufficient quantities. A company's resources may be better used to provide exceptional value for its target consumers via interfunctional cooperation. As per Margaretha and Suryana (2023), this term describes the parts of an organization's structure that facilitate communication between individual departments. As said, when we're focused on the market, the term "interfunctional coordination" takes on a new meaning: working together to meet customer demands. Regulatory bodies, customers, and competitors are all external stakeholders whose demands must be balanced by the firm. Demographic, social, political, and technological changes are also forces shaping the firm's and the market's basic expectations and needs (Kohli, et al., 1993).

Hypothesis Four: There is an Impact of Coordination Between Functions on Business Success

Fifth: Research Methodology:

The scale:

The research relied on specific measures for the purpose of measuring the research variables. The study relied on the research of () which indicated three main dimensions of

market orientation: customer orientation, competitor orientation, and inter-functional coordination. While the study by Frank et al., 2007 was relied upon. Al., 2007 for the purpose of measuring the business success variable, which indicated three main dimensions: risk propensity, intellectual capital, and financial status.

The practical aspect of the research

TABLE I CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN THE RESEARCH VARIABLES

Correlations					
Var.		x1	x2	x3	X
Y	Pearson Correlation	.509**	.548**	.589**	.624**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	90	90	90	90

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS. Ver.23 program outputs

1- Testing the Correlation Hypotheses

A link between a focus on the market and financial success is hinted at in the first major theory. Table (I) reveals a statistically significant positive connection between market orientation and company performance of (0.624**) at the 0.000 level. At the research level, the hypothesis is accepted because the attained significance level is larger than 0.05.

Following the completion of the research-level testing of the primary hypothesis, the following procedures are followed to examine the sub-hypotheses in the order in which they occurred:

- A connection between client orientation and company performance is suggested by the first sub-hypothesis. At the 0.000 level of significance, Table (I) reveals a positive association of (0.509**) between client orientation and

company performance. At the research level, the hypothesis is accepted because the attained significance level is larger than 0.05.

- A focus on rivals is associated with financial success, according to the second sub-hypothesis. A positive correlation of (0.548**) at a significance level of (0.000) is seen in Table (I) between orientation toward rivals and company performance. At the research level, the hypothesis is accepted because the attained significance level is larger than 0.05.

Business success is correlated with inter-functional cooperation, according to the third sub-hypothesis. At the 0.000 level of significance, Table (I) reveals a positive association of (0.589**) between inter-functional cooperation and economic performance. At the research level, the hypothesis is accepted because the attained significance level is larger than 0.05.

2- Testing the Impact Hypotheses

The Second Main Hypothesis: The second main hypothesis indicates that there is an impact of market orientation on business success. Table (I) shows that there is a positive effect of market orientation on business success, estimated at (0.624**=Beta) at a significance level of (0.000). Since the achieved significance level is greater than (0.05), the hypothesis is accepted at the research level. Note that the value of $F = 56.013$ at a significance level of (0.000), indicating the significance of the research model.

After completing the second main rejection test between the main research variables, we now move to testing the hypotheses and sub-hypotheses according to their inclusion in the research, as follows:

TABLE II IMPACT COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN RESEARCH VARIABLES

Coefficients								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	F	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	1.515	.298		5.084	.000	56.013	.000b
	X	.607	.081	.624	7.484	.000		
a. Dependent Variable: y								

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Source: SPSS. Ver.23 program outputs.

After completing the second main rejection test between the main research variables, we now move to testing the

hypotheses and sub-hypotheses according to their inclusion in the research, as follows:

TABLE III IMPACT COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN THE STUDY VARIABLES

Coefficients a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.596	.311		5.131	.000
	x1	.102	.124	.106	.824	.412
	x2	.195	.112	.227	1.742	.085
	x3	.288	.091	.372	3.173	.002

a. Dependent Variable: y

Source: SPSS. Ver.23 program outputs.

A focus on customers may affect a company's bottom line, according to the first sub-hypothesis. According to Table (I), customer orientation has a positive effect on company performance, with an estimated value of (0.1060), a t-value of (0.824), and a significance level of (0.412). At the research level, this hypothesis is rejected since the attained significance level is larger than 0.05.

- Customer orientation has an effect on company success, according to the second sub-hypothesis. According to Table (III), customer orientation has a favorable effect on company success, with an estimated value of (0.2270). The value of t at the 0.085 level of significance is 1.742. At the research level, this hypothesis is rejected since the attained significance level is larger than 0.05.
- According to the third sub-hypothesis, cross-departmental cooperation has an effect on company performance. It is accepted at the research level that there is a positive effect of coordination between functions on business success, as shown in Table (III). The effect size is 0.3720, and the value reached is $t=3.173$ with a significance level of 0.002.
- Market orientation significantly improves the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Najaf Governorate, Iraq.
- The most influential dimension among the studied variables is inter-functional coordination. Firms that enhance internal collaboration achieve higher business success.
- Customer orientation and competitor orientation, while positively correlated with success, did not show statistically strong predictive power in impact testing. These should not be overly prioritized at the expense of broader coordination strategies.
- Empirical data confirmed a strong correlation ($r = 0.624$) between overall market orientation and business performance.
- The findings support the idea that market-oriented thinking—especially strategic integration across departments—is a practical route to improve SME competitiveness in open and uncertain markets like Iraq.
- SMEs should focus less on isolated customer satisfaction or rival analysis and more on creating a cohesive, market-responsive internal structure.
- Decision-makers should encourage continuous information sharing, responsive planning, and structural alignment as core business practices.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The study's findings shed light on how SMEs in Iraq's Najaf Governorate, specializing in product and electronic phone marketing, fare when it comes to market orientation and its three facets: customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interfunctional coordination.

A market orientation and financial success are positively correlated, according to the findings of the correlation. As a result, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) will have more success if they put more effort into becoming market-oriented. Everything else that the market orientation variable has to provide is correct as well.

According to the impact test, a market orientation positively affects company success, suggesting that market orientation helps boost company performance to a certain degree. In other words, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Iraq's Najaf Governorate are more likely to succeed commercially if they prioritize market orientation. Companies should not put too much emphasis on customer orientation and competition orientation as the research showed that these two dimensions had a modest effect on company performance. This means that these dimensions do not help to company success. In the meantime, company performance was positively affected by the interfunctional coordination component, indicating that businesses with higher levels of interfunctional coordination were more likely to achieve commercial success.

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