

Hypotheses

Analysis of Market Orientation on Business Performance in the Multinational Service Industries

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Abstract: The paper examined the extent of market orientation on business performance in the multinational service industries in Ghana. It applied the behavioral viewpoint of market orientation measurement using MKTOR scale as a base in eliciting information from eleven marketing managers through in - depth interview while one hundred and sixty-three marketing managers were also surveyed using structured questionnaires. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) statistical technique was used in analysing the data using Partial Least Square (PLS) software version 3.0. The findings revealed that, customer orientation and competitor orientation have significant positive relationships with business performance of the multinational service companies' activities whereas, inter-functional coordination did not have any influence on business performance. The study contributes to the negligible studies on market orientation measurement as a uni-dimensional construct as well as the limited studies on marketing managers as drivers of market oriented activities in the Sub-Saharan African countries.

Keywords: Orientation, Inter-Functional, Competitor

Introduction

Market orientation has become an important research subject matter in business research for some time now (Hult and Tomas, 2011; Murray *et al.*, 2011; Agrawal, 2012; Spillan *et al.*, 2013; Ozturan *et al.*, 2014; Šályová *et al.*, 2016). According to a study by Herhausen (2016), he stated that, firms with market orientation culture are able to attain better monetary and business performance even in tricky market situations. Fraj-Andrés *et al.* (2009) also observed that, promoting business performance strategy is dependably connected to the marketing practices of the business. The execution of a suitable marketing activity promotes superiority of a firm's activities and strengthens the competitiveness and market share of the firm (Ghouri *et al.*, 2011). It therefore becomes ruinous for organizations to ignore the consequence of market oriented activities in their business setup (Salminen, 2006; Smirnova *et al.*, 2011; Theodosiou *et al.*, 2012). The difficulty in assessing marketing performance stems from the fact that, its measurement is basically depended on external irrepressible factors such as customers and competitors (Neely, 2002). According to Kumar *et al.* (2011a; 2011b), the two foremost influential rudiments of the

peripheral environment are customers and competitors. An organisation is not likely to survive once it does not uphold a market oriented culture in their business activities (Attia, 2013). Šályová *et al.* (2016) posited that, it was an indispensable on the part of organisations to certify well-timed running of market oriented policy, that is expected to replicate the market circumstances and continue to the current market inclination. The proliferation of companies and products on the markets have made consumers more sophisticated to be satisfied in both emerging and developing economies. Kotler (2010) observed that, consumers now know their rights and they persevere on their rights; for that reason, organizations ought to be customer-driven so as to stay put in their businesses. Kurt *et al.* (2006) also stressed that, a well-built economies characterized by strong demand require companies to embrace utmost intensity of market orientation. The change in taste and preference of consumers in the current Ghanaian business environment has made it imperative for organizations to alter their strategic marketing activities in meeting the needs of the people. Ansah (2016) observed that, there were limited studies on multinational activities and market orientation in Ghana-specifically with marketing

managers in determining the oriented activities of the firm. Hajipour *et al.* (2010) researched on market orientation and advised that, studies on marketing activities necessitate marketing executives or managers to be used as respondents other than general managers in organizations. Employing marketing managers on market oriented activities of companies was more likely to enrich academic literature and at the same time provide a clear guideline to organisations on their market activities. Verbeke *et al.* (2016) opined that, a study on multinational companies in the current international business environment has a propensity to present both theoretical understanding and practical implications to deal with processes of adopting best business practices.

In recent years, an increasing body of literature has identified some gaps associated with studies on market orientation and business performance from the perspective of developing countries and they are provided as follows: First and foremost, there are limited studies on multinational activities in Africa and Ghana. According to a study by Merchant *et al.* (2011), they observed that, there was not much research carried out on multinational activities outside of the United States. The idea was finely tuned by Murphy and Li (2012) who also argued that, not much research has been conducted on multinational activities in Developing countries-especially in the Sub-Saharan Africa: Which was also made evident by Ansah (2016) on the limited nature of studies on multinational companies in Africa. Secondly, Van Raaij and Stoelhorst (2008) posited that, there were various concerns associated with the measurement of market orientation. While many researchers assess the concept as a uni-dimensional concept and other authors such as Ansah (2016) prefer market orientation to be analyzed from multi-dimensional perspective so as to understand the significance of each component of the orientation. Morgan *et al.* (2009) also recommended for future researchers to assess the value of market orientation in organizations-especially on its measurement. Racela *et al.* (2007: 146); Mokhtar *et al.* (2009; Suliyanto and Rahab, 2012) all observed that, research on market orientation, as a concept, was still inadequate with limited studies in developing nations like Asia and Africa. Finally, there is a problem of limited studies on marketing managers, particularly on multinational business activities in developing African countries. Puck *et al.* (2008) observed that, managers who are concerned with managerial sustainability ought to be studied and analyzed carefully, in order to have an international perspective. According to Morgan *et al.* (2009; Merrilees *et al.*, 2011), empirical testing and assessment of the significance of marketing activities to a firm's performance is limited in the extant literature. Marketing managers have responsibilities towards the development of teams for work performance in organizations (Comu *et al.*, 2011).

Significance of the Study

The scant literature on multinational activities in developing countries, measurement of market orientation coupled with limited literature on marketing managers have necessitated the study. The study therefore aimed at examining the influence of market orientation on business performance through the viewpoint of marketing managers from multinational service industries in Ghana.

The next section presents the study's objectives; the theoretical grounding of the study; followed by the study's conceptual model and hypotheses development. The subsequent section describes the research methods, measurements and data utilised in the study. The final section summarises the results, discusses their implications for theory and managerial practice; provision of direction for future research. At this backdrop, the present study has framed the following objectives:

- To examine the relationship between customer orientation and business performance of multinational service industries in Ghana
- To determine the association between competitor orientation and business performance of multinational service industries in Ghana
- To analyse the connection between Inter functional coordination and business-performance of multinational service industries in Ghana

Literature Review

The review of the study's literature explains the theoretical literature and empirical literature. It started with the explanation of the resource based view theory as the study's theoretical foundation before the empirical literature is explained afterwards.

The Resource-Based View

Resource-Based View (RBV) was propounded by Wernerfelt (1984) as a bunch of possessions and means that are put together to build up on companies' competencies. According to Barney (2001; Progolaki and Theotokas, 2010; Merrilees *et al.*, 2011), the inner resources of companies are likely to enable them to have competitive advantages over their competitors. It simply explains that, the internal wealth of a company adds to its competitive advantage. Merrilees *et al.* (2011) observed that, companies' resources comprised: The material resources, capital resources as well as the human capital. The financial position of the multinational companies is more likely to enable them to acquire the required marketing personnel whose activities are more likely to turn the fortunes of these companies marketing activities around. Based on the underpinning, the current study views

market orientation activities to be embedded in established internal capabilities-regarding material, capital as well as human resourced based in drafting a strong market oriented activities in ensuring a successful marketing performance, leading to the business performance of such companies.

Empirical Literature

The empirical literature comprised: Market orientation, business performance and multinational companies.

Market Orientation

Narver and Slater (1990) revealed that, market orientation has three diverse dimensions that outline the required organisational culture. They were: Customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination. Researchers such as: McCarthy and Perreault (1993; Kotler, 1994) also supported the definition of Narver and Slater by suggesting that, marketing concept normally put together three focal components: Customers, inter-functional coordination and profitability. According to Ngo and O’Cass (2012), the idea of organisations becoming market-oriented give credence to keeping close to the marketplace in generating better client value. Šályová *et al.* (2016) defined marketing orientation as an established concept with a broad spectrum of approaches, methods and tools that are used for achieving sustainable competitive advantage. Kotler and Armstrong (2011: 29) reiterated that, features of market orientation specify a strong client focus and an appreciative of organisational strengths and weaknesses. Marketing competencies ought to be seen as marketing practices that support policies - which comprised: Elements of the marketing mix, market

research and market management (Merrilees *et al.*, 2011). Zebal and Goodwin (2012:339) opined that, market orientation has always become an extended figure of marketing orientation. The current study employed Narver and Slater's (1990) definition which suggested that, market orientation was an activity that comprised three varied dimensions namely: Customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination.

Business Performance

Vieira (2010: 49) defined business performance as an idea of doing a particular work coupled with the result achieved at the end of doing that work. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2011: 65), business performance was a multidimensional construct with diverse interpretation - which relies on a diversity of factors. Capon *et al.* (1990; Lee and Madhavan, 2010) observed that, business performance is habitually determined by using the Return On Assets (ROA). Baker and Sinkula (2009) also opined that, business performance was calculated through sales revenue, return on investment as well as return on assets. Authors such as: Kohli and Jaworski (1996; Narver and Slater, 1990; Dwairi *et al.*, 2007; Olavarrieta and Friedmann, 2008; Morgan *et al.*, 2009) as well as Ngo and O’Cass (2012) all observed that, business performance denote a subjective process that has methodically been used by many researchers. Cano *et al.* (2004) opined that, subjective measures were appropriate indicators to measure business performance. The study employed the definitions of Ruekert *et al.* (1985; Kohli and Jaworski, 1996) towards business performance in a subjective way by assessing companies' sale value growth, return on sales growth as well as the overall market performance.

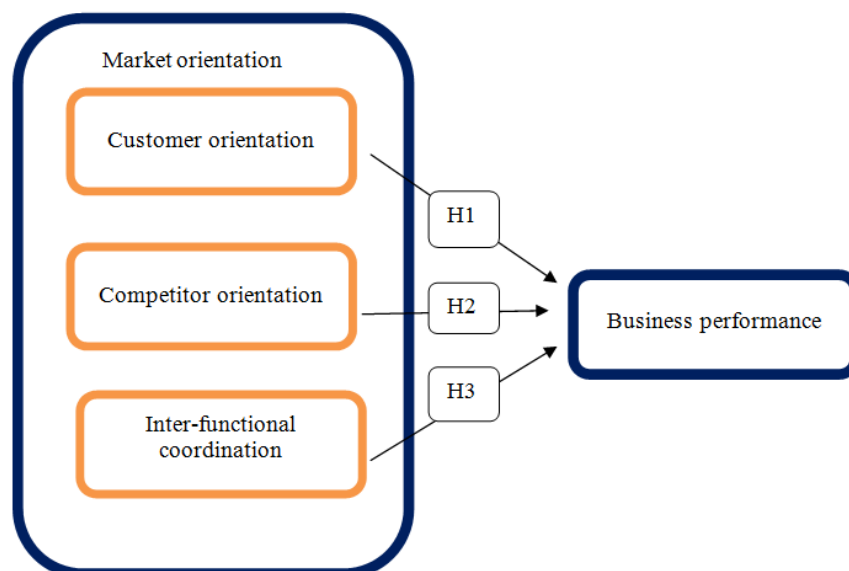


Fig. 1. The study's conceptual model

Multinational Companies (MNCs)

An extensive definition of what represent a multinational company (MNC) has not been lucid in both academic literature and in policy. Buckley and Casson (2009) defined a multinational company as a corporation that has interrelated business position in more than two countries. The OECD (2008) also defined an MNC as a direct investment company that has a direct investor in another country and controls 10% or more of the ordinary shares or power in another country. MNC was also defined as an incorporated organisation that comprised a parent company and its subsidiary affiliate companies abroad (UNCTAD, 2009). According to Spero and Hart (2010), a multinational company was a company that preserve its foreign overseas direct investments in more than one country. Shah *et al.* (2012) termed a multinational company as a business venture that maintains direct investments in a foreign country. The current study employed the definition of Shah *et al.* (2012) who defined a multinational company as a business venture that controls direct investments in another country.

Hypothesis Development

A collection of research works has focused on the relationship between market orientation and business performance (Fraj-Andrés *et al.*, 2009; Edigheji, 2010; Zebal and Goodwin, 2012; Dubihlela, 2013). According to Ghouri *et al.* (2011), the implementation of a good market orientation was more probable to lead to firms' performance. Hortinha *et al.* (2011) observed a positive relationship between market orientation and business performance. Researchers such as: Kohli and Jaworski (1996; Slater and Narver, 1994; Lado and Maydeu-Olivares, 2001; Yoon and Lee, 2005; Lai *et al.*, 2009; Mahmoud *et al.*, 2010; Smirnova *et al.*, 2011; Bahman and Mehdi, 2011; Mashahadia *et al.*, 2016) have all observed a positive relationship between market orientation and business performance. According to Herhausen (2016) market orientation has an incremental positive effect on business performance. This study therefore hypothesises that:

- H1:* Market Orientation (customer orientation) has a significant positive relationship with business performance
- H2:* Market Orientation (competitor orientation) has a significant positive relationship with business performance
- H3:* Market Orientation (inter-functional coordination) has a significant positive relationship with business performance

Research Methodology

The procedure that was used in collecting and analysing the study's data is explained below:

Study Population

The population of the study comprised all marketing managers in the various service multinational companies in Ghana. The service industries comprised: The banking industry, the insurance and financial institutions, the telecommunications companies as well as other support multinational service companies in the country.

Study Sample

Purposive and snowballing sampling techniques were employed. It consisted of 163 managers who were sampled from: Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi and Koforidua - which were basically the four business cities in Ghana. It included both expatriate managers of other countries as well as the native Ghanaians as managers for the multinational companies. Interviews and questionnaires were used in eliciting the views of the managers as part of the study's data collection process in getting the sample.

Measurement Scale and Instrument

Research scales were modified to suit the previous adapted works. Proper changes were made in aligning the current research context and purpose. Market orientation (competitor orientation) used a four item construct which was adapted from Narver and Slater (1990); Market orientation (customer orientation) employed a four item construct which was adapted from Narver and Slater (1990); Market orientation (Inter-functional orientation) used a four item construct which was adapted from Narver and Slater (1990) while business performance also employed a four item scale which was adapted from Ruckert *et al.* (1985) as well as Kohli and Jaworski (1996). The measurement items were measured on a seven point Likert scale that was anchored by 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. According to O'Sullivan and Butler (2009:1352) Likert scale helps in capturing attitudes of participants in business studies.

Validity of the Study

The validity of the interview guide was evaluated by two senior marketing lecturers of the Marketing Department from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana as well as two lecturers from the Marketing Department of the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa. Some of the questions were modified while others were deleted. The study's questionnaire was also validated statistically.

Discriminant validity was determined quantitatively through a comparison of the square root of the study's Average Variance Extracted (AVE) from the various variables using the application by Fornell and Larcker (1981). It was observed that, the values of the root square of the AVEs of the study's variables such as competitor

orientation, customer orientation, Inter-functional coordination as well as business performance were all greater than their respective individual correlations. It demonstrated that, the measurement item of each construct was powerfully connected to its underlined constructs signifying that, a discriminant validity had been established as observed by Chin (2010).

The convergent validity of the study was assessed using the various factor loadings of the study. The values of the study's factor loadings were all greater than 0.5 showing a strong convergent validity among the proposed constructs.

Reliability of the Study

The study's reliability was calculated by using Cronbach's alpha and Composite reliability. The Cronbach alpha coefficients were calculated through SPSS version 24.0 where the loadings ranged from 0.701 to 0.788 which then exceeded the threshold of 0.7. The composite reliability was also calculated using Smart PLS software version 3.0 with values ranging from 0.751 to 0.863.

Data Collection Techniques

Marketing managers of the various service companies were contacted through appointments. The idea of conducting the interviews and the distribution of the questionnaires were also discussed. The researchers then adopted "a drop and pick later method" in administering the questionnaires which gave the managers adequate time to complete the questionnaires. The use of follow - up phone calls, texting of messages, sending of emails were all used in facilitating the response rate.

Many of the questionnaires were received through post especially those in Koforidua, Takoradi and Accra - where other managers were introduced to the researchers by other marketing managers in the same service companies from the other regions. The completed questionnaires in Kumasi were collected by the researchers while others were made available through branch managers, companies' receptionists and secretaries - where they were all picked at the premises of the companies. The process persisted back and forth from September 2015 to March 2016 until the required sample size of one hundred and sixty-three (163) marketing managers was obtained from the multinational service companies for the study's analysis.

Collected Data from Interviews

Quantitative survey is usually substantiated with the follow-up interview techniques - a suggestion in the contemporary business literature (Stanko and Bonner, 2013; Siamagka *et al.*, 2015). The authors employed purposive sampling method by selecting marketing

managers as respondents who could offer in - depth information in relation to the market orientation activities in the various organisations. Identified managers also referred researchers to their other colleague managers' to assist in the research process as part of the snowballing technique employed in the study. In depth interviews were conducted with eleven marketing managers from their respective firms on appointment basis. The managers were asked to provide information on:

- The type of marketing activities they were applying in the development of their market orientation?
- How were they using the three component: Competitors, customers as well as the inter-functional coordination as part of their market orientation?
- How the named market/marketing orientation influenced the performance of their business?

Data Analysis

PLS - SEM was employed as the statistical technique in analysing the data. The software used was Smart PLS 3.0. The two-step model of SEM was conducted as suggested by Gerbing and Anderson (1988). The first step was to assess the measurement of the model after which, the hypothesised relationships of the study was assessed in a form of path modeling.

Assessment of Measurement Model

Reliability

Reliability is defined as the steadiness and consistency in a study's construct. Reliability of the instrument refers to the extent at which scales generate dependable results when being re-used (Hair *et al.*, 2009). In this study, reliability was assessed using Cronbach alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) as indicated in Table 1, the Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.701 to 0.789 which exceeded the recommended threshold opined by Henseler *et al.* (2009:299). The CR values also ranged from 0.751 to 0.863 as shown in Table 1.

Validity

Validity is the extent at which a construct measures what it intends to measure (Hair *et al.*, 1998). In this study, convergent validity and discriminant validity were used to confirm validity. Convergent validity refers to the degree at which a measure of a construct is linked with other measures of the same construct (Babin and Zikmund, 2016: 283). Convergent validity was defined by Ramayah *et al.* (2011: 419) as the extent at which various items that determine identical variables were in conformity.

Convergent Validity was assessed through the item factor loadings. Loadings that were less than 0.5 were deleted while those above were used for the study. Table 1 shows all the reflective measurement items with their respective high and significant loadings exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.5 as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981; Hair *et al.*, 2010; 2009). They ranged from 0.526 to 0.983.

Discriminate validity explains how measurement instrument ought to be discriminated or separated from each construct being studied from other similar constructs (Hair *et al.*, 1998; Babin and Zikmund, 2016: 283). According to Kline (2011), discriminant validity was contrary to convergent validity to the extent that, variables alleged to evaluate different variables illustrate discriminant validity. In the current study, discriminant validity was assessed using the inter - construct correlation matrix by Fornell and Larcker (1981) as well as an average variance extracted values (AVE) exceeding 0.5.

The study's analysis specified that, the discriminant validity for the variables: Customer orientation, competitor orientation as well as the inter-functional coordination had satisfied Fornell-Lacker criterion where - the square root of the AVE values for each of the individual construct was higher than the cross correlation between that particular construct.

Again, discriminant validity was also assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981; Urbach and Ahlemann, 2010; Mayfield and Mayfield, 2012) values of AVE ranging above 0.4 and 0.5 were considered appropriate criteria for exhibiting a discriminant validity. The study's values for AVE values ranged from 0.612 to 0.684 - showing that all

the constructs' are satisfactory and hence have good measure of the model as shown in Table 1.

Assessment of Structural Model

The study's hypotheses were tested and explained below:

In determining the structural model paths coefficients and the statistical consequence or significance of each path; the current study employed Smart PLS 3.0 with bootstrapping as a resampling procedure (300 random samples). Chin (1998) posited that, path coefficients and the R² are jointly used to evaluate the model while the error estimates and t-statistics values were used to check the statistical significance. Values shown in both Figure 2 and Table 3 present the PLS analysis outcome. The statistical significance of the path coefficient permits to identify which of the stated hypotheses supported or rejected the study's propositions. The value for the "R²" signifies the total of variance described by the independent variables. Chin (1998) also posited that, the lowest t-statistic value of "two" or "2" is usually employed as a yardstick to specify significance of the stated relationships. It is evident from: Figure 2 and Table 3 that, the "R²" for "Business performance" (BU) was 0.602. It then explains that, the independent variables (Competitor orientation, customer orientation as well as the inter-functional coordination) explained 60.2% on the dependent variable. The t-statistics depicted significance levels for "Competitor orientation" and "Customer orientation" while "Inter-functional coordination" recorded an insignificant impact on business performance with values such as 0.000, 0.020 as well as 0.147 respectively were obtained as shown in Table 3.

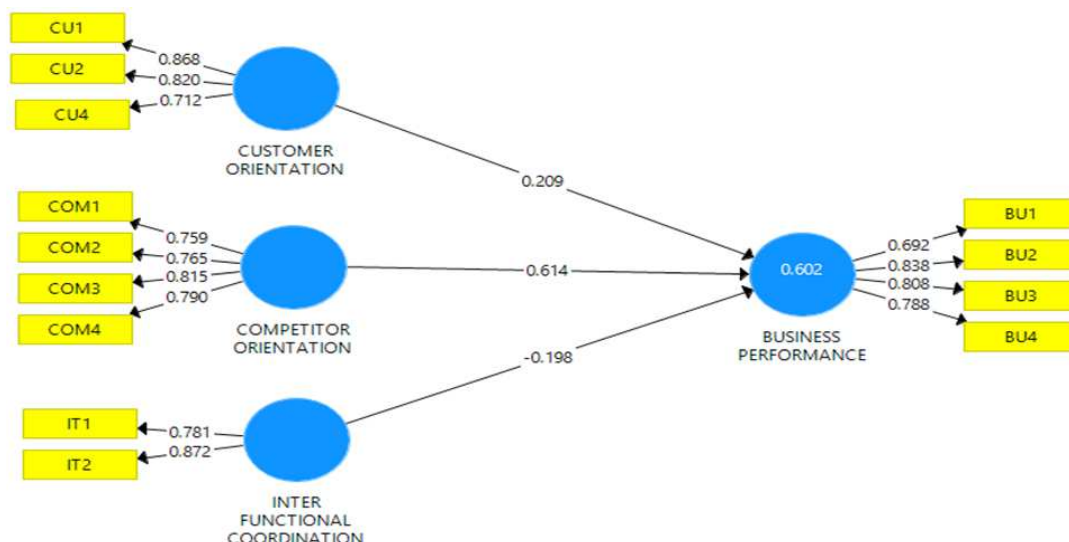


Fig. 2. Structural model results

Table 1. Accuracy statistics

| Research Construct | | R-Squared Value | Cronbach Alpha | Composite Reliability | Average Variance Extracted | Factor Loadings |
|--------------------|------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| CU | CU1 | 0.000 | 0.719 | 0.844 | 0.644 | 0.868 |
| | CU2 | | | | | 0.820 |
| | CU4 | | | | | 0.712 |
| IT | IT1 | 0.000 | 0.700 | 0.813 | 0.684 | 0.781 |
| | IT2 | | | | | 0.872 |
| COM | COM1 | 0.000 | 0.789 | 0.863 | 0.612 | 0.759 |
| | COM2 | | | | | 0.765 |
| | COM3 | | | | | 0.815 |
| | COM4 | | | | | 0.790 |
| BU | BU1 | 0.587 | 0.788 | 0.863 | 0.614 | 0.692 |
| | BU2 | | | | | 0.838 |
| | BU3 | | | | | 0.808 |
| | BU4 | | | | | 0.788 |

Table 2. Inter-construct correlation matrix

| Research constructs | BU | COM | CU | IT |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Business Performance (BU) | 0.782 | | | |
| Competitor orientation (COM) | 0.730 | 0.782 | | |
| Customer orientation (CU) | 0.605 | 0.644 | 0.803 | |
| Inter-functional Coordination (IT) | 0.141 | 0.095 | 0.004 | 0.828 |

Note: Customer orientation = CU; Competitor orientation = COM; Inter-functional coordination = IT

Table 3. Results of the structural analysis

| Study's hypothesis | Hypothesis outcome | Path coefficients | T-statistics | P-value | Supported/Rejected |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------|--------------------|
| CU BU | H1 | 0.209 | 2.348 | 0.013 | Supported |
| COM BU | H2 | 0.614 | 7.177 | 0.000 | Supported |
| IT BU | H3 | - 0.198 | 1.452 | 0.147 | Rejected |

Note: Customer orientation = CU; Competitor orientation = COM; Inter-functional coordination = IT while $p < 0.05^{***}$

The study's Goodness of Fit statistics (GOF) was calculated using a formula by Tenenhaus *et al.* (2005), where the averages of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were first multiplied by the averages of the R² value, after which the multiplied value was squared to determine the model fit:

$$\begin{aligned}
 GoF &= \sqrt{AVE * R^2} \\
 &= 0.639 * 0.602 \\
 &= \sqrt{0.384678} \\
 &= 0.6202
 \end{aligned}$$

The calculated global Goodness of Fit (GoF) was 0.604, which exceeded the threshold of $GoF > 0.36$ recommended by Wetzels *et al.* (2009). Thus, the study therefore concluded that, the research model had a superior overall fit.

Findings from the study's interview

Results from the interview were put into three and they were: Views on marketing or market orientation; how the three components under market oriented activities were applied as well as the influence of marketing activities on business performance.

In the first place, it was observed from the managers that, marketing activities of the companies were purposely controlled by their respective marketing department without involving the views of the other department in their oriented activities. Moreover, the findings on the three component namely - customers, competitors as well as inter-functional coordination were also identified. It became clear that, the focus of the multinational companies was solely on the activities of their competitors - with little attention on customers and inter-functional activities. Managers revealed that, the liberal nature of the Ghana government towards multinationals companies to invest in the country has made it very imperative for managers to monitor their competitors' day in and day out since new companies enter the market at all times. It was observed that, inter-functional coordination among other department on the company's marketing activities was very rare. Finally, managers attested that, their marketing activities had a greater influence on their business performance while limited attention was given to the inter-functional coordination of the companies since every department wanted to be independent in handling their respective activities.

Findings from Conceptual Model

The study's Hypothesis (H1) posited a significant positive relationship between "customer orientation" and "Business Performance". The results shown in Fig. 2 and Table 3 supported the hypothesis with a positive and significant relationship of (0.013) with the probability value of (0.209). This result supported the view that, an increased level of customer orientation improves the business performance of multinational companies. Hypothesis 2 (H2) forecasted that, an increased levels of competitor orientation augments the performance of business. The results shown in Fig. 2 and Table 3 again supported the hypothesised relationship with a very strong and significant relationship (0.000) with a probability value of (0.614). The finding therefore provided a support for a significant positive relationship between competitor orientation and business performance in the multinational business activities. Hypothesis 3 (H3) posited a significant positive relationship between inter - functional coordination and business performance. The results in Fig. 2 and Table 3 have showed an insignificant relationship (0.147) with probability value of (-0.198) and therefore rejected the hypothesised relationship.

Discussion of the Study's Findings

This current study sought to examine the influence of market orientation on business performance among multinational service industries in Ghana. The study relied on the Resource-Based View (RBV) as its theoretical underpinning. Distinctively, the study postulated three hypotheses and in order to test these hypotheses, data were collected from the various marketing managers in Ghana. The empirical results did not support all the postulated research hypotheses in a significant way.

Drawing from the findings of the research, competitor orientation of multinational service activities has a stronger influence on business performance (0.000) more than all the market orientation activities - such as customer orientation as well as the inter functional coordination. Ellis (2006) opined that, a company becomes a competitor oriented once the firm has a reflective insight about the activities of their competitors within the same business environment. This is to say that, multinational service industries in Ghana assess both the strengths and weaknesses of their competitors as observed by Awwad and Agti (2011) as well as Liu *et al.* (2013) who posited that, such characteristics amount to a strong customer orientation. From the theoretical perspective, it can be concluded that, the inner resources of the multinational service companies also enabled them to have a competitive advantage over their competitors as observed by Barney (2001; Progoulaki and Theotokas, 2010; Merrilees *et al.*, 2011) who revealed that, the

resource base of companies are more likely to support them embark on activities in which small organisations will find difficult to embark on. The findings from the interview were also consistent with the results from the survey - where managers attested that, their main focus have always been on their competitors due to the liberalisation policies in attracting multinational industries to Ghana.

Customer orientation on business performance recorded a moderate value of (0.013). According to Aziz and Yassin (2010) and Hillebrand *et al.* (2011) an astute implementation of customer needs augment the business performance of organizations. The coefficient value of 20% concentration on customers demonstrated that, multinational service industries were mostly concentrating on market oriented activities at the expense of their customers - who are the life - blood of the companies. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2011:65); Shin (2012) companies that are into customer oriented activities are expected to heighten their market share as well as their effectiveness. The minimal concentration on customers at the expense of competitors is more likely to reduce the profitability levels of the companies.

Findings from inter-functional coordination recorded the least with (0.147) of the total market oriented activities of the multinational service industries in Ghana. According to Awwad and Agti (2011), the inter-functional coordination comprised the idea of integrating all department in the business to develop market information in supporting the entire organisation. The findings of the study have attested that, multinational companies in Ghana were not so much into coordinating the marketing activities among the various department but were solely relying on marketing department in handling activities of the companies' marketing. It was also revealed from the interview with the managers that, marketing department was only responsible for marketing activities without any interference from the other departments. It demonstrated that, the views of the managers who were interviewed were consistent with the results that were obtained from the survey. It also demonstrated that, inter-functional coordination did not have a significant impact on business performance in the multinational companies. Market orientation is solely based on competitor and customer analyses with limited influence of the inter-functional coordinating activities on the performance of business.

Implications of the Study

The current study makes essential academic and practical contributions to market orientation - business performance literature and practice. To commence with, this study is one of the pioneering studies on market orientation and business performance - which

measured market orientation from the perspectives of competitors, customers and inter-functional coordination perspective. Many of the studies on market orientation and business performance are measured as a uni-dimensional. The idea of separating the concept brought new insight to the fact that, companies were solely relying on their competitors and customers at the expense of integrating activities of marketing together - something previous researchers have made in the academic literature. Moreover, the use of marketing managers' views on market orientation makes it more viable in understanding market oriented activities of the companies other than the general managers' view as observed in many of the studies in the extant literature. In addition, excessive concentration on competitors by the multinational companies other than the taste and preferences of the customers ought to be assessed by the marketing managers as part of their long term plans to remain in Africa. Attention is expected to be given to the different customers from different cultural background - since Africa and many of the developing countries are espoused to their cultural heritage in terms of receptive advertising, promotion, personal selling and other marketing activities that are geared towards the customers. Finally, the finding of the current study is expected to add to the academic literature on the need to measure market orientation as a multidimensional construct. It is also expected to improve the service multinational sectors in Africa. The MNC marketing managers are expected to be aware of the trend in their marketing pattern - thereby making provisions in handling unforeseen situations which could affect the companies. According to Mokhtar *et al.* (2014) many organizations obliges their administration to pay attention and identify customer needs towards the improvement of their companies' market position.

Contribution of the Study

The study's contribution is in three phase: First and foremost, the findings from the empirical study advance the market orientation literature by pointing out that, the association between customer orientation, competitor orientation as well as the inter - functional orientation on business performance have diverse view than previously assumed in the extant literature-especially in the developing countries. In addition, the results also fill the void on the scant literature of multinational companies' activities in Africa as well as the use of marketing managers' views to effectively evaluate market oriented activities of companies.

Acknowledgment

This is part of an exertion to advance academic knowledge in both marketing and management

literature-especially on multinational companies and marketing managers as drivers of market oriented activities in organisations. Part of the funds came from the Post Graduate Merit Award scholarship from the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa. Data relating to the study were sourced from different marketing managers in Ghana. Preceding works in the study's area are acknowledged as well as the anonymous reviewers of this manuscript.

Author's Contributions

Martin Owusu Ansah: Designed the study, wrote the preliminary outline, conducted the interviews, took part in the data collection process with the help of contracted research assistants, structured the literature review, analysed the collected data and reviewed the original draft.

Richard Chinomona: Reviewed the original draft from the introduction to conclusion and made significant comments towards the completion of the study. Both authors gave consent to the final submitted manuscript.

Ethics

This study presents original findings, which make contribution to multinational studies and on marketing manager's activities in both marketing and management literature. The contents are the viewpoint of the authors and not necessarily the journal publishers. The research has not been published elsewhere or is it being considered for publication in any other journal.

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