

A Theoretical Framework on Market Orientation-firm Performance Linkage in Textile Processing Industry: Mediating Effect of Entrepreneurial Orientation

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Abstract

The objective of this theoretical paper is to explore the relationship of market orientation (MO) and organizational performance in the context of Indian textile processing industry. The study also aims to construct a conceptual model which can hypothesize the relationship between market orientation, firm performance, and entrepreneurial orientation (EO). The conceptual model is drawn with the help of extant literature review of studies conducted by various authors in the area of market orientation and entrepreneurial orientation. The study presents a model depicting the inter-relationship among MO, EO and firm performance. The proposed model also propounds that the relationship between market orientation and firm performance is mediated by entrepreneurial orientation. This work will be helpful for different stakeholders of textile processing industry to understand the importance of MO and EO and their impact on the performance of the organization. Also, the proposed conceptual model showing inter-relationship among MO, EO and firm performance is an addition to the existing pool of knowledge.

Keywords

Customer Orientation, Competitor Orientation, Inter-functional Coordination, Entrepreneurial Orientation, Firm Performance, Market Orientation, Textile Processing.

Introduction

Indian textile industry has significant contribution to industrial production, GDP, export earnings and generation of employment. According to the government data, textile industry

has contributed 13% in the India's total export in the year 2019 while on the global trade of textile India's contribution is pegged at around 5% (Ministry of Textiles, 2019-20). Further, the textile industry contributed 12.65% of India's manufacturing production and 2.3% of national GDP in 2018-19. According to the same report 45 million people were directly employed in this sector and additionally 60 million people were employed in the allied sectors. Textile processing industry deals with removal of impurities present in fibre, yarn or fabric and application of colour on them. Also, different finishes according to end user requirements of textile products are imparted in this process. Textile processing has an important role in terms of value creation to a final textile product.

Like other industry segments, there is also intense competition among processing units in textile processing industry. This industry has a very good demand from domestic market due to India's huge population, but it is not performing well on the export front. Moreover, India is not getting the maximum benefit of value addition in the entire value chain. For an example, India is exporting cotton yarn to China and getting benefit of low level of value addition through spinning process. China is preparing fabric from this yarn and doing the necessary finishing at their end and exporting the finished fabric back to India to get better pie of value addition through weaving and textile processing. The performance of major textile exporting Asian countries in 2018-19 is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Textile Export Data

S/N	Country	Annual Export (in billion USD)
1.	China	266.41
2.	Bangladesh	38.73
3.	Vietnam	37.93
4.	India	37.11
5.	Hong-Kong	20.43

Source: fibre2fashion (2019)

Presently, foreign buyers demand for stricter quality parameters and they are asking for narrow tolerance regarding presence of hazardous chemicals on the final products through various compliance requirements like REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals), GOTS (The Global Organic Textile Standard) etc. On one hand there is growth potential for Indian textile processing industry but on the other hand the business environment is very challenging. So processing units must respond in a strategic manner. As per Argote (2011), a firm needs to adapt to the market dynamics for successful performance in long term. In line with this argument, textile processing units need to be market oriented in this current dynamic business environment to achieve consistent

organizational performance. Deshpande and Farley (1998) explained ‘market orientation’ (MO) as “understanding customers’ needs and activities of the competitors in the business environment in which the firm operates”. They suggested MO can help a firm to offer better value propositions to its customers to influence their purchase intention and as a result firm may achieve better performance. In last thirty years several research works were conducted to understand the MO-firm performance relationship in different contexts but very few studies are available in the context of textile industry and the number of studies on MO-firm performance linkage in Indian textile processing industry is almost insignificant and thus needs further critical investigation. Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is a strategic orientation of a firm and defined as organizational methods and functioning characterized by innovativeness, proactiveness and risk taking (Matsuno et al., 2002). Earlier studies found positive effect of EO on firm performance in dynamic environment (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005). But literatures also reveal that this impact may vary from context to context. In case of Indian textile processing industry, evaluation of EO-firm performance relationship is still a grey area of research and there is a wide scope to study various dimensions of EO and their impact in this industry. The primary objective of this theoretical paper is to study various MO-firm performance and EO-firm performance research findings in different contexts and evaluating the importance of these two links for Indian textile processing industry. Further, this study aims to develop a conceptual model to examine causal relationships among MO, EO and firm performance of textile processing industry.

Literature Review

Market Orientation (MO) and its Components

Kohli and Jaworski (1990) explained MO as “generation of market intelligence, dissemination and sharing of this intelligence among various business functions and subsequently responding to the business environment”. Three components of MO are identified as customer orientation (CO), competitor orientation (CMO) and inter-functional coordination (IFC) (Narver & Slater, 1990). ‘Customer orientation’ refers to the organizational culture that always believe customers are the most important stakeholders of the business and customer-oriented firms always try to provide superior value proposition to their customers rather than just offering products or services to them (Levitt, 1960). Various researchers (Blocker et al., 2011) suggested that CO can help a firm to enhance its ability to respond to changing customers’ needs, to understand present and future needs of the customers which can be helpful to find out new business opportunities and improve its performance. ‘Competitor orientation’ relates to willingness and ability of a firm to closely observe the strengths, weaknesses and strategy of major competitors and based on these

information, formulation and implementation of suitable strategic response. Shapiro (1988) defined IFC “as a cross functional cooperation that helps in the coordination of all the processes and functions of a firm”. IFC helps in the cooperation with the customers, takes care of acquired market information, critically analyses current and potential resources and helps in formulating effective business strategy”. Woodside (2005) suggested that IFC facilitates effective communication with customers and employees and it creates conducive atmosphere for cooperation among various departments of a firm. As a result, IFC has a positive impact on achieving organizational objectives, gaining competitive advantage and improving firm performance. Earlier research findings suggest that MO can enhance the level of customer satisfaction which is beneficial for achieving better business performance (Shehu & Mahmood, 2014). Strong MO is required for a company to focus on those relevant factors which can help their ability to maximize satisfaction of customers compared to potential competitors. Chen and Quester (2006) argued that pool of loyal customers is immensely valuable for a business irrespective of nature and scope of its operation and this leads to better performance of the firm. Oliver (1999) defined customer loyalty as “deeply held commitment to repurchase a preferred product/service consistently in the future despite situational influences and marketing efforts that have potential to cause switching behavior”. In sum, MO and its components help in building a strong loyal customer base which can be leveraged by a firm to achieve better performance on consistent basis.

Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) and Firm Performance

Earlier researchers identified ‘innovativeness’, ‘proactiveness’ and ‘risk taking’ as three important dimensions of EO (Rauch et al., 2009). Dess and Lumpkin (2005) defined innovativeness as “organizational efforts to discover novel opportunities and new solutions which involve experimentation and creativity that results in development of new products and services or improved technical aspects of existing products and services”. Research asserts that innovativeness plays an important role for better firm performance and it is a major component of entrepreneurial orientation (Hult et al., 2004). Lumpkin and Dess, (2005) defines proactiveness as “an opportunity seeking and forwardly looking perspective of a firm characterized by heavy dependence on structural resource capital development”. Proactiveness helps a firm to take initiatives to get maximum advantage from existing business environment and responsiveness depends on how a firm tackles challenges of competitors. Thus, entrepreneurial orientation involves both proactiveness in exploring available business opportunities and the willingness to aggressively respond to competitor strategies. Risk taking involves breaking away from routine path and entering into unknown arena and employing valuable resources to ventures in which chance of success is not certain (Rauch et al., 2009). Though an entrepreneurial firm has to always take some degree

of risk but it should be calculated risk with some basis like past experience of risk taking etc. Lebens and Euske (2006) define firm performance “as a set of financial and non-financial indicators that provide attainment of objectives of various stakeholders of the firms”. From shareholders point view, financial indicators may be growth, profitability, return on investment etc. Some of the non-financial performance indicators are customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, re-purchase rate, environmental pollution level, social responsibility etc.

Scope of this Study

Indian textile processing industry plays a pivotal role in terms of value creation. Growth potential is certainly there both in terms of domestic and export market. But in current dynamic business and environmental scenario it is not performing according to available opportunities. Extant literatures in the field of MO research reveal that in general components of MO can directly or indirectly enhance the firm performance. In this study we will explore various MO-performance research findings under different context and to find out the importance of MO and its components on the performance of textile processing industry. Research findings indicate that the performance of a firm can't be explained by market orientation of the firm alone. There may be different mediating factors which can influence the MO-firm performance relationship. Most of the Indian textile processing units fall under MSME category and they are run by single or joint owners. Thus it is quite possible that there exist some degree of entrepreneurial orientation among the processing units. Second objective of this paper is to examine the effect of EO on organizational performance in SMEs under different context and to understand the EO-firm performance link in the context of textile processing.

From theoretical point of view, MO and its components can enhance the effectiveness of EO. For example, customer orientation can help a firm to understand some specific customer need which is not getting fulfilled with existing product. In turn it will enhance the innovative behaviour of the firm if it wants to explore the opportunity. Customer orientation may also influence the risk-taking aptitude of a firm. Similarly, the higher degree of competitor orientation of an organization may positively affect the proactiveness component of EO. So, there may be some mediating effect of EO on MO-firm performance relationship. Through this paper we will examine the existing research findings on this type of mediating effect and their relevance for textile processing units.

Theoretical Framework

MO and Firm Performance

Earlier research findings indicate that MO and its three behavioural components, CO, CMO and IFC may directly or indirectly contribute to better firm performance (Neneh, 2016). In some cases, the MO-firm performance link has been found to be strong, in other cases this relationship was weak. Researchers found CO component of MO may positively affect salespersons' performance, purchase intention of customer, customer satisfaction and loyalty of customer (Park & Tran, 2018). All these positive effects may contribute to better organizational performance. Kadic-Maglajlic et al. (2017) found CO-firm performance linkage is of inverted-U shape type. CMO may help a firm to be in a better position to respond to the business environment and enable the organization to fulfill customer needs in a better way compared to its competitors. Consequently, a firm can create superior market value, built a loyal customer base and finally improve performance through earning higher profits for the firm. Im and Workman (2004) suggested that by adopting IFC a firm can provide better satisfaction to its customers, generate large pool of loyal customers, increase the frequency of repeat purchase of customers etc. As a result, firm performance improves. Kirca et al., (2005) reported that IFC is necessary for maximum value creation for customers that leads to satisfaction of customers which finally can help to achieve better organizational performance. They investigated the MO-performance relationship for manufacturing and service sectors. They found a positive impact of MO on firm performance for both sectors but the strength of this relationship is more in case of manufacturing sector as compared to service sector.

Williams et al., (1995) carried out a research work in textile weaving industry in U.S.A, and concluded that diversification of products and product quality positively linked with firm performance. A study was carried out by Demirbag et al. (2006) in the context of Turkish textile sector and the authors indicated MO is indirectly related to firm performance through the moderating factor of Total Quality Management. Udriyah et al. (2019) studied MO-performance behaviour in the context of Malaysian textile garment SME's and they found a significant positive relationship between MO and SME performance. In 1998, a work was conducted by Hung Ngai for Hong Kong garment industry to examine the MO-performance relationship. In the study it was assumed that marketing and MO are two different concept and as per his research findings, MO-performance link has been found to be stronger as compared to marketing-firm performance relationship. Some recent research findings on MO-performance relationships under different context are shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2 Link between MO and Firm Performance

S. No.	Name of author	Context of research	Research findings
1.	Morgan et al., (2009)	748 firms offering services and durable and non-durable goods in U.S.A.	MO has positive impact on performance in terms of return on investment
2.	Chen et al., 2015	198 manufacturing companies in north-east China	MO positively impact environmental performance of a firm. Besides environmental commitment moderates the link between MO and environmental strategy
3.	Ahmed et al., 2018	150 companies across textile, automobile, engineering, and plastics of Pakistan.	MO and its components have positive effect on organizational learning which, in turn, improve the organizational performance
4.	Asomaning & Abdulai, 2015	322 SMEs in Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis, Ghana.	MO and its components have positive effect on SME's performance
5.	Waruiru et al., 2018	384 composite insurance firms, life insurance firms and general insurance firms in Kenya	IFC is positive linked with performance of insurance firms
6.	Charles et al., 2012	147 manufacturing units in Kenya	There is a positive relationship between MO and performance
7.	Neneh, 2016	320 Entrepreneurs of Mangaung metropolitan municipal area in South Africa.	Two components of MO, CO and CMO have significant positive effect on firm performance
8.	Morgan & Vorhies, 2018	202 Trucking companies in USA.	MO culture has significant positive impact on firm performance

In the context of Indian textile processing industry, global as well as domestic customer needs are changing continuously. Today customers are not only looking for fulfillment of basic need of simple clothing from a textile product but also for its fashion and design outlook, comfort, aesthetic value, quality, durability of colours at various conditions, minimal or no health hazards, minimum adverse effect on environment during its production and use, ability to fulfill special requirements etc. So, processing units needs to

be market oriented to capture the changing needs of the customers and make them enable to satisfy those needs. Though there are ample opportunities for India to grab medium and highly value-added textile segments, but the competition is ruthless. There is a tough competition among domestic processing units and global competition is even tougher. China is posing the toughest challenge to Indian processing industry. Other Asian countries like Bangladesh, Vietnam and Hong Kong are also giving very strong competition to India. In this scenario, CMO may be of great help to processing units in our country to understand the activities and strategies of major domestic and global competitors and formulate their response to the dynamic business environment accordingly to achieve better performance. To get maximum benefits of CO and CMO, processing units require adoption of better level of IFC. With coordinated efforts of business functions of a firm, the response to the market environment expected to be more specific and accurate with effective use of resources and without much confusion or doubts. Thus, adaptation of MO by Indian textile processing units may help to improve the performance in terms of growth, market share and profitability. Also, this will help India to improve its export earnings, more employment generation and overall economic performance.

Mediating Effect of EO on MO-Firm Performance Linkage

Most of the market orientation literatures revealed that MO may directly or indirectly help a firm to achieve better performance. The number of studies is very limited for Indian textile industry in general and textile processing industry in particular. Researchers found the impact of EO on firm performance may vary from context to context with changing business environmental aspects. According to Wiklund and Shepherd (2005), when the business environment is more dynamic the effect of EO on performance is found to be stronger. Current global textile market is also dynamic in nature. Therefore, there is a significant possibility that EO may positively associated with firm performance of Indian textile processing units. The impact that three components of EO has on performance of firm is interdependent but their individual impact on business performance may vary depending on business environments. Recent findings on EO-firm performance and mediating effect of EO on MO-firm performance linkage are summarized in Table 3 below:

Table 3 EO-Firm performance relationship

S. No.	Name of author (s)	Context of research	Research Findings
1.	Herman et al., 2018	153 SME manufacturing firms in Batam City, Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EO is positively linked to competitive advantage which has significant positive impact on SME's performance. Product innovation is also found to have significant effect on firm performance.
2.	Rosmayani et al., 2016	263 small weaving industries of Riau province, Indonesia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EO has positive effect on performance through innovation.
3.	Avlonitis & Salavou, 2007	149 manufacturing SMEs in Greece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product newness to the customers has no effect on product performance. The proactiveness component of EO enhances the performance of firm.
4.	Monteiro et al., 2017	Exporting companies in Portugal. Sample size- 265	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EO helps to increase dynamic capabilities of the organizations EO has positive effect on firm performance.
5.	Lechner & Gudmundssons, 2014	335 small firms in Iceland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovativeness component of EO is positively linked with differentiation and hence, helps to improve firm performance. Risk taking and proactiveness components have negative impact on differentiation and cost leadership strategies.
6.	Kraus et al., 2012	164 SMEs in Netherland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactive firm behavior has positive effect on performance of SMEs.
7.	Ribau et al., 2017	Plastic manufacturing SMEs in Portugal. Sample size- 147	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactive firms are better at innovating and perform better in export market.
8.	Sarker & Palit, 2015	SMEs in Khulna, Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovativeness and risk-taking behavior of SMEs positively impact business performance Competitive aggressiveness has no
9.	Wijesekhara et al., 2014	155 SMEs garment manufacturers of southern province, Srilanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market orientation and entrepreneurial orientation have significant impact on firm performance
10.	Hussain et al., 2016	Manufacturing companies in Sialkot region, Pakistan. Total sample size- 213.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive relationship between MO and firm performance. MO-firm performance relationship is positively influenced by entrepreneurial orientation behaviour of the firm.
11.	Bhuian et al., 2005	Hospitals listed in the Directory of the American Hospital Association. Sample- 131	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market orientation is most effective when a firm adopts moderate level of entrepreneurial orientation and yield best performance of the firm.

Previous study results enlighten us that EO has significant positive impact on firm performance of SMEs in different contexts. As most of the Indian textile processing units belong to MSME category, so EO and its components may have positive influence on

performance of textile processing units. There may be strong possibility that MO has significant positive impact on performance of processing units but it is needed to identify and analyze other factors that may affect this relationship to increase the effectiveness of MO for improving business performance. Research findings also indicate that MO components can enhance different EO components. In other words, MO can increase the level of EO of a firm which may further improve the firm performance. As most of the textile processing units belong to MSME category and small units have some degree of entrepreneurial characteristics, so there is significant chance that in this industry segment, EO has some mediating effect on MO-performance link. Customer orientation of a processing firm may lead to product, process or technological innovation of the organization. CO can also help a textile processing firm to take calculated risk for new ventures. The processing units with major focus on competitor activities can help them to increase their proactive approach towards business environment. As a result, the performance may get improved further. IFC, another component of MO, may positively affect all three EO components of units. Thus, a higher level of MO of textile processing industry will improve their level of entrepreneurial behaviour which, in turn, favor performance of the processing industry. On the basis of above arguments, a conceptual model showing relationships among MO, EO and FP is depicted in Figure 1 below:

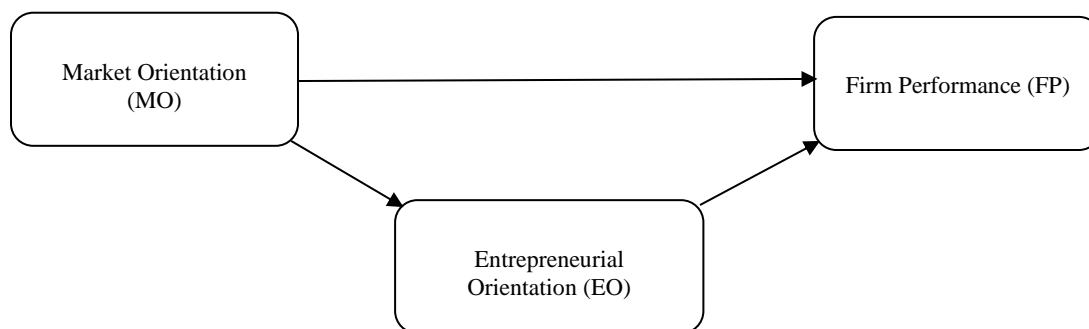


Figure 1 Conceptual Model
Source: Authors' conceptualization

Discussions, Implications, and Limitations

MO and its three behavioral components (CO, CMO, and IFC) may have some positive impact on firm performance of textile processing units in India. EO has some degree of mediating effect on MO-firm performance relationship in the context of textile processing industry. A conceptual model showing inter-relationship among MO, EO and firm performance has been proposed for this industry segment. There is a scarcity of research related to MO-performance linkages in textile processing industry which is a major contributor in entire textile value chain. Also, textile industry is a very important sector

from India's economic point of view. Better performance of this industry segment can contribute to more employment generation (since it is comparatively a higher manpower-oriented industry), improvement of export earnings of the country, incremental GDP of India etc. This study may help different stakeholders of this industry to understand the importance of MO and EO on firm performance. Most of the Indian textile processing units belong to MSME category and they are run by single or joint owners. So EO may be significantly relevant for this industry. As per the findings of this study, EO has some mediating effect on MO-firm performance interlink. Thus, it will be beneficial for the management of processing units to adapt EO for improved firm performance.

The causal relationships shown in proposed conceptual model has not been tested with the help of primary data and its analysis. Consequently, the extent of impact of MO and its components on firm performance of textile processing units could not be quantified. Also, the degree of mediating effect of EO on MO-performance relationship is unknown. As number of researches in the context of textile processing in India is very limited and so there is huge scope of further research to explore the relationship among MO, EO and firm performance of textile processing units. The proposed conceptual model needs to be validated with the help of primary data to understand the relationships among identified variables which can assist various stakeholders of this industry segment to formulate suitable strategies so that this important sector can achieve better performance consistently.

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