

Applying Customer Orientation to IT Organizations

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Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the various models used in the application of market orientation to different sectors and select an appropriate model to be examined and implemented within the IT organizations / departments to measure how market oriented they are and enhance their effectiveness in servicing their customers.

The Methodology used in this dissertation is the model of Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Jaworski and Kohli's (1993) as an application of market orientation within the IT organizations / departments in the United Arab Emirates. This model consists of intelligence generation, intelligence dissemination and organization-wide-responsiveness. Case studies with four companies in the financial sector in the United Arab Emirates were used to examine this approach by conducting interviews as a method of data collection.

The application of market orientation in IT organizations was suitable. It was found that IT organization seriously lack the concept of market orientation. In addition, barriers were identified which halted the application of market orientation. However, the organization selected are in the development stage of market orientation where couple of factors found could be enhanced, adjusted, and used as a base for implementation of market orientation.

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Chapter One
Introduction

1.1 Introduction

As of today, Information Technology (IT) had taken over every single entity on our daily life. Organizations are seeking their IT Departments or teams to enhance their processes and improve their performance to match up with rapid technologies. Looking back at the second half of the twentieth century, one might wonder what factors facilitated organizational and management changes. Among many factors, one of the most profound was Information Technology (IT) (Martinsons, 1993). When it comes to doing business, organizations are heavily using IT as a tool for success. How good a certain company is utilizing their IT solution, will dramatically increase their level of competition. During the rapid evolution of this technology in the past 25 years, organizations realized the tactical and competitive value of implementing Information Technology (Mojsilovic et al., 2007).

If numbers are any indication, the current spending of an average UK company on IT could reach up to £2.67 million, which is about 14% of company earnings (Sheppard, 1990). Organizations worldwide spent an estimated \$100 billion on the implementation of enterprise systems in 1999 and 2000 (Shang and Seddon, 2002). In the financial sector, with its growing need for global investment, IT played an effective role in enhancing trading and economic systems that connect the world's continents in one market (Egan and Shipley, 1995). Shang and Seddon (2002) concluded that the benefits of implementing Information Technology (IT) / Information System (IS) solutions covers operational, managerial, strategic, IT-infrastructure, and organizational benefits. Implementing an IT solution is an investment for any organization, and as is true for any type of investment, there are chances of success or failure. Cline and Guynes (2001) concluded that investing in IT will raise a company's performance. This achievement is aligned with the successful project management implementation of an IT solution, but failure of IT projects is just as possible.

What might go wrong? Let us focus on IT project failures. Schwalbe (2004) points to a report called CHAOS published in 1995 by Standish Group. The report showed that organizations in the United States developed about 175,000 IT application projects costing more than \$250 billion each year during the 1990s. The Standish Group report points out that the average cost for IT development and projects for large companies was about \$2.3 million. Medium-sized companies spent about \$1.3 million, and small companies spent \$434,000. Thirty-one percent of projects started were abandoned before completion, and only 16.2% succeeded; i.e., the indicator for success was meeting goals on time and within budget (Schwalbe, 2004).

IT project failures can cause serious problems. Some real-life examples of this follow. Implementation of a new system for a passport office delayed 500,000 applications in the UK, national insurance accounts generated an additional £53 million that went to taxpayers, and passengers were late reaching their destinations during an upgrade of an IT application implemented by Air Traffic Control (David & Richardson, 2007).

Why do IT projects fail? An overview of IT projects in the UK by David and Richardson (2007) reported that some reasons for IT project failures are: creeping scope, increasing costs, failure to meet expectations; and technical problems that reshaped the project, making the final solution far from what the end-user wanted. On the other hand, in a survey conducted for IT executive managers, published in the CHAOS report by Standish Group on why projects succeed, their three main reasons: user contribution, top management sponsorship; and a clear statement of requirements. Factors that caused projects to be challenged were lack of user input and an incomplete statement of requirements (Schwalbe, 2004).

As mentioned above, end-user / end-customer involvement in IT/IS projects have great influence on an IT project's success. "As participants in IS projects, users are typically responsible for articulating business needs and requirements and may also be involved in other activities such as testing" (Kirsch et al., 2002, p.484). Along with the importance of involving end-users and stakeholders, user satisfaction is also

important to an IT/IS project's success. In fact, user satisfaction is used to measure success, along with other factors like system quality and organizational impact (Caldeira & Ward, 2002). Therefore, if the end-user is satisfied with the final IT product, it means that the IT project accomplished its main objectives and goals.

Customer satisfaction does not end with completion of the project's installation. For an IT project to be counted as a success, an IT organization should provide ongoing support and maintenance for an IT product / solution. Customer satisfaction is considered one of the competitive tactics, and business success comes only with happy customers (Stank, Daugherty and Ellinger, 1997). IT projects tend to be more successful and have fewer failures when IT organizations turn their attention to their customers / end-users and involve them during the project development. This makes IT organizations more customer-oriented rather than product-oriented. This dissertation focuses on customer orientation and its integration with the IT sector.

Much research on the subject of market orientation has been done by many authors worldwide. To be customer-oriented a company must be involved in an investigation process to see what the customer really wants, concentrating not only on the customer's current needs, but also on future needs (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990).

Customer orientation is not limited and applicable to profit-based organizations, which focus on products and goods, but can also be applied to any type of service-provider organization that seeks to improve its performance by better understanding its customer's needs (Marr, 1984). Current issues IT organizations are facing are: not fully satisfying the customers, which results in project failures and delays, and not delivering projects that customers really wanted (Schwalbe, 2004).

On the other hand, some projects fail because IT organizations are providing IT solutions, concentrating only on the technical aspects that make a solution work and leaving their customers / clients behind. Not being customer-oriented is a major problem that most, if not all, IT sectors are facing, causing negative consequences when the end product collapses in front of their customer.

In this dissertation “customers” refers to both internal end-users and external clients who are acquiring and receiving a service from a department or organization. Below are the aims and the objectives:

1.1.1 Aim

This dissertation attempts to examine and investigate the applicability of research done by Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Jaworski and Kohli (1993) market-orientation model within IT organizations and departments to enhance their effectiveness in providing better service to their customers and become customer-oriented.

1.1.2 Objectives

When IT organizations reach the stage of becoming customer-oriented, the percentage of successful IT projects is likely to increase due to a clearer understanding of a customer’s requirements and successful delivery of an end product or solution.

To accomplish the aim of this research, the objectives of my dissertation will cover the following:

1. Explore existing models used by researchers to examine the application of customer orientation.
2. Measure and implement a model of customer orientation for IT departments and organizations in UAE.
3. Identify the barriers for an effective customer-orientation approach in IT organizations in UAE.

Chapter Two
Literature Review

2.1 Literature Review

For this dissertation, the literature review plays an important role in demonstrating and applying what other scholars have discovered about the subject of market / customer orientation in different sectors. Authors from different parts of the world have highlighted the importance of market orientation for any organization providing services to customers that leads to delivering the final product that a customer requested. Many articles in journals that analyze market orientation have facilitated my research. For example, the access to the University of Manchester library via World Wide Web and other resources available via the (My Athens) website provided by the British University in Dubai.

2.1.1 The View of Market Orientation

According to Cross et al (2007), the original concept of market orientation started about 50 years ago as an organizational observable fact. Then it was viewed on the organizational level. In the 1950s interest in measuring the effect of market orientation began, and by the mid-1960s and into the next decade, attention on the subject increased. By the beginning of the 1990s, the most commonly used model developed by Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Narver and Slater (1990) for studying market orientation had been declared (Cross et al., 2007).

Authors define market orientation differently, but all focus on the same theme. In addition, authors have used the expression of market orientation and customer orientation so that their meanings are interchangeable (Ellis, 2006). What does market orientation mean? “Market orientation is a strategic option. It is theorized to be the central construct behind successful marketing management and strategy” (Sen, 2006, p. 23). Customers are the focal point of these marketing concepts, not only for their current needs but also their future needs. According to Ellis (2006), market-oriented organizations are those who observe and listen to their customer’s current and future needs, then take action on the tasks required to process those needs. That’s how they out-perform their competitors.

Marketing orientation is not software that can be implemented by an organization so that it is then transformed and becomes customer-oriented. It actually depends on the business culture. Gray and Hooley (2002) came up with the most comprehensive definition of market orientation:

Market orientation is the implementation of a corporate culture or philosophy which encourages behaviors aimed at gathering, disseminating and responding to information on customers, competitors and wider environment in ways that add value for shareholders, customers and other shareholders (p. 981).

Marketing orientation happens because of corporate actions. Market orientation is the backbone of a winning marketing management strategy; no external assistance can execute the marketing concept. It is the execution of the marketing theory wherein an organization that is market-oriented is responsible for the actions that depend upon the marketing theory (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990). When organizations attempt to apply market ordination, they need to look at how their competitors are offering service to their customers, then beat this type of competition. Organizations seeking to reach their goals need to have a better understanding than their competitors when fulfilling customer needs in the targeted market (Narver, Slater, and MacLachlan, 2004).

Narver, Slater and Maclachlan (2004), define market as consisting of two types of behaviors: responsive and proactive. Both result in knowing what the customer wants and then responding to those needs to satisfy them. When a behavior change comes into any organization, it is a challenging step since being market- oriented or customer-oriented is not something that can be achieved easily. It involves drastic change in attitude and thinking about cultural behavior. All employees should believe in market orientation as a main objective in their careers (Greenley, 1995).

Does market orientation depend on behavioral action alone? It is important to know that market orientation is divided into behavioral and cultural viewpoints. The behavioral part concentrates on the behaviors that affect the generation of market orientations, while the cultural part creates the atmosphere to learn and maximize information about market orientation (Langerak, 2004).

The market-orientations concept cannot be applied away from customers. In fact, market orientation focuses mainly on the customer as a central point, especially when organizations place the customer's interest as the first priority (Deshpande, Farley and Webster 1993). Market orientation works as a collaborative effort between the customer and the organization. Greenley (1995) described market orientation as a set of thoughts in which customers are integrated with the organization's culture. Other authors view market orientation as a competitive reward. Caruana (1999, p.248) described the ideal market orientation. He stated, "A market orientation should be the objective of any company as the focus on the customer that this brings about can provide a firm with sustainable competitive advantages".

2.1.2 Market Orientation & Organizational Performance

Market orientation and organizational performance are areas that numerous researchers have examined. They found that when organizations seek input, their performance increases. Market orientation is considered as a strategic methodology increase and improves organizational performance (Narver and Slater, 1990; Jaworski and Kohli, 1993; Van Egeren and O'Connor, 1998; Chang and Chen, 1998). Increasing performance will reflect on employees, according to Paarlberg (2007), as market orientation can improve the motivation of individual employees and the organization as a whole.

There is much evidence that supports the link between market orientation and business performance. However, how strong is that evidence? In reference to the evidence in their literature research on the link between customer orientation and business performance Diamantopoulos et al (1993) found that it can be divided into two parts. Some researchers found evidence confirming the importance of being near the customer in order to be market-oriented, and others found little evidence that being customer-focused is a key to customer orientation.

On the other hand, an organization's outstanding performance will definitely at least partially result from market orientation practices (Diamantopoulos et al, 1993). In addition, being customer-oriented closes the gap between the customers and the organization in terms of understanding each other's needs. Market orientation's major accomplishment is to boost an organization's productivity. Other researchers confirm that there is a positive relationship between organizational performance and market orientation that places the organization into a better environment and gives it a more visible understanding of its customers (Kara, Spillan and DeShields, 2005).

Whether there is a positive result of market orientation on business performance or not, it has been argued by many authors who take different stands on this relationship. Earlier studies showed negative results concerning whether market orientation really increases an organization's performance (Chan and Ellies, 1998; Langerak, 2003; Shoham and Rose, 2001) Thus, such performance outcomes require a standard measurement as a tool to confirm those results.

Scholars argue that there should be a method for measuring organizational performance to prove such a concept. Market orientation can be applied in different cultures within different countries where the size of the economic development and size of the home market has a great effect on the application of market orientation (Ellis, 2006). For example, a meta analysis of 56 studies (58 samples) covering 28 countries showed that orientation is a broad determinant of an organization's performance (Ellis, 2006).

On the same subject of market orientation and business performance, Dawes (2000) argued that the positive relationship is a result of organizations listening to their customers' needs and acting accordingly to respond to those needs. The stronger the market orientation within the business, the greater the value that will be offered to buyers. In the same article, Dawes (2000) also indicated that of 36 studies examining the relationship between market orientation and business performance, the outcome was out of 36 studies, 30 indicated a positive relationship with organization performance.

Market turbulence was seen as having an effect on market orientation and business performance. Slater & Narver concluded that "the greater the extent of market turbulence, the greater the positive impact of market orientation on performance" (Slater & Narver, 1994, p. 48). Furthermore, market orientation grants a company enhanced knowledge of its customers, environment, and competitors' guides to outstanding performance (Kara, Spillan and DeShields, 2005).

2.1.3 Market Orientation & Customer Satisfaction

Many researchers found that customer orientation is part of human relations decisions, viewing any type of service as a purely cultural behavioral act with an exact set of organizational principles (Bhuiyan, 1998). Both market orientation and customer satisfaction gain from cultural behavior. Being customer-oriented will generate customer satisfaction, but doing this requires commitment from the whole organization with top management's support, while market orientation is a business cultural change (Yam et al., 2005).

The main goal is to make customers happy and satisfied, which is a challenging task for any organization. Being customer-oriented is one way to achieve this goal. Market orientation defines the goal for organizational behavior which affects the novelty and operation of such an organization (Tyler and Gnyawali, 2002). Just being in contact with the customer and supplying his needs is not enough. Market orientation means not only knowing what the customer wants, but can also be used

when an organization understands and satisfies its customers in an outstanding way (Narver, Slater, and MacLachlan, 2004).

Every organization focuses the most attention on its products and on enhancing those products without having customer involvement in the organization's objectives. In order to apply successful market orientation, organizations need to have customer satisfaction as a major aim and as a high-priority task (Diamantopoulos et al., 1993). Any organization suffering from poor customer satisfaction and a high rate of complaints needs to look at implementing the market-orientation approach. To improve customer satisfaction, an organization's culture and its employees' mind-set needs to change through a reorientation (Griffin et al., 1995). The relationship between customer satisfaction and market orientation are so close that, according to Carson and Gilmore, (1998) customer satisfaction's origin is the application of market orientation concepts, and the achievement of any organization depends entirely on the end-user's satisfaction.

Market orientation is connected to the concept of customer satisfaction and preferences. Its major requirement is continuous satisfaction of a customer's current and future needs. (Kara, Spillan and DeShields, 2005). Baker and Sinkula (1999, p.412) in viewing the relationship between market orientation and customer satisfaction, said, "A strong market orientation is required to focus the company on those environmental events that are likely to affect their ability to maximize customer satisfaction relative to competitors, but it is a mechanism that primarily facilitates adaptive learning." When organizations have a clear understanding of customer preferences, they can produce and focus on these preferences and make an eye-catching offer (Dawes, 2000).

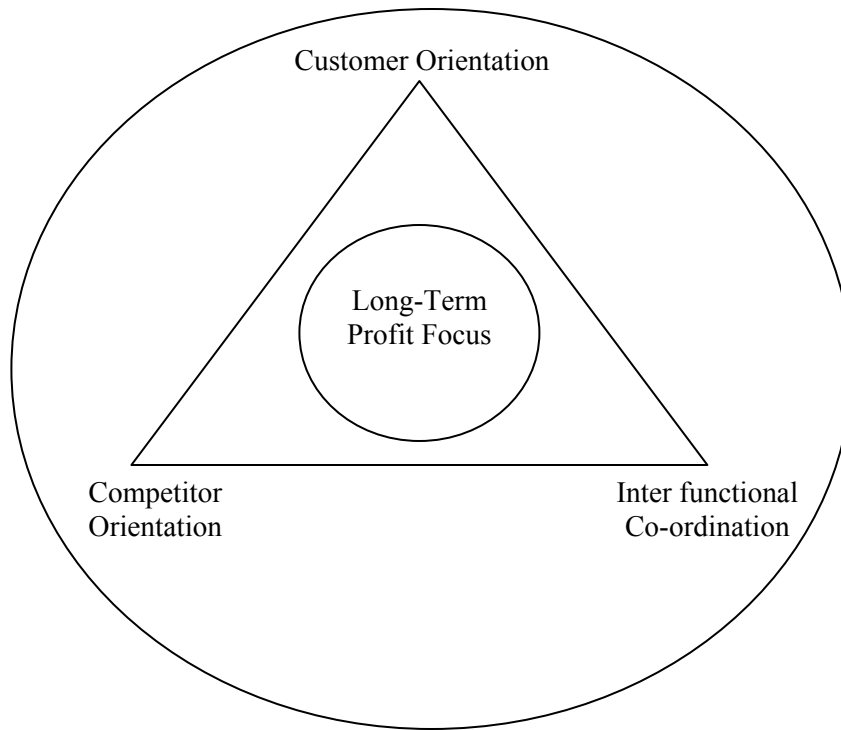
2.1.4 Approaches in Measuring Market Orientation

In the past two decades, there were serious investigations of market orientation by multiple authors (Kolar, 2006). In every field of study, there are pioneers who contribute the most and take their field of study to the second level to reach maturity. Major pioneers in studying the subject of market orientation, Kohli and Jaworski; and Narver and Slater took the lead during the 1990s, and many authors did further studies and drew new conclusions (Ellis, 2006). Rukert (1992) came up with a new model, which was then followed by another model by Slater and Narver (1994) and another by Greenley (1995).

Kohli and Jaworski's first model includes a measuring instrument made up of 32 questions (Appendix A) called MARKOR, which refers to market orientation. They concluded that market orientation consists of three sections: 1) intelligence generation; 2) intelligence dissemination; and 3) organization-wide responsiveness.

Figure 1 shows the dimensions of the second model developed by Narver and Slater. They included the following in their approach to market orientation, according to Hooley et al. (2000):

- 1) Customer orientation: An adequate understanding of target consumers, so continuous superior value can be shaped for them.
- 2) Competitor orientation: the perception of short-term strengths and weaknesses and long-term capacities of both current and potential competitors.
- 3) Inter-functional co-ordination: the co-ordination of the company's wide resources in utilizing their strength in creating outstanding value of target customers.



Target Market

Figure 1

Model of the dimension of market orientation

Narver and Slater (1990, p.23)

The Narver and Slater instrument consists of questions that were sent to managers across different organizations asking whether they agreed that market orientation is directly linked to business effectiveness, where 1 = strongly agree and 5 = strongly disagree (Haverty & Gorton, 2006).

After that, Jaworski and Kohli (1992) came up with an empirical study of market orientation and organization performance by adopting five measures of performance into market share and return on equity (ROE), but the overall result did not impact the market share and the ROE. Instead, it increased the commitment of the organization and the performance in general (Greenley, 1995). Later, Slater and Narver (1994) successfully attempted to test the relationship between market orientation and return on assets.

Ruekert's (1992) study on market orientation was very narrow, covering only the Strategic Business Unit, and the results indicated that the higher the degree of market orientation the lower the performance in the Strategic Business Unit (Greenley, 1995). Slater and Narver (1994) conducted another study to measure the Return on Assets and market orientation, and they found a positive relationship which resulted in high sales growth.

2.1.4.1 Selecting Kohli & Jaworski (1990) to Measure Market Orientation

In the literature review conducted for this dissertation, all of the authors preferred using Kohli and Jaworski (1990) or Narver and Slater (1990) models in market orientation, and in some cases authors used both of models. Kolar (2006) pointed out that the models of Kohli and Jaworski (1990) or Narver and Slater (1990) are considered to be a legitimate base for other studies measuring market orientation.

Cadogan and Diamantopoulos (1995) conducted a study to develop an internationally- recognized framework in customer orientation, and they selected Kohli and Jaworski (1990) or Narver and Slater (1990) as the leaders in the study of market orientation. In addition, Harrie and Piercy (1997) also pointed out that managers had become more proverbial about the customer-orientation models of Kohli and Jaworski (1990) due to the fact that those authors were dominant in this subject.

Kohli and Jaworski's model is accepted as a measurement of small businesses in relation to organization performance (Kara, Spillan and DeShields, 2005). In addition, Haverty & Gorton, (2006, p. 1078) in describing described the reason behind their selection of Kohli and Jaworski's and Narver and Slater's models for their study of the integration of market orientation and competitive benchmarking, saying, "Two main approaches have emerged to measure market orientation of firms, pioneered by Narver & Slater (1990) and Kohli & Jaworski (1990)."

2.1.5 Application of Market Orientation

In the research conducted for the literature review, no work was found that covers the application of Kohli and Jaworski's (1990) and Jaworski and Kohli's (1993) models of market / customer orientation within IT organizations. The concept of market orientation has been deployed in various sectors in the strategy area of management and marketing (Sen, 2006).

The original application of the marketing concept was a linked to companies that produce products, industrial materials, and goods. However, with the growing need to be customer-oriented, it has extended beyond that to service and non-industrial organizations like flight transport (Marr, 1984).

In the adoption of market orientations, organizations need to be ready for such a change. Some organizations face difficulties in this change, and according to Yam et al., (2005 p.449) "The adoption of a market orientation philosophy requires an organization to be proactive to the external environment and to be responsive to the corresponding environmental changes"

In reference to the application of market orientation, a study conducted to examine the market orientation in Saudi Arabian manufacturing companies that collected data from 2,091 corporations. Before the study, there was no evidence that such a topic had been addressed in Saudi Arabia (Bhuian, 1998). In the same study, the author pointed out that there is a positive relationship between market orientation and manufacturing companies in Saudi Arabia and that this type of relationship depends on market turbulence, competitive force, and technological force (Bhuian, 1998).

The health sector has also been analyzed by the approaches of both Narver and Slater (1990) and Kohli and Jaworski (1990). One study covered 43 health professionals in different positions, and the study concluded that health library professionals were in the developing stage in applying the concept of market orientation (Sen, 2006).

On the other hand, a research conducted using the same approaches were done to view the different forms of market orientation in UK companies. Questionnaires were sent to 1000 companies, and the results showed that about 36% of the samples had a comprehensive market orientation (Greenley, 1995).

Kolar (2006) deployed the market orientation concept of both Narver and Slater (1990) and Kohli and Jaworski (1990) when looking into Slovenian and European banks. He found that Slovenian banks produced very poor results in marketing intelligence generation and intelligence dissemination and he found no signs that they gathered information on customer and employee satisfaction.

Another study was done applying the market orientation concept to Volvo cars (Borjesson & Dahlsten, 2004). The authors found that the market intelligence was in the developing stage and that responsiveness to customer information and their study was very low. They also concluded that the managers with little experience in customer satisfaction were able to gather intelligence, but failed to disseminate it within their organizations and were unable to generate action in response to the information gathered (Borjesson & Dahlsten, 2004).

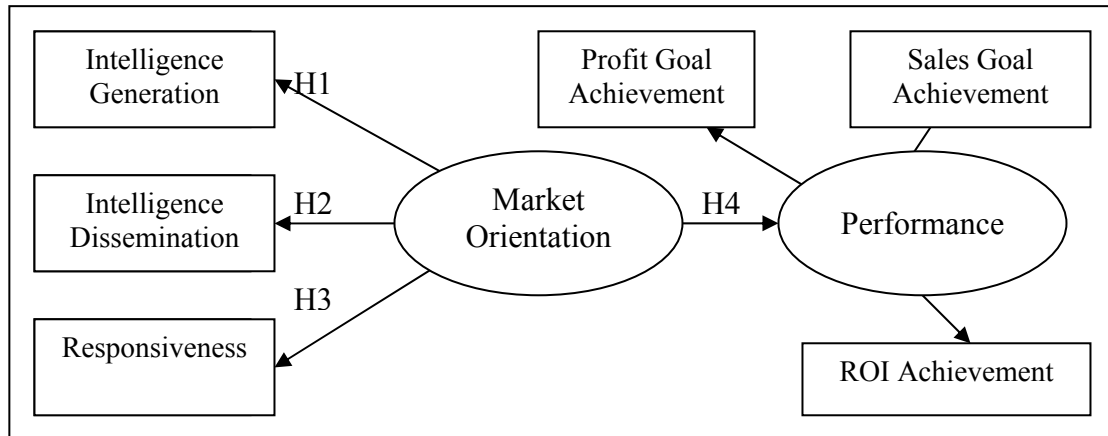
Applying market orientation on the international level, a study was conducted to investigate the application of market orientation within Nigerian companies in the manufacturing and service sectors (Osugwu, 2006). The author studied more than 667 small and large companies in the manufacturing and service sectors and found that they showed a reasonable level of practicing market orientation (Osugwu, 2006).

The hotel sector also was examined using the market orientation model. Harris and Watkins (1998) examined 44 small hotels in the UK by using semi-structured interviews with managers and owners of those hotels. In the same study, the authors found that the level of market orientation was very low due to seven barriers they found, which will be explored in the barriers to market orientation section, but in summary, they showed “ignorance of market orientation; limited resources; perceived inappropriateness; contentment with status quo; short-termism; unclear view of the customer; and perceived lack of competitive differentiation” (Harris and Watkins, 1998, p. 226).

In reference to market orientation and high technology service innovations, Riel et al. (2004) came up with the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between how organizations put efforts into market orientation, intelligence generation, and the technology plus competitors’ strategy. Another study was conducted to apply market orientation to the electric utility industry using the Total Quality Management (TQM) model and the conceptualization of market orientation approaches of both Narver and Slater (1990) and Kohli and Jaworski (1990). The aim of the study was to transform those organizations into market oriented surroundings (Yam et al, 2005). In fact, the same study concluded that TQM, when used to change the management process, could be used as a driver for the organization to reach the market oriented stage (Yam et al., 2005).

One of the studies done by applying the market orientation model of Kohli and Jaworski (1990) was the investigation of the effect of market orientation on small-sized retailers where all of the items used in the model indicated a positive reaction to market orientation (Kara, Spillan and DeShields, 2005). Figure 2 below describes this study’s hypothesis concerning the effect of market orientation on business performance in small-sized retailers.

Figure 2: Study Model (Kara, Spillan and DeShields, 2005, p.108).



H1	For small-sized service retailers, intelligence generation (that is, the collection and assessment customer needs/preferences and forces that influence the development of those needs) will be a positive indicator of market orientation.
H2	For small-sized service retailers, intelligence dissemination (that is, process and extent of market information exchange within a given organization) will be a positive indicator of market orientation.
H3	For small-sized service retailers, responsiveness (that is, the action taken in response to intelligence that is generated and disseminated) will be a positive indicator of market orientation.
H4	Market orientation in small-sized service retailers is positively associated with performance.

2.1.6 Barriers to The Market Orientation Model

When implementing any methodology within organizations, there are barriers that slow down or sometimes stop the process from being accomplished. In market orientation, authors have identified factors that prevent the application and the measurement of market orientation.

Harris (2000) conducted a significant effort in identifying the barriers to market orientation by conducting multiple case studies, and he categorized those factors into three types: structural, strategic and systemic barriers. In reference to the structural impediments, the organizational structure could inhibit the implementation of market orientation if their designs affect the relationship between the functions in the organization, which result in making the implementation of market orientation model components harder(Harris, 2000).

In reference to strategy obstruction, Harries (2000) found that the way the strategy of an organization is formulized can act as a barrier to the implementation of market orientation if different behaviors are not aligned with market orientation concepts. A strategy could be focused on cost rather than service, which would negatively impact the application of market orientation.

There are other systems barriers to market orientation like insufficient budget and lack of training. One case study found that most of the employees missed the real meaning of market orientation, which can hold up the implementation of market orientation models (Harries, 2000).

As mentioned previously, a study by Harries and Watkins (1998) applied this concept to small hotels in the UK, and identified seven factors as barriers that prevented those hotels from being customer oriented, namely high ignorance, limited resources, the ease with status quo, short-term strategy, the view of current and future needs of the customer were unclear, also managers thought competitions only exists for small hotels only and the last factor was the perceived incompatibility of market orientation within small hotels increases the level of not being customer oriented.

In addition, the approaches of both Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Narver and Slater (1990) have been investigated, studied, and argued against by multiple authors. Since both of these mechanisms are based on behavioral issues (Greenley, 1995). Enhancing customer value was argued to be part of the company's culture (Webster, 1988). Other authors like Canning (1988) emphasized that the greatest orientation is when every member of the staff in the organizations feels that market orientation is part of their job.

Lichtenthal and Wilson (1992) agreed that market orientation should be led by the behavior of management. Ellis (2006) found that the research in market orientation is collective in nature and purely affected by the geographical location of the study conducted Cadogan and Diamantopoulos (1995) observed both forms of the market orientation construct, whereas Narver and Slater's concept was very dependent on behavioral views. However, they found that Kohli and Jaworski's concept did not prevent the possible usefulness of the eliminated items such as the events reflecting the stakeholders. (Cadogan and Diamantopoulos, 1995).

Moreover, some other barriers were found in Narver and Slater's and Kohli and Jaworski's model since it focuses on the manager's perspective and point of view. Therefore, it will have limited impact on the employees' accomplishments and inspiration (Paarlberg, 2007).

Chapter Three
Methodology

3.1 Research Methodology

As pointed out in the literature review chapter, the importance of applying a market orientation and the concept of being customer-oriented has become a high priority for any organization that wants to achieve better performance and clearer understanding of its customers. In order to accomplish the aim and the objectives of this dissertation, the research methodology will answer the “how” questions in applying the concept of market orientation and to unveil and tackle the barriers to accomplishing it.

For this dissertation, in order to accomplish the best results in measuring market orientation within the IT organizations in the United Arab Emirates, four companies within the financial sector were selected as case studies. For each company, an interview was conducted, using the set of questions extracted from the research model selected. In this chapter, the research model selected will be described, followed by the case studies along with the description of the interviews and the pilot interview conducted.

3.1.1 The Research Model

Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Jaworski and Kohli’s (1993) market-orientation model is the most commonly used model in measuring the level of customer orientation within organizations as it previously mentioned in the literature review chapter. This model is the backbone for this dissertation where the results will determine the attempt to apply customer orientation to IT organizations. The three sections of the model are described below.

- A- Intelligence generation is the first step in market orientation. Information should be collected from the customers about their current and future needs. The information collected can be analyzed to find out what things influence those needs. This type of intelligence generation could take several forms. It could be formal or informal; it could include surveys along with other mechanisms like physical meetings or any other type of discussion. That information should be collected within individual departments, not by the marketing department (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990).

- B- Intelligence dissemination should be done by every department within the organization needs as a response to the intelligence generation results. There should be a formal procedure for doing this, in addition to the informal conversations with management to increase the awareness of market orientation. “Effective dissemination of market intelligence is vital, since it provides a shared basis for concerted effort by different departments” (Diamantopoulos, 1993, p. 97).

- C- Organization-wide responsiveness is the third part of the module. Action plans need to be drawn up for dealing with the market intelligence and its dissemination and then responding to it accordingly. Responsiveness to market intelligence may take different approaches, such as creating a new product, changing promotion strategies, and changing elements of the product itself (Kara, Spillan and DeShields2005).

3.2 The Case Studies

The information used in this dissertation was gathered via case studies of four financial organizations in the United Arab Emirates that want to remain anonymous, so they will be referred to as Company A, Company B, Company C, and Company D. By using case studies, representative illustrations can be presented to show different views about the application of market orientation. Below are the characteristics of the four companies selected for the case study:

	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D
Company Size	Large	Medium	Large	Large
Market Coverage	Regional-national	Regional	Regional-national	Regional-national
Market Share	High	Medium	High	High
Company ownership	Government	Private	Government	Government
Number of employees in the IT Department	~ 350	~ 120	~ 200	~ 250

Table 1

Characteristics of the four companies

3.3 Choice of Case Studies via interviews as tool for data collection

In this dissertation, the investigation and the attempt at applying customer orientation to IT organization was tested in the United Arab Emirates in IT departments seeking to provide better service to their customers. Other authors preferred using the case study with a set of interviews as a method of data collection rather than another method to measure market orientation, especially in small samples within the same sector. For example, interviews were selected as a method for data collection in conducting a study of two small British retailing organizations and the same method was applied market orientation in small UK hotels (Harris and Watkins, 1998). Since the concept of market orientation depends on the behaviors, selecting the type of data collection was important. This dissertation uses interviews for the following reasons:

- 1- Surveys are good when studying a large-scale sector that cannot be covered via interviews, whereas in this dissertation, the targeted sector for data collection is small and can be covered by interviews.

- 2- Face-to-face interviews show the real reaction of the interviewee while answering the questions.
- 3- Since the concept of market orientation is new into the region studied, the interview will help the interviewee who needs assistance in understanding the questions.
- 4- Interviews will assure all questions are answered fully.
- 5- Finally, the original designers of the model selected the interview method where they conducted 62 field interviews with managers in different sectors and organizations when they were examining their concept of market orientation (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990).

3.4 Interview Design:

The interview was designed to determine how customer-oriented the IT organizations and departments are in the region of the United Arab Emirates by applying the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Jaworski and Kohli's (1993) model market orientation.

Below are the factors used in the interview design and technique to achieve quality results:

- The sample of the interview
- Composition of the questions
- Scope of the interviews

3.4.1 The Sample of the Interview:

As this dissertation's focus is to attempt to implement the market orientation model to IT departments and organizations in the United Arab Emirates, organizations in the same sector were studied in order to achieve a better comparison and equal results. In addition, the literature review revealed that authors tend to apply the model to the same sector, for example, customer orientation and health sector (Greenley, 1995), investigation of customer orientation in UK financial service sector (Egan and Shipley, 1995) and examination of market orientation in Saudi Arabian manufacturing companies (Bhuain, 1998).

The sector chosen for this study was the financial sector which includes IT departments or divisions within their organizational structure as service support / provider for technological inquiries. In this sector, the "customers" were referred to the non IT employees who do the actual business process, where the IT department's employees are the staff who are providing the technological support to those business users. On the other hand, the personnel targeted in these interviews were the staff responsible for user-support positioning. They were managers and senior managers in the IT department.

The decision to interview top managers was based on the literature review, since the model emphasized that change will come through top management support once they understand the benefits of being customer-oriented (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990). As for the selection of companies, four organizations were selected out of five contacted. One declined, saying that the manager was on leave. The interviews were conducted at the office of each interviewee in each selected organization.

Interviewees were asked if the information gained in the interview and the name of the organizations could be disclosed or not. None of the interviewees wanted to disclose confidential information, which was all right since it does not affect the overall results nor the analysis.

3.4.2 Composition of the Questions

Some researchers utilized the market orientation model designed by Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Jaworski and Kohli (1993), which mailed 32 questions to the organizations for data collection. Others modified the questions to fit the sector they were studying to achieve better measurement and understanding of market orientation (Osuagwu, 2006). The original model is divided into three parts: intelligence generation (10 questions), intelligence dissemination (8 questions), and responsiveness (14 questions). (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990).

For this dissertation, the interview method was selected instead of surveys. It would take too long to cover 32 questions in a single interview, and the interviewee might lose interest in the subject. In addition, not all of the questions in the original model fit an IT organization. For example, question number 19 (Appendix A) on responsiveness asked for a response: “It takes us forever to decide how to respond to our competitors’ price changes.” The interviewed companies provide Information Technology services and solutions without cost as part of the company’s structure.

Nine questions were selected from the model of market orientation by Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Jaworski and Kohli’s (1993) and modified. There were three questions for intelligence generation, three for intelligence dissemination, and three for responsiveness.

Questions about intelligence generation were designed to discover how the information was gathered and the process of gathering the intelligence within the organization. In addition, in this section, questions targeted how individuals obtained the information and how the information was reviewed.

Questions on intelligence dissemination focused on how the information gathered from the intelligence generation was disseminated within the department and the frequency of doing so. In addition, they were asked to what extent the information gets distributed within the department.

Questions about responsiveness were designed to find out how the information gathered was used in action plans. In addition, the questions also measured follow-up procedures used within the organization.

A cover letter and the interview questions (Appendix B) were sent in advance to interviewees, so they could look at the questions in case they had any concerns or needed clarification. No question mentions anything regarding intelligence generation, intelligence dissemination or responsiveness. Therefore, the interviewees were not confused by the introduction of a topic that might distract them from their answers.

3.4.3 Scope of Interviews

The duration of the interview was an hour, which provided about seven minutes for each question. The questions were open-ended, to provoke the interviewee to discuss as much information as possible about the subject. At the beginning of the interview, the interviewee was given a brief introduction about the dissertation, and then questions were asked one by one, and the next question was not presented until the interviewee finished answering the previous question.

It was challenging to keep the interviewee from expressing a personal opinion. In order to accomplish quality analysis of the model applied in this dissertation, all of the questions had to be answered fully, and additional information could be requested by the interviewee if needed.

3.5 Pilot Interview

A pilot interview was a very essential step used to confirm the quality and clarity of the questions. The choice of the person to interview was also important. A senior manager who works in the quality division in one of a leading investment companies in city of Abu Dhabi volunteered to conduct this pilot interview. This interview was not as formal as the actual interview. It was more of correction and editing session prior to the formal interviews. The interviewee showed interest and was very

impressed with the subject of this dissertation. When the interview was done, the following points for improvement were noted:

- 1- The duration of the meeting could be reduced to between 30 to 45 mints, since some questions could be answered in 5 minutes.
- 2- Since the letter mentioned the topic of this dissertation, the interviewee suggested a short introduction about the subject of customer / market orientation in a high level base. The quick briefing about the dissertation was not enough.
- 3- The interviewee said it was important to carefully select the person for the interview. Some organizations have dedicated staff for communicating and interacting with customers, whereas other staff perform purely technical duties and do not interact with end-users / customers. The letter should not be targeted as interviewees as they will not be able to answer the questions correctly.
- 4- Taking good notes of the interviewee's answers needed to be improved where several of the important points the interviewee has mentioned and it was not noted.

Chapter Four
Results and Analysis

4.1 Case Study Results

As the aim of this research is to examine and investigate the application of Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Jaworski and Kohli's (1993) market orientation model within IT organizations / departments to enhance their services to their customers, the case study played an important role in making the market orientation concept known within IT organizations in the UAE. In addition, the case study would indicate how far IT organizations had gone in the development of customer orientation and identify their level of customer orientation in comparison to what had been identified in the literature review.

All of the participants welcomed the chance to be interviewed and were attentive. The time they gave to the interview was really appreciated, and their willingness to take part shows how organizations are willing to spend some of their precious time in this busy environment.

As expected, organizations in the financial sector in the UAE have a good level of recognized standards in their IT departments and in the methodologies they employ (for example, British Standards and ISO certifications). Those standards were set as prerequisites in order to accomplish international business relationships because other organizations world wide won't process any deals if an organization does not meet the international standards for financial organizations.

Four interviews were conducted, and a total of 3 ½ hours was spent on those interviews, which generated a good amount of information. For each company, the results were analyzed in each of the three categories mentioned earlier.

4.1.1 Intelligence Generation

All of the interviewees were able to answer the questions about intelligence generation, but not all had the same level of fully answering the questions. Companies A and C were integrating information technology systems to get feedback from their customers as a way of evaluating their services. After any service to end-users or the fulfillment of a request from a department within the company to the IT department, an evaluation form as provided. This form was sent via e-mail to the requester, business-user / client, indicating that the requested service was complete, and then it asked the user to fill out a short evaluation. Replies were then sent to a central database, Company A said the IT quality team evaluated and recorded responses; Company B did not mention actions taken after the response to the evaluation. Both organizations A and C, were integrating IT solutions for intelligence generation, but using different brands of systems.

The rest of the IT departments within the companies that were selected did not have a method of evaluating their services with their customers, but Company D did mention that they had a project as a one-time exercise to evaluate their services with their customers. They hired an external consultant specializing in customer service evaluations who spent about two months to finish the evaluation process and generate a report explaining how they were evaluated from their customers' points of view. As the interviewee of this company mentioned, "By the time the report was ready, there were major departmental restructures, which changed the status of this evaluation report. It was put on hold, and since then there was no action taken."

Company B reported no method for the evaluation of its services. In fact, at the beginning, the interviewee pointed that they don't have any customers nor do they provide services, but then it was explained that the internal users of an IT department were customers, and solutions provided were the support and services. The interviewee said most improvements would come about only if customers complained! The interviewee gave an example where the end-users of their business departments were sometimes very disappointed or unhappy about certain products /

solutions which then led to an official complaint being sent out to the IT department. Then the IT department acted accordingly to upgrade, adjust, or sometimes change the whole system to resolve the issue.

None of the four IT departments in the companies that were selected had any means of detecting changes in customer preferences. In fact, major changes were done following requests from the end-users themselves. With the new exposure to the World Wide Web over the Internet, the business users simply made discoveries about new technology in their sector, and once they were interested in something, they forwarded a request to the IT department to acquire, test, and implement this solution. The interviewee from company B indicated that the current processes and workflows were forcing a change in such behavior and that a new policy had been set for initiating new IT solutions project so that they would be initiated from the business users in the first place.

The interviewees could not give a clear answer about whether there was a process for reviewing environment changes affecting their business. In company B, as an example, the interviewee pointed out those environmental changes would definitely have an effect on end-users, but he said the change was forced, and a proper review had not been done. In fact, all the changes were done within the IT departments without involvement of the customers.

4.1.2 Intelligence dissemination

Some of the four IT departments had a mechanism to disseminate the information gathered in the intelligence generation stage, but where in some cases, there was no information gathered. In response to a question about what steps were taken in case a major change occurred in the business department's market, one out of the four interviewees who represented Company A pointed to a way of disseminating information about their customers by an e-mail broadcast to all employees in the organization.

However, the rest of the three companies did not have any method for reacting to such a market change. As mentioned earlier, the initiation for any project or request came only from the business departments, and if such major change occurred in the business department, the IT department would just wait until the business users themselves acted accordingly, and if any technological changes were required, they would contact the IT department to do so.

As for the organizations that were implementing an IT solution to their feedback system, no action was taken after the information was received. The Company B interviewee said that there was really no action taken when feedback was received from the end-users, and the follow-up activity was really low.

In reference to distributing the information that was received from the business departments across the IT department, there was no clear process identified for doing so except in Company A. This company's representative mentioned that they have an Intranet website that was available for all employees, which includes information about the organization and its structure and other classified information that is only utilized internally. In addition, the interviewee mentioned that they have uploaded, for a short period of time, the evaluation of their services to the Intranet so the IT employees can see how each service was evaluated. However, the interviewee mentioned that the update on this website was rare, and the information about the end-users was not updated regularly.

An answer to the third question in the intelligence dissemination section was very dependent on the first question about intelligence generation in part one (shown in Appendix B). The question regarding the intelligence generation was investigating the evaluation of the services provided to the customer and the question in the intelligence dissemination section was trying to discover how the information concerning customer satisfaction is disseminated within the department. There was no information gathered to be disseminated.

4.1.3 Responsiveness:

A complaint was the one method mentioned by all interviewees that would wake up the IT department to resolve any issue raised. As mentioned before, Company A and C were integrating IT solutions to get feedback from their customers, but there were no signs of follow-up methods. The interviewee from Company D said regarding quick response as a corrective action, “The best way to get this department to react quickly is send an aggressive complain”

The interviewee from company A did mention that they have recently added a new function within their IT department which is Service Level Management (SLM). This new section would add a significant change to their processes, especially when it comes to responding to customer requests, whether they were complaints or requests for new services. The Service Level Management (SLM) was acting as a contact point between the IT department and the end users, and they would know how much time would be required to respond to pre-defined requests, such as requesting new service / IT solution, and the agreed-upon time to respond to a complaint or incident depends on its urgency.

The interviewee described the Service Level Agreement (SLA) as the main core of SLM, and he said it includes the actual agreement that the IT department and the business department, have to agree upon and to sign. Unfortunately, this process has been recently implemented, and they have not yet fully completed the agreements (SLA) with all the business departments.

Below is a table that summarizes the overall results of the case studies conducted with the four companies selected. The rating is set as Poor, Good and Outstanding:

Company Name	Market Orientation Model		
	Intelligence Generation	Intelligence Dissemination	Responsiveness
Company A	<i>Good</i> Shown via feedback through software with a follow-up process to those evaluations	<i>Good</i> Central Intranet website that shows information about the organization and the end-users and the use of the e-mail as broadcasting method	<i>Good</i> Service Level Management as new section in the IT Department
Company B	<i>Poor</i> No sign of an evaluation of their services	<i>Poor</i> Dissemination of information was not detected	<i>Poor</i> Responsiveness was not visible
Company C	<i>Good</i> Shown via feedback software.	<i>Poor</i> No action on the information that was collected from their customers	<i>Poor</i> Action is done when the end-user asks for it.
Company D	<i>Good</i> Outsourced consultants did an evaluation of their services	<i>Poor</i> If any information was collected, it was not disseminated.	<i>Poor</i> Complaint is the only way to get things moving in the IT Department

Table 2

Market Orientation Model and Summary of the Overall Results of the Case Studies

4.2: The Analysis

The interviews with members of IT departments within four organizations in the financial sector showed that there were signs of customer orientation within the IT organizations, but it is in a development stage. The process of market orientation, based on the model outlined earlier, was visible and achievable. In fact, the foundation of customer orientation was already available within the IT departments that were selected for the case studies using the three stages in Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Jaworski and Kohli's (1993) model for market orientation.

Starting with the first stage of the model and looking at intelligence generation results summarized in Table 2, one can see that there were a couple of areas that proved the existence of the intelligence generation processes in seeking customer's feedback and evaluating their services with the exception of Company B where no action was taken for intelligence generation. An example of the existence of intelligence generation is the feedback system that was introduced in Company A and C. This can be enhanced to be fully utilized for intelligence generation and giving the company method to check and rank the services they are providing. Collecting the information is not enough; it should be explored and checked carefully.

The step Company D took in outsourcing consultants to gather feedback and evaluate its services was an encouraging step, but it would be better if the IT Department took this initiative and conducted this exercise instead of the consultants. IT department employees are the ones who need to know about their customers. However, this project was frozen. The information would have really helped them in discovering more about their customers.

As a critical stage of the market orientation model, the successful dissemination of information would improve the success of the third stage of the model, which was the responsiveness. The IT departments of the companies that were selected made a good start in disseminating the information collected from the intelligence generation. This can be seen in Company A where the Intranet website acted as a method of disseminating the information about their customers, but this needs to be enhanced and updated regularly.

On the other hand, the dissemination of the information was really low in the other three companies. They were seriously lacking in the dissemination of the information, and in some cases no information was collected in the first place during the intelligence stage. Therefore, with no information available, there was no information to be disseminated. To achieve the best results in this stage, intelligence needs to be carefully collected and selected. In some cases, the e-mail system was used as a method of disseminating the information, which was a good start.

The overall result for the responsiveness section indicated that the IT departments were not proactive in terms of their attention to their customers, and no action was taken to respond to any unhappy customer. In addition, as mentioned before, modifying any services would start only if the customer asked for it. None of the IT departments took the initiative to check with their customers about what they were missing and what they could do to improve their services. Instead, the entire IT department was busy solving other pending issues and responding to complaints. Those complaints worked to start the process of responding to the customers, and sometimes it would be used as method to update or change a product.

IT Departments within financial organizations in United Arab Emirates seem to be in the development stage of implementing new standards and processes like the Service Level Management that Company A had added recently, which can be used as a bridge to its customers in responding to their concerns and inquires. Certain infrastructure was already implemented, but it needs to be linked to achieve the goal of being customer-oriented.

4.2.1: Barriers to Customer Orientation in IT Organizations In the UAE

As mentioned earlier in the literature review chapter, there are several barriers slowing the implementation of a market orientation. Within the IT departments that were selected, top management had a significant effect on the components of market orientation during the investigation of applying the model within those organizations. As an example, Company D was in the process of examining its quality of service to its customers by outsourcing consultants, but the top management had stopped this project, which was about to create significant changes to its services.

Moreover, high tech systems and software used to achieve customer satisfaction will not return benefits unless the change comes from the people in the first place. As mentioned in the literature review chapter, the concept of customer orientation is purely a behavioral act, and if the employees are not changing the way they react to their customers, market orientation will be impossible to accomplish. Based on the case studies conducted for this dissertation, it was management's decision not to take action to satisfy their unhappy customers. Simply responding to complaints received in the IT department is not being proactive. Companies are required to check on their customer's needs before complaints are reported.

Another finding of this study is that IT management did not understand the basic concept of treating their employees in the other departments as customers. The top managers interviewed had the wrong impression that customers existed for organizations that provide goods and physical items to outside clients. The above are not major barriers, and they were expected in such an environment where the market orientation concept is new to the IT sector.

Chapter Five
Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

It is the time for IT organizations in The UAE to come alive and move their attention to their customers. Being product-oriented instead of customer-oriented will halt an IT organization's processes, which will result in more IT project failures than successes. Customer orientation has become a key element for any organization that wants to provide customer satisfaction and better performance. Customer orientation is not only limited to companies within the marketing sector that provide goods and products or organizations whose customers are the main source of income, but also should be used by any organization that provides services and solutions in several sectors. Information Technology is one of these targeted sectors.

Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Jaworski and Kohli's (1993) model approved its compatibility with IT organizations. The three components of the model which are intelligence generation, intelligence dissemination and organization-wide responsiveness, were successfully implemented in the four organizations selected by the case studies.

As measurement of market orientation, the IT departments tested showed serious lack of customer orientation especially in the area of the disseminating and the responsiveness of the information. However, the infrastructure for the market orientation model was available within these departments and it have not been utilized as a tool to build their market orientation strategy.

5.2 Recommendations

Market orientation concepts are not like standard mathematical formulas, but give us a base model that can be customized and modified and used as a universal tool in the application of market orientation. This study discovered that IT organizations in the United Arab Emirates need significant improvements to achieve the stage of being customer-oriented. Below are recommendations in the form of a checklist based on conclusions from this research in applying customer orientation within IT organizations:

- The research conducted showed that the basic concept of market orientation was misunderstood by the managers along with their employees. Therefore, training for managers and employees is highly recommended to introduce the concept of market orientation and, most important, the benefits that an organization can gain from using it.
- Top management's support is very critical in the application of market orientation within the IT department. When the managers encourage and direct the practice of market orientation, it will give the confidence to the rest of the staff to act accordingly.
- As discussed in the literature review chapter, market orientation is a behavior act, and the change needs to be generated from the people who have the full agreement and acceptance of market orientation concepts.
- IT organizations in the United Arab Emirates need to change their processes from being reactive to proactive. Being proactive will boost the application of market orientation, especially within the stage of intelligence generation where IT needs to look after the current and the future needs of their customers, rather than waiting for complaints to be triggered.

- IT organizations can utilize their current infrastructure and built-in systems like feedback and evaluation systems as tools while implementing market orientation components.
- In order for an IT organization to be customer oriented, its strategy needs to be as customer- and service-focused rather than being profit- and product-focused.

5.3 Future Studies

As for this dissertation, the application of customer orientation was only covering the IT organization / department within financial sector in the United Arab Emirates. The next study needs to cover wide sectors covering others private and government IT organizations especially in the telecommunications sector. In addition, for the further study, the entire 32 questions of the model of market orientation can be use in the wider research and using the questioners instead of the interviews.

APPENDIX A

Market Orientation (MARKOR) Questions

Intelligence Generation

1. In our business unit, we meet with customers at least once a year to find out what products or services they will need in the future.
2. Individuals from our service department interact directly with customers to learn how to serve their needs better.
3. In our business unit, we do a lot of in-house market research.
4. We are slow to detect changes in our customers' product/service preferences.
5. We survey end-users at least once a year to assess the quality of our product and service offerings.
6. We often share our survey results with those who can influence our end-users' purchase such as retailers and distributors.
7. We collect industry information by informal means (for example, lunch with industry friends, talk with trade partners).
8. In our business unit, market intelligence on our competitors is generated independently by several departments of our firm.
9. We are slow to detect fundamental shifts and trends in our industry such as competition, technology, and regulation.
10. We periodically review the likely effect of changes in our business environment, such as regulations and technology, on customers.

Intelligence Dissemination

11. A lot of informal talks in this business unit concerns our competitors' tactics or strategies.
12. We have interdepartmental meetings at least once a quarter to discuss market trends and developments.
13. Marketing personnel in our business unit spend time discussing customers' future needs with other functional departments.
14. Our business unit periodically circulates documents (for example, reports and newsletters) that provide information on our customers.
15. When something important happens to our major customer market, the whole business unit knows about it within a short period.
16. Data on customer satisfaction are disseminated at all levels in this business unit on a regular basis.
17. There is minimal communication between marketing and manufacturing departments concerning market developments.
18. When one department finds out something important about competitors, it is slow to alert other departments.

Responsiveness

19. It takes us forever to decide how to respond to our competitors' price changes.
20. In our business unit, principles of market segmentation drive new product development efforts.
21. For one reason or another we tend to ignore changes in our customers' product/service needs.
22. We periodically review our product development efforts to ensure that they are in line with what customers want.
23. Our business plans are driven more by technological advances than by market research.
24. Several departments get together periodically to plan a response to changes taking place in our business environment.

25. The product/service lines we market depend more on internal politics than real market needs.
26. If a major competitor were to launch an intensive campaign targeted at our customers, we would implement a response immediately.
27. The activities of the different departments in this business unit are well coordinated.
28. Customer complaints fall on deaf ears in this business unit.
29. Even if we came up with a great marketing plan, we probably would not be able to implement it in a timely fashion.
30. We are quick to respond to significant changes in our competitors' pricing structures.
31. When we find out that customers are unhappy with quality of our service, we take corrective action immediately.
32. When we find that customers would like us to modify a product or service, the departments involved make concerted efforts to do so.

APPENDIX B

The cover letter and the modified questions for interviews
Applying Customer Orientation in IT Organizations

As a part of my Masters Degree at The British University in Dubai, final dissertation is required in order to complete this program. I have chosen the topic of *Applying Customer Orientation in IT Organizations*.

In order to achieve best results, I am attaching interview questions to measure how good we are in customer orientation. I am sending the questions a head of time, so please look into these questions and we can discuss them once we meet.

Khaled AL Quabisi

Questions for data collection

Please answer the below questions with your best effort.

Note: The reference to “customer” in the questions refer to internal customer, as in other departments in your organization, as well as external clients.

Part one:

- 1- Explain what activities your department normally undertakes to evaluate the quality of service your customers receive and to identify opportunities for improvement?
- 2- How does your department detect changes in customer preferences, especially in new technologies?
- 3- Explain how do you review the likely effect of changes in your business environment such as regulation and technology on customers?

Part two:

- 1- What practical steps does your department undertake when an important change occurs in your customer’s market? How quickly can you react to such change?
- 2- How often your department circulates documents (for example, reports and newsletters) that provide information on your customers?
- 3- Does your department collect information about how your customers are satisfied? If yes, are those data are disseminated at all levels in the organization on a regular basis?

Part Three:

- 1- What type of corrective action dose your department takes when your customers are unhappy with the quality of service?
- 2- How does your department respond to customer complain? What are the processes in reaction to such input from your customers?

- 3- When your department finds out that your customers would like you to modify a product or service, how fast are the dedicated functions in your department in modifying product or service upon customers' request?

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