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The Moderating Roles of Selling Skills and Knowledge on the Customer Satisfaction and the Organization Performance

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Abstract In recent years, market-driven organizations have begun to emerge as the new industry giants. The new market-driven companies, are consistently delighting their customers with a new products, services, and reaping great rewards in the process, while other companies have struggled. The market-driven formula for success in today's marketplace is to produce the right product at the right price at the right time. The right product is the one that solves the customer's problem and delivers the highest value. The right price is what the customers willing to pay. The right time is when the customers need the product. This paper proposes that marketing orientation component, organizational commitment, organizational encouragement, and organizational climate, are impacted by salesperson selling skills knowledge to organizational performance and customer satisfaction as well. However, we posit the moderating influence of three salespeople selling skill knowledge dimensions: salesmanship skills, technical knowledge skills and interpersonal skills. In this paper, we present a conceptual framework for understanding the contexts in which company moving towards a market driven the factors that impact on organizational performance and customer satisfaction. Throughout the paper, we present research propositions that provide opportunities for future examinations of salesperson performance and customer satisfaction.

Keywords Salesperson performance, Selling skills, Organizational commitment, Organizational encouragement, Organizational climate

1. Introduction

The customer service is well known term in business world encompasses a miscellaneous of used techniques by businesses in order to ensure their customers' satisfaction, it starts from by friendly and attentive staff to demand to reply as long as confronted with product defects took place. It is very important for those entrepreneurs and business owners to cite and look after this factor as one of the most significant and vital important factors in setting up either maintaining a prosperous enterprise or business in general. These chains of beneficial effects would result once these kind of enterprise no matter its size how its, cultivates loyalty with their customer, (Jackson, 2007).

That pattern holds in all kinds of small businesses those that sell to other businesses as well as those that sell to consumers. However, customer satisfaction is an ambiguous and abstract concept and the actual manifestation of the state of satisfaction will vary from person to person and product, service to product, service. The state of satisfaction and organizational performance are depending on a number of both psychological and physical variables which correlate with the company performance, then the satisfaction behaviours such as return and recommend rate. The level of satisfaction can also vary depending on other options the customer may have and other products against which the customer can compare the organization's products.

As a cornerstone of the modern marketing discipline, the marketing concept lays the emphasis on the significance of integrating a firm's/company's strategy along with marketing tactics in pursuit of long-term preferable performance, which of course will leads to the satisfaction of the customers (Kotler, 1972). Indeed, some business experts contend that quality customer service can be a most important factor in ensuring company performance and success in some industries than promotion, advertising, and other marketing efforts, where the customer service is a great business advantage, (Tschohl, 2009). By existed of a lot of competitors in a field and one of them courts customers with the service and the others don't, it's the customer-oriented company that pulls ahead. Customers buy more, and they return to buy one more time, and the

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feed the positive word of mouth grapevine about the quality service company." Business owners who make customer service a central guiding principle in their business, then, are far more likely to succeed than those who are indifferent to such practices.

2. Motivation of the Study

In recent years, the increased interest in market orientation and what it involves has led several writers to describe its operational definition as a “construct”, and the majority of researchers has derived their definitions from the two most familiar conceptualizations, formulated more than a decade ago (Jaworski, 1990; Slater, 1990). Whether or not the market orientation leads directly to customer satisfaction and directly affects performance, or affects the performance via other variables; has also invoked much academic discussion (Han & Srivastava, 1998). However, most scholars agree that market orientation is one of the important variables. As defined by Narver *et al.,* (1990), market orientation consists of several behavioral components such as customer orientation, competitor orientation, responsiveness and inter-functional coordination, as well as several decision criteria, such as long-term focus and profitability and so on.” Several studies have confirmed a positive relationship between market orientation and organizational performance (Narver & Slater, 1990; Pitt, Caruana & Berthon, 1996; Wu, Jyh-Jeng, 2004). Market orientation is a concept that is believed to have far-reaching effects on organizations as it influences how employees think and act.

According to Deshpande *et al*., (1993), define customer orientation “as the set of beliefs that puts the customer’s interest first, while not excluding those of other stakeholders such as owners, managers, and employees, in order to develop a long-term profitable enterprise.” Besides, market orientation represents superior skills in understanding and satisfying customers (Day, 1992). Slater *et al.,* (1995) stated that “market orientation is valuable because it focuses the organization on first, continuously collecting information about target customers’ needs and competitors’ capabilities and second, using this information to create continuously superior customer value”.

In a general sense, marketing orientation pertains to an organizational culture that emphasizes aspects such as customer orientation, competitor orientation and sales-orientation as keys to organizational success (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Narver *et al.,* 1990). Although the marketing orientation performance relationship has been the focus of many studies, efforts to synthesize existing findings to better understand this relationship in the context of smaller organizations have been virtually non-existent. Past research shows some key differences between SMEs and larger organizations (Acs & Audretsch, 1987; Pelsa, Coviellob & Brodiec, 2000; Brodie, Coviello, & Winklhofer, 2008), and one can expect the role of marketing orientation in SMEs to be quite distinct from that in larger organizations.

The primary objective of this paper is to formulate a conceptual framework to examine marketing orientation components and some other variables which have been suggested in the literature in the context of the shifting from market-product to market-driven company. Such a framework could help to better comprehend the role of marketing orientation and its influence as well as a salesperson selling skills knowledge on the company new strategic movement and performance. The marketing orientation and salesperson literatures' is used to identify the constructs of particular relevance the new company’s manager marketing strategic. Increased emphasis is given to the antecedents of marketing orientation and the moderators of the marketing orientation selling skills relationship.

Following the discussion of the conceptual framework, this paper attempting to understand the actual effects and influence of marketing orientation dimensions and the moderating effect of selling skills as well as the factors which can affect the multinational company’s strategic marketing activities which is subsequently impact the (MNC’s) overall performance as well as customer satisfaction in line with research in relation to the proposed framework and offers suggestions for future research.

3. Marketing Orientation

3.1. Sales Oriented, Customer Oriented

As mentioned earlier, the emphasis on the significance of integrating of firm’s/company's strategy with marketing tactics is the cornerstone discipline of the modern market strategy. This emphasis would pursuit of long-term preferable performance and leads to the satisfaction of the customers (Kotler, 1972).

One of the primary efforts to formally evaluate the field of salesperson’s behavior was as a consequence of researchers and scholars questioning whether sales people were really practicing and working the tenets of the marketing concept in their individual interactions with customers (Schwepker, 2003).

These efforts had led to assess the marketing conceptions acceptance/adoption amongst salespeople. As an attempt to make clear of the salesperson's behavior, Saxe and Weitz, (1982), introduced a conceptualization of customer oriented selling. In their points of view, the customer-oriented sales people style tends to exhibit a sincere willingness and desire to assist customers and prospects make satisfactory purchase decisions by helping in the valuation of their needs and by only offering products that satisfy those desires or needs. However, often, the result of this kind of style “customer oriented behaviors” will result in the giving up of immediate sales, earnings and gains in favor of the establishment and maintenance of long-term relationships.

The customer orientation perspective suggests that customer orientation and market orientation are identical. In particular, the focus of this perspective is building a corporate culture based on customer orientation. Hence, customer orientation was proposed “as the set of beliefs that puts the customer’s interest first, while not excluding those of all other stakeholders such as owners, managers, and employees, in order to develop a long-term profitable enterprise” (Deshpande, Farley, & Webster, 1993).

Recently, the relevant literature suggests that customer-orientation has a long-term effect impact on the salesperson's performance and companies as well, compared to a sales-oriented selling approach (e.g. Brady and Cronin, 2001; Goff & Horst, 1997; Kelley, 1992; Langerak, 2001; Reicheld & Sasser, 1990; Saxe & Weitz, 1982). However, even though the strength of the association question between customer orientation and the sales performance remains not yet solved, and might perhaps depend on the choice of the intervening factors, the relevant literatures are still not consistent and in somehow divided on whether is associated positively significant (Boles *et al*., 2001; Brown *et al*., 2002; Swenson and Herche, 1994; Honeycutt and Siguaw, 1995; Keillor*et et al*., 2000; Singh, & Koshy, 2010), or negatively insignificant as reported by (Howeet *et al*., 1994). Notwithstanding, the meta-analytical level, also has shown that the jury in this regard is divided. Despite the fact that, a positive but a weak association between sales orientation-customer orientation and job performance of salesperson, regardless of how the salesperson's performance has been measured, sometimes subjectively or objectively, (Jaramillo *et al*., 2007), a prior meta-analysis conducted by (Franke & Park, 2006), revealed no significant effect of customer orientation on sales performance objective.

Actually, there has been some recent longitudinal studies that have been tried in resolving this stalemate or tie (Jaramillo & Grisaffe, 2009), this study have suggested that, the direct linkage used to be insignificant in the short term performance of sales, but then again only in the long term objective of sales performance (Donavanet, Brown, & Mowen, 2004). Furthermore, cautioned about blindly extrapolating the positive association between customer orientation and salesperson’s performance in all environmental situations, and called for establishing “boundary conditions” of customer orientation-performance linkages. The sales-orientated company occurs when a business bases its ability to make profits on using powerful selling techniques to persuade people to buy its products, rather than on customer needs, Some businesses see their main problem as selling more of the product or services which they already have available.

In 1982 Saxe and Weitz, operationalized the mentioned conceptualization into 24 item of sales-oriented and customer-oriented scale, this however, make a distinction among salespeople practicing a traditional “sales orientation” which attempts to maximize short term sales gains by stimulating demand for products versus the “customer-oriented” approach that prefer selling products only in response to bona-fide customer needs or wants. So far, the most common studies in the previous efforts were concentrated on customer orientation from the perspective of the firm in contrast to the salesperson individual performance. It is that, once firm performance as well as a sales-orientation and customer-orientation, assessed at the firm level, the consequences have commonly been inconclusive or weak.

The organizational level factors, as they come to impact sales orientation and customer orientation, including culture, has been given a substantial attention in the relevant literature (Herche, Swenson, & Verbeke, 1996; Williams & Attaway, 1996), climate and ethics (Mulki, Jaramillo, & Locander, 2006; Howe, Hoffinan, & Hardigree, 1994; Verbeke, Ouwerkerk, & Pee1en, 1996).

A number of studies have correspondingly assessed customer orientation’s effect on the salesperson’s role conflict and role ambiguity (Flaherty *et al*., 1999; Johnston, Parasuraman, and Futrell, 1989; Honeycutt *et al.,* 1995). There has been a clear shift from an outcomes perspective, the widespread topic has been the customer orientations effect on loyalty (DelVecchio, 1998), where customer satisfaction is more common (Flaherty *et al*., 1999; Johnston *et al*., 1989; Siguaw *et al*., 1995).

In contrast to the areas of investigation referred to above, the sales-orientation and customer-orientation effects on individual's performance level has received somewhat slight attention in the relevant literature. As a matter of fact, a limited number of studies have tried to evaluate the correlation between customer orientation and the outcome performance of individual (Boles *et al*., 2001; Keillor *et al*., 2000; Dursun & Kilic, 2011). Nevertheless, interestingly, there is little empirical evidence regarding the positive and significant relationship exists between customer orientation and performance of individual level has been reported in the last 20 years literatures. It has in general been the case that academics, researchers and managers alike have slowly evolved to a point of tacitly assuming that customer orientation and performance of the individual level relationship is exist, which has been validated in the relevant literature (Schwepker, 2003).

However, the fact remains that in spite of the intuitive appeal is clear and overlap with the marketing concept on a larger scale, much is remains to be academically learned regarding the marketing orientation factors to the customer satisfaction and performance relationship. Therefore, we propose the following propositions:

Proposition 1a: *Customer-Orientation positively relates to organizational performance and customer satisfaction.*

Proposition 1b: *Sales-Orientation positively relates to organizational performance and customer satisfaction.*

3.2. Competitor-Oriented

Which is has to do with creating superior value through understanding the principal competitors’ short-term strength and weaknesses and long-term capabilities and strategies. In fact, this context lays the foundation for this proposed conceptual study. Competitor orientation can enhance a firm’s competitive advantage by allowing it to benchmark with, learn from, imitate, and improve on the products of successful competitors (Drew, 1997; Day & Wensley, 1988). Dissimilar to the long-term benefits of customer orientation, (Narver *et al.,* 1990), in their empirical research have produced widely divergent findings on the relationship between competitor orientation and organizational performance, where some studies have identified a significant positive relationship between competitor orientation and organizational performance as revealed by Noble, Sinha, and Kumar (2002), on the contrary to Harrison-Walker (2001), they reported that, no such relationship existed. However, a negative relationship have been reported by Armstrong and Collopy (1996). Whereas, a curvilinear relationship between the competitor orientation and organizational performance has been claimed by Luo, Rindfleisch and Tse (2007). In the other view, competitor orientation reduces the profitability of a firm (Armstrong *et al.*, 1996). However, Armstrong *et al.*, (1996), in their view suggested that organizations should put more emphasis on maximizing their profit and disregard or ignore their competitors' tactics and strategies completely.

However, another study had used additional data of almost 20 firms conducted by Franke, Armstrong and Vaclavik (1998), have introduced two new criteria: "real return on equity" and "percent of after-tax return on sales". Finally, the study covered (1955 through 1997) time period using 10 year time intervals up to (1984) followed by 6 and 4 year intervals. Eventually, the study reported that, the correlations between competitor-oriented objectives and profitability were negative, ranging from (0.28 - 0.73). Furthermore, Shrader (2001), studied the performance of 176 foreign market entries by 70 American high-technology manufacturing firms. These firms were less than seven years old at the time of their Initial Public Offering (IPO) and the IPOs all occurred between (1983) and (1988). To measure the firms' competitor orientation, two researchers independently examined the firms' IPO prospectuses and coded them on a five-point scale depending on whether the firm's objective was to be a "minor player", "industry leader" or in between with an inter-rater reliability of r = 0.81. Shrader examined two measures of performance: profitability and sales growth. Profitability was measured as the average return on sales in a single foreign market over a three-year period. In addition to competitor orientation, Shrader used foreign market sales growth, firm-level sales growth, age of the firm at foreign entry, and the number of employees to estimate a regression model for profitability. Competitor orientation was negatively related to profits.

Besides, those advocating larger market share as a goal often professes that the added share will contribute to the appeal of their brand. Hellofs and Jacobson (1999) analyzed five years data collected by surveys of consumer attitudes for 85 firms' offerings in 28 product categories. On average, achieving a higher market share led consumers to believe a firm offering had declined in quality. As a consequence, they were prepared to pay less. A series of studies have been done using a competitor-orientation scale developed by Narver *et al.,* (1990). This scale includes the following items:

- Salespeople "The exchange of information regarding competitors",
- Rapid response procedures to competitors, senior managers competitors
- Discusses the strategies of competitors, and
- Target opportunities for competitive advantage.

Only the last item relates directly to a competitor-oriented objectives, whereas the first three items seem like reasonable strategies for all businesses. As a result, it was unclear whether the net effects of their competitor-orientation scale would be positive. Although it is a confounded measure of competitor-oriented objectives, it was negatively related to organizational performance in several studies and positive in others. Hardley and Mavondo (2000) surveyed 145 retail pharmacists in Australia about their businesses. Profitability was measured as an aggregate of previous, current and future profit. They found that, competitor orientation was negatively related to profitability. Matanda and Mavondo (2001), in a study of 276 horticultural retailing establishments in Zimbabwe, found that competitor orientation was negatively related to performance. Dawes (2000), using a scale adapted from Narver and Slater's, found a positive relationship between self-reported performance and competitor orientation. Similar to Narver and Slater's, however, Dawes's scale went beyond whether a business was concerned with beating an opponent.

However, companies in industries with low levels of competition may be successful, although they are not customer and competitor oriented, because "customers are stuck with the organization's products or services" (Jaworski and Kohli 1993) and companies are less dependent on analyzing current and potential competitors to maintain their customers' commitment. In highly competitive environments we believe customer orientation to become much more important for company performance. To gain new customers and the commitment of existing ones is pivotal for the business success of new strategies. Understanding their customers' actual and future needs and interests is of particular importance if there are alternative sellers. Therefore the researcher expects that by moderating of selling skills knowledge of salespersons, the competitor orientation to be an important determinant of organizational performance in highly competitive markets. Thus:

Proposition 2a: *Competitive-Orientation negatively relates to Salesperson performance and customer satisfaction.*

Proposition 2b: *The greater the salesperson's selling skills knowledge, the greater impact of a Competitive -orientation on customer satisfaction.*

3.3. Long-t erm Time Orientation

Traditionally, one of the most cited reasons of conflict between marketing and sales is the difference in the time frame they refer to in the processes of goal setting, resource allocation and performance evaluation (Strahle *et al*., 1996). Such differences obviously translate into conflicting priorities and inconsistent activities, because marketing mainly adopts a strategic, long-term perspective, while sales primarily focuses on tactical, short-term objectives and activities. As a result, value creation for the customer may become very problematic (Cespedes, 1993). Respondents also suggested that a selling firm can remove a major obstacle to customer value creation by adopting a long-term time horizon throughout all its departments. Consequently:

Proposition 4: *Long-term time orientation has a positive impact on customer satisfaction and company performance.*

Behaviors associated with this aspect include: adopting a long term focus on matters of growth/survival; attempting to service all customers, in the long run; aiming for effective organizational performance in the marketplace; identifying and implementing new value added services; and identifying and overcoming deficiencies in school services.

4. Organizational Commitment

In today’s dynamic and competitive markets, the most important challenges to change from product-driven to market driven, which managers/sales managers face is designing strategies to improve the performance of the sales force.

Sales force functions and activities not only typically constitute the largest portion of a firm’s marketing budget, but also are a primary source of revenue and are key to organizational success (Cravens *et al*., 1993; MacKenzie *et al*., 1998). In view of this, sales organizations have long been interested in identifying variables that influence organizational performance (e.g., Churchill *et al*., 1985; Johnston & Marshall, 2003). Research indicates that one such variable is an organizational commitment (Vinchur, Schippmann, Switzer & Roth, 1998).

Researchers have found a positive correlation between performance and organizational commitment in studies of industrial salespeople (Bashaw and Grant, 1994; Benkhoff, 1997). This relationship has been found to be negative or non-significant in the retail and insurance sector (Leong *et al*., 1994). Moreover, the relationship between organizational commitment and performance was found to be weak (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990) and mixed (Meyer *et al*., 2002) in previous meta-analyses conducted in the psychology literature with samples consisting of a variety of sales and non-sales occupations.

Moreover, Jaramillo, & Solomon (2006), stated in their study that, the relationship between organizational commitment and job performance is positive and stronger for sales employees than for non-sales employees. Stronger correlations between organizational commitment and job performance are found for collectivist compared to individualistic cultures. Such mixed prior results within a phenomenon that is seemingly straightforward warrant further study.

Due to the nature of the salesperson’s job and the visible impact of their activities and behaviors on organizational performance, one would typically expect a positive and a stronger correlation between organizational commitment and performance of salespeople as compared to non-sales personnel. Their boundary spanning activities, a high level of autonomy in dealing with parties inside and outside the organization, and physical location that is often outside the organizational setting would seemingly require higher commitment than other workers.

There are several approaches to define organizational commitment which can be found in the literature in regarding to organizational commitment. One of them saying that, commitment is understood as an employee’s intention to continue working in the organization (Meyer, 1997; Jaros, 2007). Also, organizational commitment could be defined as an attitude in the form of an attachment that exists between the individual and the organization, and it reflected in the relative strength of an employee’s psychological identification and involvement with the organization (Mowday *et al*., 1979).

Organizational commitment by salesperson is very important, because of the demonstrated positive relationships between it and several variables related to job performance; such as customer-oriented selling (Flaherty *et al*., 1999), turnover intentions (Johnston *et al*., 1990; Bashaw and Grant, 1994), absenteeism (Farrell and Stamm, 1988), and job satisfaction (Low *et al*., 2001; Schwepker, 2001)

Proposition 3: *Organizational commitment positively relates to salesperson performance and customer satisfaction.*

5. Organizational Encouragement for Creativity

In order to achieve the company aim which is moving towards a market-driven encourage creativity in solving customers' problems must come from several sources for salespeople to engage in operations to identify opportunities. In general, the organizational culture of the organization sales should adopt sale approach, embrace a solutions selling approach for instance. The upper levels of the administration should provide salespeople a license for the production of new ideas to solve customer problems using the product idiosyncratic bundles.

The organizational processes and structures need to enable sales people to move and transfer with absolute and relative ease across the various product parts with the aim of design the optimal customer solution. Furthermore, organizations have to encourage salespeople in order to invest in understanding the benefits as well as the features of the full variety of the available products and services. Moreover, performance measurement and reward systems should provide adequate encouragement for selling solutions, including the provision of appropriate credit for the sale of products and services outside a salesperson’s immediate unit.

Likewise, sales managers must embrace the idea that salespeople can and should attempt to solve customer problems using a range of offerings rather than a more narrowly defined problem that may be more directly addressed by a single product or service (Amabile, & Conti, & Coon, & Lazenby, & Herron, 1996). Thus, sales managers and other members of the sales function should encourage novel thinking to stimulate the opportunity recognition processes in individual sales representatives as reported by Orpen, (1990), and confirmed by, Leff Bonney, and Williams, (2009). This cross-level encouragement helps to spark new ideas and exposes salespeople to the new perspectives that are critical in the awareness and discovery dimensions of opportunity recognition, which absolutely will lead to a better stage of company performance, for that we proposed that:

Proposition 5: *Salesperson encouragement by the organization will have a direct positive effect on customer satisfaction and company performance.*

6. Organizational Climate Established by upper Level Management

Consequential to the changing market driven environment, organizations face challenges in motivating sales force change (Jones *et al*., 2005; Weitz & Bradford, 1999). The climate of the organization within which salespeople operate may be associated with their willingness to bring back information to the organization (Festervand *et al*., 1988).

Jones *et al*. (2005), also assert that organizational climate can have effects on salespeople's perceptions of the sales and on their role and attitudes toward customer satisfaction with their job performance. Their model adopts the 7-S framework and measures organizational structure and climate by means of the tightness of the structure. However, there is no mention of specific actions of upper management.

The climate of an organization is to a large extent dictated by the attitudes and behavior of upper level management. Eser, and Hardin, (2010), and Liu and Comer (2001), have reported same result which is, supervision and upper management support associate significantly with the effective information retrieval of salespeople; while training those more technically savvy sales recruits' results in more effective information retrieval.

Sager (1999), stated that, when upper level management is perceived to be supportive of the sales force, loyalty is developed. Lack of trust is associated with dysfunctional behavior (Dixon, & Jung, 2004; Liu, & Comer, 2007), suggesting that problems in the supervisory chain will impact the willingness to cooperate with the company's information performances. We feel that upper level management's attitude toward their sales force will have direct bearing on the quality of their information, performance and posit that a climate of respect toward salespeople by them is characteristic of companies with better information gathering activities. Salespeople, who believe upper management is on their side, are more likely to go the extra mile to cooperate in a firm's information needs. Thus, we propose that:

Proposition 6: *Organizational climate established by upper level management will have a direct positive effect on customer satisfaction and company performance.*

7. Selling Skills

Walker, Churchill, and Ford, in (1977) stated that, selling skills have been identified as one of the five factors of selling effectiveness. Based on the meta analysis conducted by Churchill *et al*. (1985), selling skills, loosely defined, were found to be the most highly associated factor of performance. Yet, there has been slight empirical attention ever, since Churchill Walker, and Ford's seminal meta-analysis to support or further expound upon this claim. Hence, the notion that "selling skills" are vital to success in the sales role has retained an enduring conceptual appeal among sales scholars and managers. However, the examination of the impact of specific types of selling skills on customer satisfaction and performance has largely remained an important, yet dormant and largely unexplored thematic area in the literature.

Moreover, Trent *et al*., (2009), reported that, the importance of assessing customer and sales orientations does not necessarily reside at the level of the firm, but rather at the level of individual performance. They show that a philosophy or desire to be customer-oriented is not enough to achieve exemplary sales performance. In order to pay dividends in terms of achieving performance, they show that the salesperson must have both a customer orientation and the requisite selling skills. Besides, they posited that selling skills, play a critical role in translating the long-revered benefits of a customer orientation into demonstrable performance outcomes. In summary, they made a theoretical contribution by pointing out an initial linkage and interplay between sales orientation customer, orientation and selling skills.

In an effort to address this gap in the literature, Rentz *et al*. (2002), theoretically derived and empirically validated a perspective that marries three distinct components of overall selling skill:

(i) Salesmanship skills (e.g. Sales presentation abilities); and (Vinchur, Schippmann, Switzer, and Roth)
(ii) Technical knowledge skills (e.g. The salesperson's product knowledge).
(iii) Interpersonal skills

These three components comprise a higher-order construct of selling skills which are germane to the salesperson and, these authors argue, exemplary sales performance, customer satisfaction and long-term success in the sales role. Curiously, the exhaustive review of the literature we conducted revealed that no known study has yet applied this tripartite measure of selling skills in an empirical field setting to further evaluate its efficacy, or to determine how it might mesh from a theoretical perspective with other existing frameworks of sales effectiveness (e.g. Competitors orientation, technical orientation, customer orientation, resistance to change outcomes, customer responsiveness, intrinsic motivation and long-term time orientation) to customer satisfaction and organizational performance.

8. Salesperson Performance

From a theoretical perspective, the potential contribution of this conceptual paper will lay in identifying the multiple ways through which marketing driven orientation can affect organizational performance and customer satisfaction throughout salesperson, thereby increasing an appreciation of the complexity of the relationship between marketing orientation and outcomes. This paper is of potential aid to sales managers since it identifies intermediate markers that they should monitor once controls are installed, in order to ensure that performance enhancement does, in fact, result.

Performance has been operationalized in many ways, including market share, margins, stock performance, financial performance, sales growth, profitability, return on assets (ROA) or on investment, return on equity (ROE), change in market share or profitability, new product success, and composite measures of these variables. Such measures can be classified as objective, subjective, or combinations of the two. Subjective measures center on the managers' assessment of the performance of their business unit or company, relative to expectations or competitors. In such cases, managers may account for competitive and environmental conditions when producing subjective measures. For example, managers may rate their firms' profitability relative to major competitors'. Alternatively, managers may be asked to indicate how satisfied they are with their firm's performance, e.g. Sales growth.

As it is very clear that the primary difference is that the market-focused companies are externally focused, where they identify opportunities and then capitalize on them. Whereas, Product-focused companies are internally focused, they identify improvements and then look for opportunities where the customers desire the improvements. Externally focused companies will usually thrive and have strong and consistent growth. Internally focused companies eventually reach a point of slow or stalled growth, discovering critical information too late and falling behind in the competitive race because they are not responding to the dynamics of the marketplace. Coming to this, it's very important for measuring company performance to use ROA, ROE, and ROI.

Objective measures, in contrast, assess the actual performance of the company on absolute scales. Schlegelmilch and Ram (2000) found that marketing orientation affected perceived, but not the actual return on investment (ROI). Jaworski *et al.,* (1993), found that marketing orientation had a positive impact on subjective performance, which is an assessment of overall performance relative to competitors'. Yet, its impact disappeared when an objective measure of performance (Dollar share of the served market) was used. They argued that judgmental performance assessments might be more accurate in marketing orientation studies as subjective measures account for the particular strategies of a company. The existence of a time lag between marketing orientation and objective performance also may be important (Jaworski and Kohli, 1993; Sargeant and Mohamad, 1999). Thus, cross-sectional research, the norm in marketing orientation studies, may not capture the true strength of marketing orientation's impact on performance. Thus, Jaworski and Kohli (1993) concluded: "Based on these considerations, the authors tend to place more confidence in the results obtained using judgmental measures of performance." To sum up we propose that:

Proposition 7: *The relationship between marketing orientation and organization performance will be strong when selling skills knowledge of salesperson moderated the relationship.*

9. Customer Satisfactions

The growing number of academic studies on customer satisfaction and the mixed findings they reported complicate efforts among managers and academics to identify the antecedents to and outcomes of, businesses having more versus less satisfied customers. These mixed findings and the growing emphasis by managers on having satisfied customers point to the value of empiric synthesizing the evidence on customer satisfaction to assess current knowledge.

However, satisfaction can occur when the benefits of services/efforts or goods meet or overdo consumer wishes, and on the other hand, dissatisfaction results of when the benefits fall short of consumer wishes. This theoretical proposition is largely based on the means end models which imply that benefits are linked to consumer values. As a result, consumers are likely to be more satisfied with the services which fulfil their life goals and desires (Gutman, 1982; Olshavsky & Spreng, 1989).

In short, this analysis suggests that consumer satisfaction is a cognitive and pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of a good or service leading to or achieving one's values. Conversely, consumer dissatisfaction refers to a un-pleasurable emotional state resulting from an appraisal that an object, action, or condition blocks the achievement of one's values. Sprenget *et al*., (1996) found that desires congruence had a positive impact on attribute satisfaction, information satisfaction, and overall satisfaction. Sprenget finding concerning desires congruence and overall satisfaction was consistent with study by Spreng and Olshavsky (1993).

Finally, we expect that the above suggestions variables will have highly positive relation with customer satisfactions either way direct or indirect, and that is through the moderate effect of selling skills (Salesmanship, technical knowledge, interpersonal skills and marketing).

Proposition 8: *Customers satisfactions will be high and strong when selling skills knowledge of salesperson moderated the relationship between marketing orientation and Customers satisfactions variables.*

10. Experimental Knowledge

The level of performance depends holistically on six components: context, level of knowledge, levels of skills, level of identity, personal factors, and fixed factors. Three axioms are proposed for effective performance improvements. These involve a performer's mind set, immersion in an enriching environment, and engage in reflective practice. The Theory of Performance (TOP) develops and relates six foundational concepts (italicized) to form a framework that can be used to explain performance as well as performance improvements. As matter of fact, to perform meaning, is to produce valid results. A performer can be an individual or a group of people engaging in a collaborative effort. Developing performance is a journey, and level of performance describes a location in the journey. Current level of performance depends holistically on 6 components: context, level of knowledge, levels of skills, level of identity, personal factors, and fixed factors. Three axioms are proposed for effective performance improvements. These involve a performer's mindset, immersion in an enriching environment, and engage in reflective practice. Individual performance is a core concept within work and organizational psychology. During the past 10 or 15 years, researchers have made progress in clarifying and extending performance concepts (Campbell, 1990). More evidence has been made in specifying major predictors and processes associated with individual performance. Within the ongoing changes that we are witnessing organizations today, the performance concept and performance requirements are undergoing changes as well (IIgen & Pulakos, 1999; Bowen, & Waldman, 1999).

However, customer satisfaction theory suggests that "Satisfaction is the consumer's fulfillment response. It is a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product of service itself, provided a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under-or over-fulfillments" (Oliver, 1997). In the last decades, Heiens (2000), consider the marketing concept had been just a controversial topic then a practice for managers. Beginning of the theory of the marketing concept, researchers developed the theory of market orientation. As Kohli *et al.*, (1990) demonstrated, marketing concept is a business philosophy, while market orientation refers to implementation to this concept within the organization.

An important part of market orientation literature is dedicated to study the degree of implementation of the marketing concept. According whit marketing concept the most important element of market orientation is customer orientation. Even if, academics emphasized the importance of consumer orientation, in firm practice managers tend to focus their attention on competitors, so they are competitors oriented. This divergent focusing between academics and managers shows the lack of consensus concerning whit what are the components of market orientation and the importance degree of each component. On the other hand, some researchers consider that market orientation concept is broader than consumer orientation and includes some external factors which play an important part in shaping the consumer needs/satisfaction, for instance, the competitors or the government regulations. Conforming whit these opinions, market orientation implies whole organization while marketing concept refers mostly to marketing activities and to marketing departments.

However, in reality, no firms are entirely market orientated. Indeed, the theories on market orientation are idealistic and even then not without flaws (Gotthelf, 2005). We do necessary not agree with the affirmation that market orientation theory is idealistic because many researches demonstrate the importance of market orientation for the long-term profitability and success, but we agree that the analyzing of this concept doesn't have to be (or not) type. This means that, the firms aren’t only two types: market oriented and others. We consider that firms have different degrees of implementation of the market orientation concept.

11. Implications for Future Sales Research

Our proposed model of salesperson opportunity in improving and help companies in shifting from being product driven to become market driven recognition was conceived from a thorough review of the salesperson performance literature.

Identifying the important cognitive processes as well as the antecedents to these processes provides some initial and preliminary explanation of solutions oriented salesperson success. It is recognized that further research is a need for further research in order to explore salesperson opportunity recognition in the context of sales solutions. Most importantly, the proposed framework must be operationalized and empirically and experimentally tested. While we firmly believe in the conceptual merits of this new perspective, it is necessary to clarify assess the impact of this opinion and the impact of this view on significant results on the client level officially.

This need for the operationalization of the constructs in solutions selling requires additional qualitative research in line with the work conducted by Tuli *et al.*, (2007). Such an effort is critical to develop and eventually test key variables. This is especially critical given the lack of empirical work on entrepreneurial cognition. The empirical research that does exist in this area has yielded little in terms of key construct measures. Qualitative efforts may also reveal new constructs needed to complete the proposed nomological framework.

To conduct empirical research on salesperson cognition during solutions selling, scholars must move beyond survey research and embrace emerging techniques found in the cognitive sciences. Think-aloud protocols, analysis of videotapes of people engaged in problem solving, analysis of spatial visualization, and tests of bisociative thinking have been used extensively in studying awareness and creative problem solving (Kay, 1994). These types of techniques hold great promise for sales researchers interested in understanding the cognitive processes associated with solutions selling.

Finally, Cooke *et al*., (2000), they had described some interesting means of assessing awareness through tests of working memory and gap analysis. These approaches can help determine the degree to which individuals are truly aware of events surrounding their environments.

Changes in the variables that make up salesperson opportunity recognition represent another interesting aspect of the framework worthy of future research. As some research has shown, the degree of change in cognitive abilities is often a major source of variability in decision-making performance which in aligned with, Marinova, (2004) and Omar, Mat, Imhemed, (2012) and; Omar, (2016). The dynamic nature of cognitive abilities suggests that future research should seek to study changes in the ability of salespeople to recognize patterns in customer accounts, to accurately frame problems, to develop a set of possible solutions to identify problems, and to select the optimum solution. Similarly, the factors that inhibit or encourage development of these abilities should be identified and assessed empirically.

12. Area of Future Research

Because of the majority of the variables used in the prior studies were “lump sum” and although the researcher in this paper tried to categorize the independent variables, there is still need for further research, which could categorize these variables more precisely. This would give a clear understanding in explaining these variables as well as the company’s performance and customer satisfaction as well.

13. Conclusions

The market-driven strategies begin with an understanding of the market and customers that make up the market. The strategies include the characteristics of the market-driven development of market orientation, and benefit from the distinctive capabilities, finding or creating a match between customer value and organizational capacity, and access to superior performance by providing distinct value to customers’ values. The available evidence points to the logic of strong support for the adoption of a market-oriented strategies, recognizing that the long-term commitment is necessary to develop such strategies. By achieving the market orientation needs a customer focus, selling skills knowledge as well as competitor intelligence which needs a coordination among the business functions. As a matter of fact, market oriented companies will have to involve making major changes in the culture, organizational commitment, processes, and structure of the traditional pyramid organization which organized into functional units. Several interrelated actions are required, including information acquisition, sharing information within the organization, inter-functional assessment, organizational encouragement, shared diagnosis, and organizational climate. The objective of market orientation is to provide superior customer value and satisfaction.

Selling skills knowledge is a key part of developing a market-driven strategy. Selling skills knowledge is organizational processes that enable companies to coordinate related activities and employ assets by using skills and accumulated knowledge. The outside-in processes provide direction to the inside-out and spanning processes by identifying customer needs and superior value opportunities.

It is one of the magnificent competitive challenges that organization facing which is creating the superior and highest customer satisfaction in order to sustain successful market-driven strategies. There are several ways of satisfaction which might be to distinguish between products, at lower prices than competing brands, or a combination of low cost and differentiation. The market driven becomes more involved than only following-up the sequence of step-by-step procedures and actions. It needs, capabilities which are to be identified and analyzed, market sensing and customer linking capabilities developed, and necessary organizational changes implemented. Our discussion and proposition of the key dimensions of market-driven strategy provides a fundamental point of view and perspective on the development of business strategies and marketing.

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