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The Moderating Role of Job Design on the Mediation Effect of Individual Market Orientation in the Relationship between Individual Factors and Behaviours: A Conceptual Model

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper is to investigate the antecedents, moderating variable and consequences of individual market orientation. The intention is to construct a new conceptual model that can be tested empirically. Studying market orientation concept is advocated by many previous studies of market orientation. Literature show that there are very few studies investigating individual contribution in the organizations' market orientation. This study contribution in knowledge is to construct a new individual market orientation conceptual model that can be tested by future empirical studies.

The conceptual model is based on three theories; Social Exchange Theory and Social Technical Theory. The model has five independent variables (employee commitment, learning initiatives, personality traits, psychological contract and knowledge attainment) which are viewed as antecedents of individual market orientation. It is seen as mediating variable that lead to dependent variables (employees' satisfaction and employee performance). A moderator (job design) is introduce to influence the relationship between mediator and dependent variables also known as consequences of individual market orientation.

Expected findings are that the study will draw guidelines to manger regarding manipulation of any independent variables will lead to higher results in dependent variables through enhancement of mediating variable as well as introducing the moderating variable.

The model is expected to be valuable tool for managers to understand constructs that induce the implementation of market orientation at the individual level.

Keywords: Individual market orientation, Employees satisfaction, Job design, Employees performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Market Orientation contributes significantly to organizations' overall performance. Although previous studies show a fragmented results regarding its contribution (Liao et al, 2011) but majority of studies support the notion (Aziz and Yassin, 2010; Lagat et al 2012; Liao et al, 2011; Mahmoud, 2010). The concept has attracted considerable research attention in marketing (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Deshpande, Farley, and Webster 1993; Ruekert, 1992; Narver and Slater 1990). After these early work, various conceptual and empirical studies have been conducted in developed (Tomas, Hult and Ketchen, 2001; Blankson et. al., 2006; Low et. al., 2007; Smith, 2012) and developing (Alhakimi and Baharun 2010; Mahmoud et. al., 2010; Dubihlela, 2013) economies, making it the more empirically researched concept in marketing for the last 25 years. The central argument of these studies is the indispensable role of market orientation in achieving greater performance by firms.

It should be put in perspective though; the implementation aspect of market orientation is the least researched (Amalia et al 2011; Hilman and Kaliappen, 2014) among the four aspects of market orientation, others being the definition, measurement and models (also see Raaij and Stoelhorst, 2008). In attempting to enhance implementation, recent literature has concentrated on the individual market orientation (Baber et al, 2014; Dauda and Akingbade, 2010; Schlosser and McNaughton, 2009). This is defined as the obligation assumed by an individual employee to collect and evaluate the significance of market information, and the readiness to distribute it to fellow employees (Schlosser and McNaughton, 2007). According to Jones, Busch, and Dacin (2003), research studied market orientation from an organizational level and very few considered the actions of individual employees, or have attempted to understand the social-psychological drivers of market orientation of employees within an organization.

Schlosser and McNaughton, 2007 conducted a comprehensive work in which investigated the contribution of individuals to organizational market and briefed about the antecedents of individual market orientation of employees. A more recent work was conducted by Baber, Rahul and Kaurav, (2014) investigating the individual market orientation (I-MO) on Banking Institution in India. They came up with psychological contract, learning orientation and customer contact as antecedents and work performance and future intention as the consequences of individual market orientation. In the suggestion for future studies they recommended researchers to extend the horizon by coming up with new antecedences and consequences of individual market orientation. This conceptual paper responds to the highlighted recommendation.

Therefore, the objective of this paper is to construct a conceptual model for individual level market orientation. This is significant because of the need to enrich the literature with new antecedent and consequences of market orientation as proposed by previous literature (Amelia et al, 2011; Bodlaj, Coenders & Zabkar, 2012; Baber et al, 2014)

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Individual Market Orientation

Original studies on market orientation literature did not precisely define the market orientation of individuals. The antecedents and consequences of individual level market orientation differ from those at an organisational level (Schlosser & McNaughton, 2007; Baber et al, 2014). Because the literature largely neglected the contribution of the individual, there was little discussion of its constructs. Kohli and Jaworski

(1990) talked about employee consequences of market orientation and identified several behaviours displayed by employees like job satisfaction, increased performance and team spirit. However these studies did not link these issues to the overall contribution of individuals to the organization market orientation. Consequently, limited individual traits were identified as antecedents and consequences in majority of the previous studies. As mentioned before, Kohli and Jaworski (1990) mentioned employee consequences of market orientation. However, they also echoed on the reciprocal nature of the consequence like commitment. This implies that as much as commitment is a consequence of market orientation it can similarly be an antecedent.

The individual level market-orientation construct is derived from the organisational level. The market orientation need to be studied at an individual level because it's accumulated implementation of each employee builds firm market orientation. Individual level market orientation is to represent the aptitude and drive of employees' contribution such as dispositions, attitudes and most tangibly, their behaviours to firms' market-oriented initiatives. The customer orientation scale (Brown et. al., 2002) and customer mind-set scale (Kennedy et. al., 2002) are about individual attitudes and behaviours toward customers. Schlosser and McNaughton (2009) developed the I-MARKOR which measures the individual level market orientation using Churchill's (1979) measure development process. The tool was developed by the greater use of structural equation modelling in data analysis. (Ho, Niden & Johneny, 2011) used the I-MARKOR in their study which addressed a significant role of individual market orientation on the employee performance and future intentions. The individuals' behaviours related to information acquisition, dissemination and coordination of strategic response was explored in the study and revealed a positive relationship. This paper inclined to the use of I-MARKOR in measuring the individual market orientation element in the proposed conceptual model.

2.2. Conceptual Model

The conceptual model shown in Figure1 (see section 3) is based on Social Exchange Theory. According to Homans (1961) Social Exchange theory is centred on the assertion that stimulus leads to behaviours and reinforcement creates exchange. This supports the proposed model in search a way that when independent constructs are enhanced they result in behaviour which is the market orientation implementation. The SST advocate for the integration of social and technical factors in organization to increases performance (Trist and Murray, 1993). Furthermore, the enhancement of each factor will impact on the organization performance. Previously, studies showed that market orientation and performance are positively related (Narver and Slater, 1990; Pitt, Caruana, and Berthon, 1996) with strong relationship (Consuegra and Esteban, 2007; Farrell, Oczkowski, and Kharabsheh, 2008; Singh 2009). Similarly, this conceptual paper hypothesizes that employee's performance and job satisfaction may be enhanced by implementing market orientation. However, this relationship may be influenced by task design; this assertion is supported by Social Technical Theory. The choice for job design as a moderator is attribute to the task alignment thinking by Beer, Eisenstat and Spector, 1990). In order to enhance implementation of market orientation activities by individual employee, there is need to incorporate market orientation activities in their job descriptions rather than embeds it as a culture or behaviour. Beer and his colleagues asserted that change (in this study is viewed as implementation) is based on task alignment (in the study is viewed as task design). They echoed that successful change efforts focus on the work itself, not on abstractions like participation and culture.

Consistently, the study apply individual market orientation models constructed by (Baber et al, 2014; Schlosser and McNaughton, 2007). These models indicated three common antecedents of individual market orientation; psychological contract, learning orientation and customer contact. However, there are existence of many other variables that were not considered and that could influence the relationships in study, the model in this paper propose five antecedent variables; employee commitment, learning initiatives, personality traits, psychological contract and knowledge attainment. Thus, we are suggesting that enhancing each of these antecedents influence market orientation implementation at the individual level.

2.2.1. The Antecedents of Individual Market Orientation

2.2.1.1. Psychological Contracts

The psychological contract show mutual obligations for employees and the employers, which direct employees towards market-oriented practices (Schlosser and McNaughton, 2007). Rousseau, (1995) defined it as the belief of an employee concerning exchange arrangement of employees and the organizations. Psychological contract, therefore, predicts the exchange of promises between employees and organizations, also signifies an individual's belief in the mutual commitments (Rousseau and Tijoriwala, 1998). In their study, Baber et al (2014) found positive and strong relationship between psychological contract and individual market orientation. In addition, since the psychological contract lead to individual market orientation and then affect employee behaviour the study propose that psychological contract may predict employee behaviours. Thus we hypothesised;

H₁: Psychological contracts of employee is related to individual market orientation

H₂: Psychological contract is related to employee behaviours (a) performance (b) satisfaction

2.2.1.2. Personality Traits

One of models introduced regarding personality trait is the Big Five model, which was developed by Costa and McCrae (1992) has emerged as a popular tool for understanding the relationship between personality and various individual behaviors (Poropat, 2009). McCrae and Costa (1997) asserted that employee personality is analysed in terms of consistency levels in the manners of cognition, affect and behavior. The model which identified five personality factors as; conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, emotional stability and openness to experience, has been employed by many researchers (Mount, Witt and Barrick, 2000; Sawyerr, Srinivas and Wang, 2009).

Yesil and Sozbilir (2013) explored the effect of individual personality on innovation behavior and revealed that openness to experience is positively related to individual innovation behavior. In addition, previous studies have echoed this by asserting that certain traits do in fact enhance employee performance (Borghans, Duckworthy, Heckman and Weel, 2008; Linz and Semykina, 2009; 2011). Many empirical studies, have confirmed that personality consistently reproduce general and specific job related behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Thoms, Moore, and Scott, 1996; Thoresen, Bradley, Bliese, and Thoresen, 2004). Market orientation being viewed as a behaviour in this study we hypothesised that;

H₃: Personality traits of employees influence their individual market orientation

H₄: Personality traits is related to employee behaviours (a) performance (b) satisfaction

2.2.1.3. Learning Initiatives

A learning organization is created through mutual interaction between employees (Cho, 2002). Farrell (2000) revealed that learning-oriented behaviors of individual are influenced by top managers' support and value given to employees, which in turn lead to the company's learning orientation. This implies that in order to enhance the learning orientation of organization, individuals learning orientation is to be maintained. Thus, organization learning ascends when individuals with high learning orientation pursue higher goals (Bell and Kozlowski, 2002; Cho, 2002) and disseminate their experiences to fellow employees (Levitt and March, 1988).

Individuals with a high learning orientation tend to persist in spite of failure, pursue more challenging tasks, and use more complex learning strategies. It is characterized by a desire to increase one's competence by developing new skills and mastering new situations (Bell and Kozlowski, 2002). Individual learning orientation is connected to market-oriented implementation. Previous studies have associated market orientation and learning orientation at the organisational level (Slater and Narver, 1995; Farrell, 2000; Keskin, 2006). Their view supports the connection of these variables at the individual level. This is because learning organisation is created by mutual interaction between employees in the organisation (Cho, 2002). Indeed, a learning orientation is very crucial for the development of organisations and people. In his paper (Williams, 1997) stressed the interaction between individual and organizational learning. With all the discussion, we posit that learning and market orientation are related at an individual level of analysis. Thus hypothesise;

H₅: The employees with learning orientation exhibits individual market orientation

H₆: Learning orientation is related to employee behaviours (a) performance (b) satisfaction

2.2.1.4. Employee Commitment

Organisational commitment is defined as a perceived mutual association between the employee and the organisation that lead to higher employee participation, energy, and fidelity (Jaworski and Kohli, 1993). Hence, it has been found in previous studies that organization with higher market orientation have demonstrated greater organisational commitment from her employees (Ruekert, 1992; Jaworski and Kohli, 1993; Siguaw et. al., 1994). In addition, market orientation is suggested to nurture a connection between employees and their organisation (Jaworski and Kohli, 1993). Thus, it seems logical that employees with strong organization commitment have more tendencies to accept and implement market orientation. Previous evidence has suggested that organisational commitment facilitates a customer orientation (Kelley, 1992), which was defined as synonymous to market orientation by Deshpande et al. (1993).

Harris (1999) used people-driven theory of sustaining and developing market orientation. Through this, he claimed that attitude and action of employees influences market orientation. So, to enhance market orientation, organization should integrate understanding, belief, and commitment of all employees. His idea is harmonious with Slater and Narver (1995), which examined the relationship between corporate culture and market orientation, with an emphasis on procedural protocol and interpersonal relationships.

Parallel to that, market orientation, as a part of organizational behaviour, has illustrated another factor shaping the organizational commitment. In literature the relationship between market orientation and commitment was examined in terms of employee consequences (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; 1993) customer commitment to organization (Farelly and Quester, 2013; Taylor, Kim, Ko, Park, Kim and Moon,

2008). In this paper this relation is handled as antecedent of individual market orientation. We argue that even though market oriented organizations lead to more committed employees to the organization, the reciprocal nature (Kohli and Jaworski, 1996) of the relationship is even stronger. Hence, the hypothesis below was formulated.

H₇: Commitment of employees to the organisation is related to individual market orientation

H₈: Employee commitment is related to employee behaviours (a) performance (b) satisfaction

2.2.1.5. Individual Knowledge

Organizational knowledge can be broadly defined as credible information that is of potential value to an organization (Tomas and Hult, 2003), and thus can enhance a firm's capability to take effective action (Grant, 1996). Knowledge management focuses on "organizing and making available important knowledge, wherever and whenever it is needed" (Sabherwal and Becerra-Fernandez, 2003). Increasingly, knowledge is believed to be an important weapon for attaining firm success (Lee and Byounggu, 2003). These studies viewed knowledge from organizational level, but noting is important that the logic can be extended to individual level.

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) implied that knowledge control the activities of individuals, like acquiring information. Tsoukas (1996) suggests that individual knowledge enables the transfer of information. This enables individuals to progress intellectually and create a mutual understanding by applying their knowledge. In addition to this, the subjective interpretation of individuals resulting from acquired knowledge, shape the way data and information are gathered, shared and used by employees.

Individual knowledge construct the foundation for exchanging information needed to implement market orientation, it form expectations, organise the plans, and resolution from emerging conflicts. Under these circumstances, individual knowledge extends interactions among individuals. Through increased knowledge employees become more active in implementing their assigned job (Wallach, 1983). Therefore we propose:

H₉: Individual knowledge is related to individual market orientation

H₁₀: Individual knowledge is related to employee behaviours (a) performance (b) satisfaction

2.2.2. The Consequences of the Individual Market Orientation

2.2.2.1. Employee Satisfaction

This is the extent to which the employees of a firm feel that their interests are being looked after by the management. If employees are satisfied with the organization they in turn will satisfy the need of customers in a better and efficient manner. Intrinsic satisfaction accompanied by extrinsic satisfaction makes employees fully satisfied with their job (Herzberg et. al., 1957). Intrinsic satisfaction includes autonomy, recognition, growth and promotion and extrinsic satisfaction includes pay and related matters, physical conditions, behaviour of superiors and subordinates (Sharma and Jyoti, 2006). For employee consequences, Kohli and Jaworski (1990) argue that by instilling a sense of pride and companionship among employees, market orientation enhances job satisfaction. Hence, we hypothesised:

H₁₁: Individual market orientation relates to employee satisfaction

H₁₂: Individual market orientation mediates the relationship between individual factors (a) individual knowledge (b) employee commitment (c) learning initiatives (d) personality traits (e) psychological contract and satisfaction.

2.2.2.2. Employees' Performance

Work performance (hereby referred as employee performance) is considered as a factor for determining contribution of an individual in an organizational. Schlosser and McNaughton (2007, 2009) indicated that employee performance is enhanced through implementation market orientation by that particular employee. Employee performance is defined as an employee's ability to effectively complete an assignment according to its requirements. Schlosser and McNaughton (2007, 2009) asserted that market oriented employees perform better than employees with no market oriented tendencies and they attributed their superior work performance to the individual market oriented behaviour. A number of previous studies have established the existence of positive relationship between work performance and market orientation (Green Jr., Inman, Brown and Willis 2005; Ho et. al., 2011). In addition, market orientation can reduce role conflict, which Siguaw, Brown, and Widing (1994) define as the incompatibility of communicated expectations that hamper employees' role performance.

H₁₃: Individual market orientation has a positive relationship with employees' performance

H₁₄: Individual market orientation mediates the relationship between individual factors (a) individual knowledge (b) employee commitment (c) learning initiatives (d) personality traits (e) psychological contract and performance

2.2.2.3. The Moderator: Job Design

Job design has been one of the most effective tools used for optimizing employee's performance. It can be defined as changing the content and processes of a job to increase employee's satisfaction, motivation and productivity (Irwin/McGraw-Hill, 2001). Effective Job design is measure of the degree to which employee is involved in his tasks and assignments. Many Researchers analysed the relationship of job design and employee performance and concluded that there is a strong positive relationship between them. (Ali and Rehman, 2014; Hyatt and Prawitt, 2011). Job design is not a new concept, it has been discussed in early 20th century by Fredrick Taylor and then by his predecessors a lot of work has been done on the role of job design and employee performance but this concept failed to attain much attention of managers. This led to a decrease in the productivity of many organizations facing opportunity cost and productivity below optimum level.

It is believed that now a day's most of the employees are not happy with their job designs or not assigned with the tasks that they feel encouraged and motivated to perform. An effective job design brings involvement of employee in work related activities which clearly forecasts employee output, departmental productivity and organizational success (Bates, 2004). Thus hypothesised

H₁₅: Job design moderates the relation between individual market orientation and behaviour (a) performance (b) satisfaction

H₁₆: Job design moderates the individual market orientation's mediating relationship between individual factors (a) individual knowledge (b) employee commitment (c) learning initiatives (d) personality traits (e) psychological contract and behaviours (a) performance (b) satisfaction.

3. CONCLUSION

In this article, the new individual market orientation conceptual model based on the Social Exchange Theory, Social Technical Theory and the Theory of Resource Based View is proposed. From the literature review, we uncovered antecedents, and moderating variables that may influence the correlation between the market orientation implementation and its consequences. The proposed conceptual model is in line with the three identified theories. The literature argues that the majority of the previous research on market orientation concentrate on four aspects; definition, measures, model and implementation. It went further to assert that implementation is the least researched area. The researchers' view is that, there are two ways to study the implementation aspect; firstly, by designing an implementation framework. Secondly, by designing a model for implementers with clear antecedents, mediators/moderators and consequences and this paper opted for the latter.

The expected findings of the proposed model is to come up with suitable antecedents, moderator and consequences of individual market orientation that will be used by managers to enhance implementation of market orientation at an individual level. Furthermore, we believe this model can offer a valuable tool for managers to understand the factors that influencing the implementation of market orientation at the individual level. This will enable them to proactively design further strategy to improve the identified factors that will enhance employees' market orientation implementation. This model has not been tested, thus, apparently it's important for future research to develop an instrument for survey to test the research model.

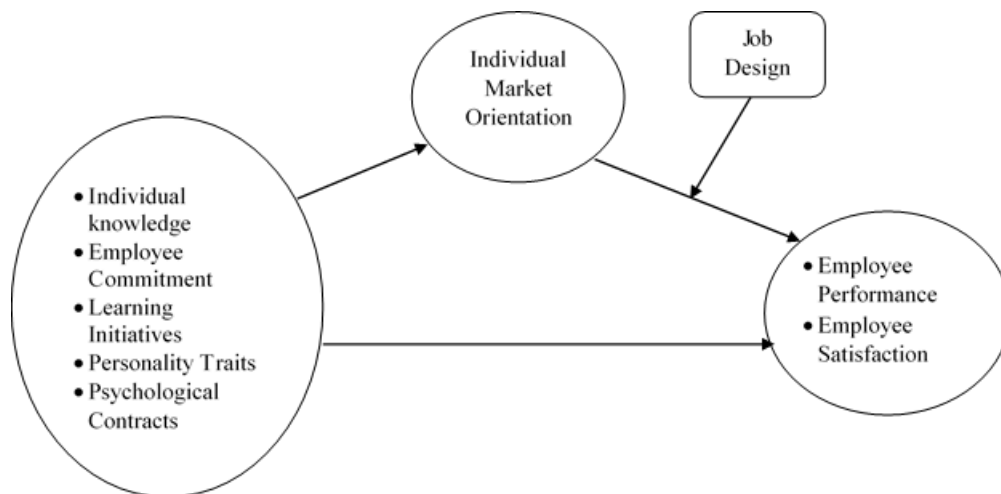


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

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