

Managing Marketing Spirit with Organizational Symbolism

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Abstract

The purpose of this preliminary study is to begin the conceptualization and research of Marketing Spirit. It is our goal to introduce the concept and justify the need for it regarding contemporary research in organizational culture and the market orientation. Hitherto, the diversity of the field of market orientation has failed to establish any conclusive link between the market orientation of an organization and its performance in the marketplace. We adopt the “organizational symbolism” perspective of organizational culture regarding market orientation as first categorized by Smircich (1983) and later developed further by Deshpande & Webster (1989) and explore the need for a new component such as marketing spirit that could further explain the relationship of success in implementing a selected business strategy, market orientation, and business performance. The conceptualization of marketing spirit is carried out with an iterative process of literary review and fieldwork with companies.

Research Setting, Goals and Methodology

The theoretical foundation of this conference paper lies in the active discussion around the market orientation of organizations (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Narver & Slater, 1990; Day, 1994; Deshpande & Webster, 1989; Tuominen, Rajala and Möller, 2000). It is our goal to contribute to this discussion and further develop the concept by researching the issue of sustaining and developing a marketing oriented organizational culture in firms. The literary review was formed around the original mapping of research in market orientation and organizational cultures by Deshpande and Webster (1989). We selected some 30 articles quoting them as a reference and naturally added articles and books from other research streams as our knowledge and understanding of the problem grew.

The theory development in this paper is based on an abductive research approach, which is a combination of deductive and inductive research, to which a sequence of qualitative case studies is linked. The aim is to systematically intermix literary reviews for the development of a theoretical framework with empirical fieldwork consisting of case analysis in order to advance the research. The exploratory nature of this study supports our choice of a qualitative research approach. Within qualitative research we use a cultural approach (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006) as a means of understanding and investigating the dynamics between institutions and (organizational) social action. This combines interviews, reading various business texts and observation. The aim is to understand the mechanism behind how companies adopt a selected business strategy. On an individual level, the aim is understand how people make sense of their work life and act in a certain, hopefully desirable, way.

A first round of in-depth interviews was conducted in Australia and Japan in December 2006. These semi-structured interviews focused on what managers felt to be the driver of their business success and how they attempted to create an organizational culture that would support their business philosophy. The selected four firms had outperformed their competition in their respective markets in terms of growth, profitability, or market share. As they were all in the high-tech industry, we felt safe to assume to that in addition to their high-class technology, they were also examples of successful commercialization and marketing skills in general.

Market Orientation

Market orientation refers to the business philosophy where companies strive to understand the markets, both from a customer and competitor perspective, and align their operations in order to serve their customers. (Tuominen, Rajala and Möller, 2004) A market-oriented organization is one where the marketing concept is adopted in all actions (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). The main argument of market orientation is that companies with higher levels of market orientation should reach better business performance.

The theoretical background of market orientation derives from the marketing concept (Drucker, 1954; McKittrick, 1958). Its main elements are customer orientation, interfunctional coordination, and profitability as seen in the following figure.

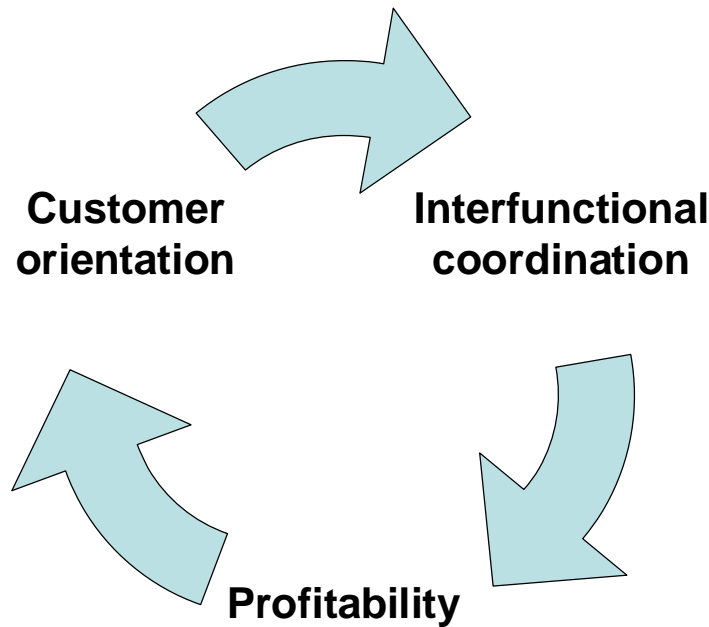


FIG. 1 THE MARKETING CONCEPT

Customer orientation requires knowledge of customers. This knowledge or market intelligence acts as the basis for creating value for customers (Narver & Slater, 1990). Organizational decision making is based on market intelligence, which also takes into consideration other exogenous factors, such as competition and regulation, in addition to customer information. These issues cannot be examined only as they are today, but possible future changes must be anticipated (Day & Wensley, 1988; Narver & Slater, 1990).

Customer orientation consists of (a) understanding internal customers' requirements that affect external customer needs and preferences, (b) obtaining information about external customers' needs and preferences through internal customers, and (c) creating additional buyer value by increasing internal customer benefits (Mohr-Jackson, 1991). Internal customers refer to the company's own employees. They are the actual creators of a firm's offering and thus the producers of customer satisfaction. Better customer service can be reached through clear and open communication of corporate values, norms and expected behaviors. This includes guidelines, process descriptions, and measurement of performance. The satisfaction that internal customers get from their work transfers through the organization finally producing better satisfaction among external customers. In market orientation employees are empowered to take any actions that may benefit the customer and improve the relationship. Profitability must also be maintained, at least in the long run. Companies value the work and input of personnel involved with serving customers. They can bring valuable information from the frontline of business. (Mohr-Jackson, 1991)

Interfunctional coordination is of great importance, since developing a market orientation requires the efforts of everyone in the organization from top management to employees in all departments and functions – not just marketing. Firstly, different marketing processes must be coordinated. This involves the work of the sales force, advertising, product management, marketing research, etc people. (Mohr-Jackson, 1991) Secondly, marketing must be coordinated with other organizational functions (Kotler, 1991). Creating superior value for customers requires the efforts of full-time and part-time marketers. It can be achieved when each employee on all organizational levels ask themselves, how do I contribute to excellence in customer relations and to revenue? (Gummesson, 1991) In order for

all operations and activities to have synergy, employees must be entirely committed, well-trained, involved and motivated to create value for customers (Mohr-Jackson, 1991).

Naturally, profitability is the goal of any business. It can be seen as the result of market orientation (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). This is the result of having a business that is customer oriented in the first place. Also, all operations are aligned to serving the customer and creating superior customer value. This is a shared, common goal, of both employees and management.

Market Orientation in Organizations

By definition, market orientation is “the organization-wide generation of market intelligence pertaining both to current and future customer needs, dissemination of the intelligence across departments, and organization-wide responsiveness to it” (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). Mohr-Jackson (1991) found that market orientation leads to an improvement in a firm’s performance as a result of improved internal customer satisfaction. This is closely related to how much meaning people find in their work. This finding supports the discoveries of Kohli and Jaworski (1990), where market orientation was found to bring various psychological and social benefits to employees. In practice it can be found in increased employee morale, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and a sense of pride in being a part of a firm where each individual, team and department are working towards the same goal – superior customer value. (Mohr-Jackson, 1991)

Furthermore, Mohr-Jackson’s interviews provided detailed evidence on positive results from market orientation. It effects several business performance indicators, such as ROI, ROE, productivity, costs, sales, volume, market share, sales growth, profits, and customer satisfaction. From the employee perspective, the research found positive effects on ownership, security, job satisfaction, full participation, involvement, motivation, enthusiasm, empowerment, absenteeism, accidents rate, productivity, and effectiveness. These all have an impact on the bottom line.

Market orientation has two primary schools - the functional and cultural view (Deshpande & Webster, 1989). These two approaches are described in more detail in the following sections.

The Functional View on Market Orientation

The traditional school of market orientation views business from a functional or structural stance. The focus is on performance and management structures aiming at monitoring and controlling behaviors of employees and business performance. (Deshpande & Webster, 1989). Market orientation comprises of three components: customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interfunctional coordination (Narver & Slater, 1990). Customer orientation is a constant process, where the firm makes every effort to understand both overt and latent customer needs, and aims at creating superior customer value by providing an offering that satisfies these needs. Similarly, the company must put an equal effort in to knowing both current and potential competitors, and spreading this information across the organization. Interfunctional coordination refers to the planned alignment of all organizational resources into working towards the common goal of creating superior value for the customer. It has proven perhaps easier to establish a link between the functional view and business performance, and this topic has been widely researched. The common consensus is that a strong market orientation leads to a better financial result.

The Rise of the Cultural View in Market Orientation

Deshpande and Webster (1989) defined market orientation as a cultural phenomenon. This cultural perspective refers to more fundamental characteristics of organizations (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). Corporate culture has been defined as the pattern of shared values and beliefs that help individuals understand organizational functioning and thus provide them norms for behavior in the organization (Deshpande & Webster, 1989) Pettigrew (1979 as cited in Alvesson & Berg, 1992) defined corporate culture as an entity as follows

Corporate Culture as an entity: Collective, Clan, Tribe	Artifacts:	Physical and Visual
	Collective Mental Frameworks and Manifestations:	Sagas& epochs forming Legends Myths forming Stories
	Collective Action Patterns:	Rites, Rituals, Ceremonies, Celebrations

TABLE 1 THE KEY ELEMENTS OF CULTURAL PHENOMENON

The collective, clan and tribe act as metaphors trying to capture the essence of corporate culture. Artifacts can be found physically in architecture and design, or more visually in graphical design such as logos. Furthermore, myths and stories strengthen the collective mental framework of an organization. Legends act as the living history of the firm. Both current and new employees are integrated and more deeply committed to the firm through collective action patters. For example, rites and celebration strengthen these feelings.

In the modern workplace employees are seeking a feeling of meaning and being a part of something larger and important. Naturally, if there is conflict between organizational and individual values, people perform poorly or leave the firm. A strong and shared corporate culture has a proven causal relationship to productivity and profitability. (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone 2004).

A market oriented culture is realized as a mentality or business philosophy that puts the customers' interests first in everything that a firm does (Deshpande et al. 1993). All organizations are market oriented to some extent and market orientation can be seen as a continuum. In order to be successful and profitable, companies need to serve customers. The level of market orientation in a firm depends on how central clients and their needs are in the formulation of the company's strategy and the running of its daily operations. (Harris, 1999) Therefore market orientation or culture is not created – it is not something that a firm has, but rather what it *is*. It can be managed, guided, steered, or manipulated. Nevertheless, culture is the result of a continuous negotiation between all members of an organization. Its members alter it in an evolutionary way. (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Narver & Slater, 1990; Harris & Ogbonna, 1999). As we see it, managers can encourage certain kind of behavior.

Developing market orientation centers on the management's ability to steer the culture and work climate into a certain direction. Research has shown that it is a rather cumbersome task and market orientation cannot be easily implemented in any time and place. (Narver & Slater, 1998) It can be argued, that the failure or success of business is defined by the implementation of selected strategy, not in its selection. So it is all about people and what they do. (Mohr-Jackson, 1991) A research gap lies in the implementation of customer orientation in firms. (Kennedy et al., 2003)

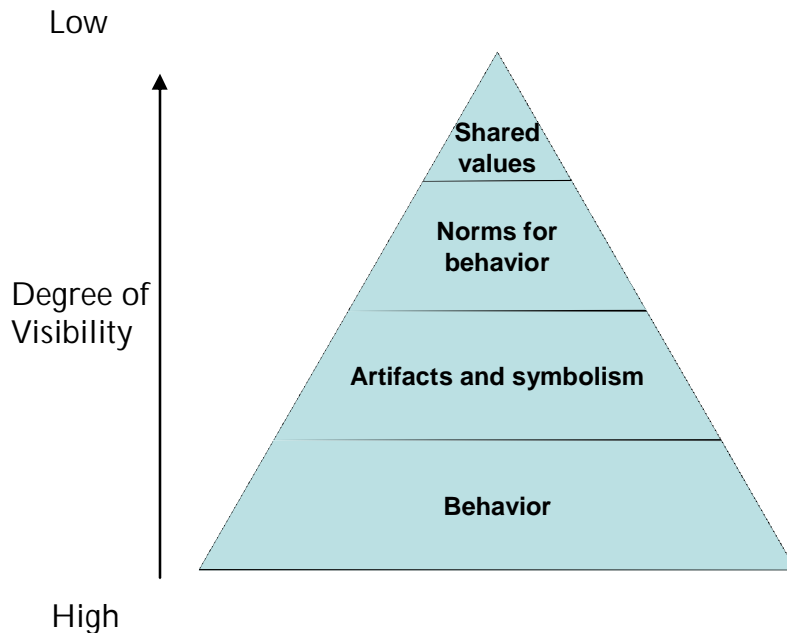


FIG. 2 A FRAMEWORK FOR MARKET ORIENTED ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The figure above presents a conceptualization of a market oriented organizational culture by Homburg & Pflesser (2000). This framework is based on the work by Schein (1992) in the field of organizational culture. The four separate, but interrelated elements are shared basic values, behavioral norms, artifacts (and symbolism), and behaviors.

Values can be further described as “a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means and ends of an action” (Kluckhohn, 1951; cf. Homburg & Pflesser, 2000). Norms are more specific and have more relevance for the members of the organization in guiding their behavior. Values act as the basis of the development of these norms that legitimize behavior in the organization defining expectations about behavior and its results. Artifacts include stories, arrangements, rituals and language that are created by an organization. They have strong symbolic meaning. Behaviors refer to organizational behavior patterns with an instrumental function. (Homburg & Pflesser, 2000). In that sense they relate to daily work routines and processes that manifest the values and norms of a firm.

The three levels differ by the degree of visibility, which high in the case of market-oriented behaviors and artifacts. In the case of norms visibility is medium, and low in the case of shared basic values (Schein, 1992).

Deshpande’s 5 Types of Market Orientation

To further elaborate on the categorizations of organizational culture first introduced by Smircich (1983) and later developed and utilized for the furthering of research in the field of organizational market orientation, explanations of the various perspectives are in order. Chronologically the locus of culture in an organization has migrated from being seen as an independent variable which could therefore be independently and directly affected by management intervention to being seen as a metaphor of the organization itself therefore assuming a more embedded and foundational organizational phenomenon which changes in an evolutionary sense as members of the organization gradually alter their behavior.

The dichotomy of organizational culture paradigms as adopted from Deshpande & Webster (1989) is as follows. The “functionalist view” encompasses the first two perspectives of organizational culture: the comparative management and contingency management paradigms. The perspectives are “functionalist” because they view the culture as an independent variable, the former as exogenous and the latter as endogenous to the organization. Even as the locus of the culture varies from external to internal, both perspectives hold that culture can be observed and modified as a singular entity extractable from the whole of the organization.

The “cultural view” encompasses the three perspectives which treat the culture of the organization as a metaphor of the organization itself. These perspectives are organizational cognition, organizational symbolism, and structural/psychodynamic perspective. The first views the culture of the organization as a metaphor for organizational knowledge systems. The behavior of these systems is guided by shared “rules” that the members adopt. In other words the organization (now analogous to culture) can be guided by affecting how the members perceive the rules. The second perspective, organizational symbolism, adds a layer of complexity to how culture manifests. According to it, culture is seen as a metaphor for shared symbols and meanings. Therefore, the culture manifests in artifacts of the organization. These include such phenomena as stories, rituals, legends, ceremonies, and celebrations occurring in the organizational context. The way these artifacts manifest guide the values, norms and behavior of the members of the organization. The last perspective, the structural/psychodynamic perspective views the culture as the structural patterns that link the unconscious human mind with behavioral manifestations in social arrangements. This elevates the idea of the organization into a form of human expression rather than purposeful instruments. (Deshpande & Webster, 1989)

In this study we adopt the organizational symbolism perspective of the “cultural view”. In their study, Homburg & Pflesser (2000) concluded that artifacts were the sole direct drivers of the behavior of the members of an organization. If these artifacts contained market oriented content they would drive market oriented behavior. It was unclear however, would this behavior contribute to actual business performance. We wish to introduce the concept of MS that could develop to become a component of the organizational culture. It could be conveyed to the members of the organization through appropriate artifacts to aid in the transformation of market oriented behavior to business performance.

Issues not Explained by Market Orientation

Research regarding the manifestation and the outcomes of market orientation has constituted its own branch for close to 20 years. However, fundamental challenges persist to remain throughout the studies. This seems to be true due to the great degree of fragmentation in research methods, metrics, and even the fundamentals regarding the conceptualization of what market orientation is and how it manifests within an organization. For us, the most relevant issue is the inconclusiveness of results of studies attempting to establish a connection between an organization’s market orientation and its effects on business performance. Depending on the measures and determinations of the perspective of market orientation has been shown to be an inconclusive, scrappy, unconditioned field, riddled with “measurement issues” (Deshpandé & Farley, 1998; Kohli, Jaworski & Kumar, 1993; Narver & Slater, 1990). The assumption that greater market orientation will lead to better financial and market performance has had mixed support, and that the fundamental link between market orientation and performance has yet to be fully explored and supported (Noble, Sinha & Kumar, 2002; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Pelham & Wilson, 1995; Han, Kim, Srivastava 1998; Narver & Slater, 1990).

Even as this study must assume a very preliminary form, it is our goal to embark into research to find evidence that the component of marketing spirit exists and could through later studies emerge as what could explain the link of market orientation behavior and the business performance of the organization. Firms with high market orientation can be a financial hit or fiasco, and vice versa.

Marketing Spirit

The term has been generated as a response to clear lack of consensus within the research of market orientation regarding what market orientation constitutes and what its link with business performance is. Furthermore, the focus of research should be in the implementation of market orientation, which is crucial for business success (Kennedy, Goolsby & Arnould, 2003). It is our view that the corporate culture and way of working in a firm should represent the management's business philosophy. They are a manifestation of what the management sees as crucial for their business success. This business philosophy is presented as the first part of marketing spirit in the following figure. The roots of this business philosophy may lie in market orientation.

Secondly marketing spirit refers to the spirit management of the firm. Business success or failure is dependent on people – how is the selected strategy understood and adopted in the organization, thus becoming a joint way of working and culture. The management tries to actively create an environment that guides the organizational culture towards a certain state. This ideal state should support business philosophy of the firm and thus steer the behavior of individuals towards this desired direction.

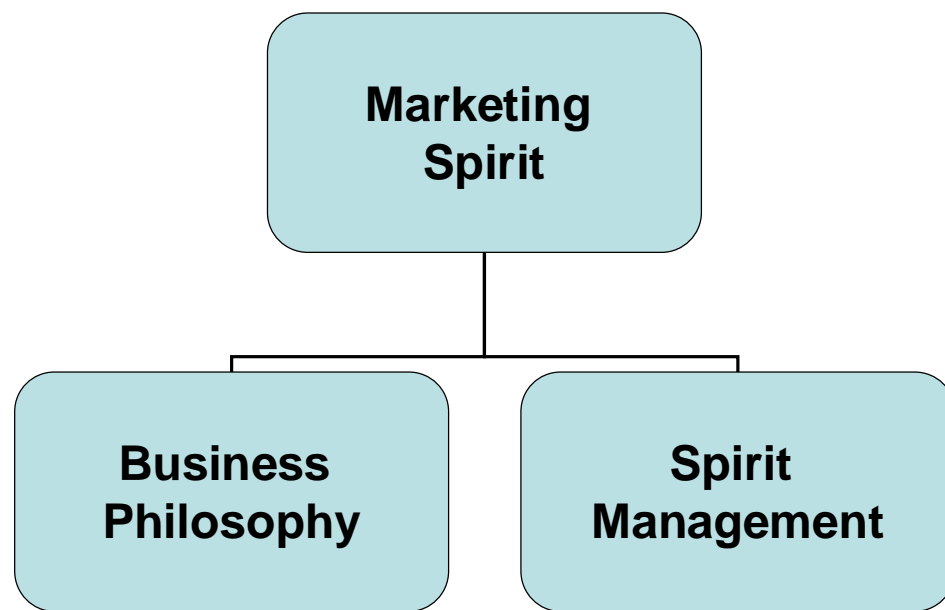


FIG. 3 THE ELEMENTS OF MARKETING SPIRIT

The theoretical foundations for our research into business philosophies derive from the marketing concept (Drucker, 1954), which still today clearly defines the three main pillars of business success: customer orientation, interfunctional coordination, and profitability. Companies exist to serve customers. The most successful firms can even anticipate changes in the market – needs of customers, actions by competitors, and regulators – and create an offering, which provides superior customer value. In order to successfully provide superior customer value, each and every individual, team, department, and function within the firms must be committed to this task. This is achieved through interfunctional coordination. Profitability is a necessity for the continuation of a business. The marketing concept emphasizes profitability through customer relationships in the long run.

The business philosophy of a firm, or rather its management, can be based on the marketing concept and market orientation. Further development of this concept has been done by Aspara, Pöntiskoski and Tikkanen (2007) through the notion of exploration and exploitation on product/technology and market/customer dimensions. The authors argue that it is marketing spirit - a refined market oriented philosophy. Finding the correct balance between dimensions can be the basis of sustained performance as companies are either market-driven or market-driving organizations – or combine elements from both strategies in different dimensions (product/technology and market/customer).

Spirit management takes place through values, norms, and organizational symbolism. They provide the basis for a common understanding of how business should be done. How employees think about customers, each other, and their work.

The outcomes of marketing spirit in a firm can be found in the innovativeness it shows in serving customers. This can be achieved in a caring work environment, which allows employees to flourish. People can find meaning and the feeling of connectedness, being a part of some greater entity, in their work (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004). Most importantly, employees can and should demand results from their employees. Efficiency together with innovativeness and a caring work environment lead to profitability. This increases the wealth of all members and stakeholders of an organization.

MARKETING SPIRIT		
THE MARKETING CONCEPT	TRANSLATED INTO A COMMON WAY OF WORKING WITH	DESIRED OUTCOME
Customer Orientation	Selected business philosophy , such as a certain school of MOR	<i>Innovativeness</i> in serving customers
Interfunctional Coordination	Spirit management and guiding behavior through values, norms, artifacts and symbolism	Creating a <i>caring work environment</i> where employees can flourish
Profitability	Guiding behavior through daily processes, measuring, monitoring, tools, rewarding schemes, etc.	Maintaining <i>efficiency</i> , which leads to growth and increased wealth for all members of the organization

TABLE 2 HOW MARKETING SPIRIT WORKS

Four interviews with managing directors conducted in Australia and Japan helped us understand the everyday challenges companies have in maintaining and developing certain kinds of organizational cultures supporting the vision of the managers – their business philosophy regarding how business should be done.

The managers spoke first about their business philosophy and business success. A clear link with market orientation theory and a marketing spirit mentality could be found. The basis of their success was in innovativeness in serving current and future customer needs.

...what we have done is we have identified a niche of the market, which hasn't been serviced...[so it is] very much a blue ocean product, there was nothing there, which made it easy and difficult because it was a new concept. We had to almost create a new market.

Respondent 2 in Australian firm

...it is crossfire, where we discuss ideas a thousand times, some ideas are gone, some ideas remain and survive, and eventually become our new business.

Respondent 1 in Japanese firm

The example of the top management was found to be an actively used tool to encourage certain kind of behavior. Leading with their own example, managers were involved in business development and sales. The interviewees told stories and legends of how managers gave direct sales leads to sales team members or encouraged employees to be proactive in thinking about new ways to make money. This could happen through existing contacts or coming up with new clients or services.

...every single managing director on the board is always trying to be creative in terms of clients, business models, products, how we should carry out our business...if I can spare my time for introducing business to the sales and marketing team...to create new business beyond our existing contacts.

Respondent 1 in Japanese firm

They really push you...you are out there, you can get involved. The managing director [brings] a newspaper article, drops it on your desk and says "go out there and make money from it". It really encourages you to really be proactive.

Respondent 2 in Australian firm

In Japanese firms, managers were contemplating the benefits of traditional Japanese or more international management styles and structures. A clear emphasis was on a self-confident attitude towards work, getting people out on the market place and talking to existing as well as potential customers. Regarding sales, managers wanted their employees to understand that business is not something that should be taken personally. Rejection from clients doesn't mean that you are incapable.

Our reward structure or promotions were based on very traditional Japanese values, which means the company regarded seniority as the most important factor...now we regard the experience and quality of work, discipline and punctuality, all those things, as very important factors when evaluating an individual.

Respondent 1 in Japanese firm

Until now they [employees] have been more like inward type of people rather than outward types. I would like them to become more sociable, outgoing, talk to everybody, don't be shy, this is just business, [It is] strictly a professional thing not personal, just go ahead, and don't be afraid of making mistakes because people make mistakes.

Respondent 1 in Japanese firm

In respondent firms, sustaining and developing the organizational culture was an on-going process involving both top management and employees. Managers didn't even expect their employees to remember all the core values of the firm. It was seen more as something that provided a framework for how work should be conducted. Especially in the Australian firms the empowerment of employees involved directly with clients was seen as important.

The everyday contacts – discussions & telling stories - between employees and open communication regarding business goals and expected ways of working were considered important. They provided the examples that inexperienced or new employees could follow. They were found useful also for teaching existing employees what kind of behavior managers expect from them. This was backed with actually quite simple tools, such as CRM software and process descriptions. Joining values, norms, and artifacts with everyday processes and ways of working were found to be most effective.

...trying to produce the mission statement quite recently and a set of core values...trying to create alignment...I had a sample and put out ...but the mission statement is actually more a goal...I suppose we have core values...but some people think differently [and it is about understanding] what we should be doing with the customers. I think it is becoming more and more important as we grow to say where we are going. Then look at everyone's activities and say "Well you are not doing that. I'll tell you what to do", rather "if you want to deal with customers that way, it is your responsibility". We have our values and everyone has the frames on how we work with our customers.

Respondent 2 in Australian firm

...one thing we have done really well is mouth-to-mouth sharing; we are a very open firm. For example, any employee can go the files, open it up and see a customer's data. [We share] all exiting opportunities in just plain email, "Went to see this firm and they are interested in this and this". "I heard this in the market" and so on. Then we have several internal systems just to help people manage their business...basic CRM and issue tracking systems.

Respondent 2 in Australian firm

Finally, the respondents were asked to describe what they considered marketing spirit to be. This was the first time the term was mentioned in any interview and the interviewer had not defined the term in advance. The respondents associated it with understanding customers' current and future needs – being in touch with the market. At this point, the concept of interfunctional coordination finally arose. Marketing spirit was seen as a sales orientation in a firm focusing more on the marketing and sales functions. Managers didn't consider it a top level attitude towards business and how it should be run in general.

Marketing spirit? You can probably make things better with the customers, something that the customers are using, best solution for them and we could probably provide a better solution, better ideas from them...You get to know what people need, and if you understand that you can start expanding your mind [regarding] what sort of service we could possibly provide them to be more competitive than others or they would be willing to pay more for a service.

Respondent 1 in Japanese firm

...that the driver of the business would be active promotion, trusting the business world...in some cases the development people could sit in [meetings with clients], because they are actually doing the work, listening to the customers...marketing spirit would be a kind of passionate desire to spread your products or services throughout the market.

Respondent 2 in Australian firm

Sustaining and Developing Marketing Spirit

We subscribe to the view that market orientation (Harris, 1999) and similarly marketing spirit can be viewed as a continuum. Thus managers should consider how they can sustain or develop marketing spirit in their organizations. It is our view that this not differ from other kinds of organizational development projects. However, there are considerable barriers to organizational development, and it can be said that the implementation of any selected strategy is the key to business success. (Mohr-Jackson, 1991) All organizational members must understand the implications and complexities of any selected orientation in a firm. They must believe in its worth and be committed to the selected strategy as a priority for the organization. (Harris, 1999)

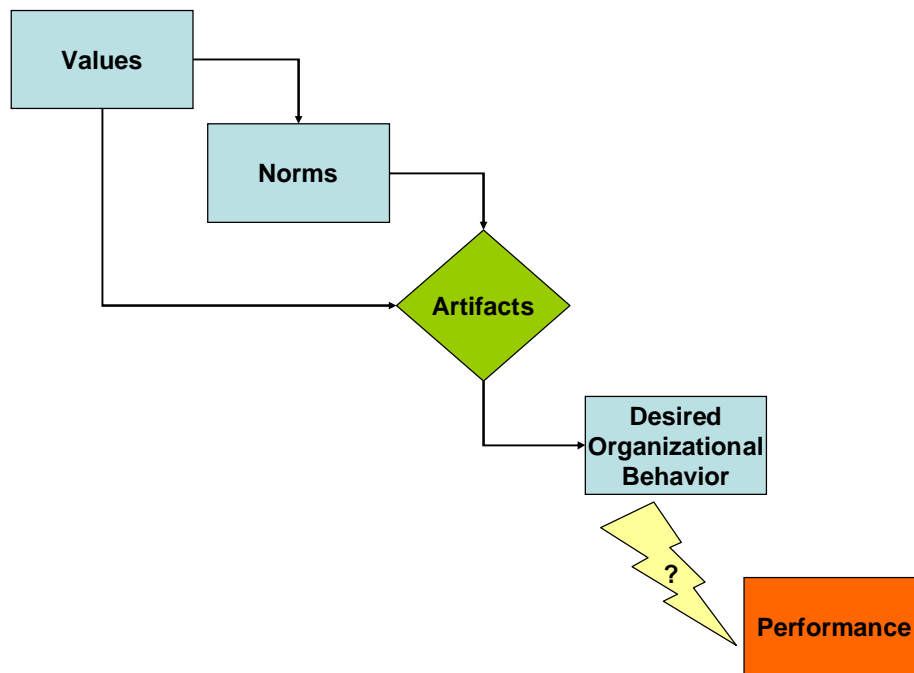


FIG. 4 A SIMPLIFIED MODEL OF FINDINGS ADAPTED FROM HOMBURG & PFLESSER (2000)

Content of artifacts define what organizational behavior is. Artifacts are affected directly by values and norms. Artifacts were found to be the sole direct driver of behavior. Current research is not sufficient to justify marketing spirit and performance link.

Marketing spirit, as we define it, certainly is a component arising from the riddles of the cultural perspective of market orientation research. In this preliminary paper we link it as being the manifestation of successful symbolic management, whether incidental or purposeful. Smircich (1983) combines organizational symbolism from its underpinnings in both fields of anthropology and organization theory. The concept combines the anthropologist notion of “culture as a system of shared symbols and meanings” to “organizations are patterns of symbolic discourse. Organization is maintained through symbolic modes such as language that facilitate shared meanings and shared realities.” Furthermore, we, when defining MS, subscribe to her worldview of organizational culture as not something the organization has, but something the organization is (1983). Kohli & Jaworski have a similar outlook as their view of the cultural perspective relates to “the more fundamental characteristics of the organization” (1990). Additionally, as stated, the culture of an organization is not a fungible and cannot be readily changed, but a continuum that alters evolutionarily through the actions of its members (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Narver & Slater, 1990; Harris & Ogbonna, 1999). We follow this mindset in the development of marketing spirit. It is a component of the organizational culture in an organization and its evolution is most readily affected by communicating it through the tangible manifestations of organizational symbolism.

In a way, marketing spirit is the “drive” that the individuals of an organization exhibit in their actions. The manifestations of organizational symbolism are multiform, but they all contribute as integrators of the culture. As Pfeffer puts it (1981):

Organizations are viewed as systems of shared meanings and beliefs, in which critical administrative activity involves the construction and maintenance of belief systems which are continued compliance, commitment, and positive affect on the part of participants regardless of how they fare in the contest for resources. Language, symbolism, and ritual are important in this management activity which is effective in part because members find it difficult to precisely assess what they are obtaining from the organization.

Other studies have also concentrated in the symbolic aspects of an organization and their relation to organizational outcomes such as turnover, absenteeism, and commitment (Meyer, 1981; Kreps, 1981; Martin & Powers, 1983). This research strand argues that cultural artifacts, including the actions of management itself are powerful means of communication through symbols. They can build organizational commitment, rationalize the members' activity, motivate members and facilitate socialization (Smircich, 1983). When successful, culture can even facilitate the generation of commitment to something larger than the self, and it can also guide and shape behavior (Meyer, 1981; Pfeffer, 1981; Peters & Waterman, 1982). When culture manifests in the individual actions of employees that have such characteristics as the expanded meaning and shared belief for the advancement of the organizations faring they exhibit spirit, when these actions take the manifest in ways of the cultural school of market orientation, they are marketing spirit or succinctly what makes the market orientation go. The evolution of this component of the organizational culture can be (at least subtly) affected by symbolic management, or the ways how organizational artifacts are exhibited or promoted within the organization.

Concluding Remarks and Suggestions for Further Research

As this study is the founding foray into what we hope to later emerge as what we call marketing spirit, it is still early to elaborate on the possible results in concrete. However, we do feel there to be a need for furthering the research in the field of market orientation, especially as the challenges in the predictive power in terms of company business performance seems compelling. We chose to adapt the organizational symbolism perspective due to its concentrating in the organizational culture as a fundamental element of the organization and because it better allows for the future testing of the implications of marketing spirit (Deshpnade & Webster, 1989). In accordance with organizational symbolism, it is our view, that meaning laden artifacts can encourage behavior in accordance with the meaning contained in the artifact (Smircich, 1983; Deshpande & Webster, 1989; Homburg & Pflesser, 2000). However, this behavior was not concluded to translate into business performance (Homburg & Pflesser, 2000). Marketing spirit, through further inquiry could emerge as the missing component not captured by the metrics of market orientation alone. It could also be fostered by appropriate artifacts to encourage marketing oriented behavior with the needed "drive" to better explain and predict business performance in the marketplace. Further research will include more work on the conceptualization of the concept and both qualitative and quantitative studies.

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