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THE IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL MARKETING DIMENSIONS ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE WITHIN SAUDI SMEs

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Abstract

In attempts to merge two distinct academic fields, Entrepreneurship and Marketing, the term Entrepreneurial Marketing (EM) is applied to describe the marketing processes of firms pursuing their opportunities within uncertain marketing circumstances, and most often under constrained resource conditions. However, in Saudi Arabia, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play an important role in economic development and income growth. The purpose of the study is to identify the effect of applying (EM) dimensions on the organizational performance, these indicators are, proactive orientation, calculated risk taking, innovativeness, opportunity focus, resources leveraging, customer intensity, and value creation. The dimensions of EM are tested with data collected through survey questionnaires administered by e-mail and online questionnaire comprising a sample of 50 managers and owners of SMEs in Jeddah. Analysis of results employing factor analysis revealed that dimensions of EM were demonstrated within the sample of SMEs in Jeddah. Whereas, regression analysis results revealed that opportunity focused, calculated risk taken, and value creation dimensions of EM are positively related with performance. Giving that, this study offers several recommendations, Saudi entrepreneurs should invest their efforts to continuously identify new ways to select opportunities, besides, since they are risk takers, they could dedicate more effort and time in planning and considering the risk management approaches. In addition, a combination of the other dimensions should be adapted to further enhance the value created for customers.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Marketing, Small and Medium Enterprises, Entrepreneurial Marketing Dimensions

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

Until recently, marketing and entrepreneurship existed as two distinct disciplines. In general, entrepreneurship can be described as the process of identifying and starting a business venture, taking both the risks and rewards associated with that venture. Whereas, marketing mainly focuses on the understanding of the practices and processes generally within large corporations. However, with a growing interest in the SME sector, the marketing aspects of SMEs and entrepreneurship have also increased in importance, the link between entrepreneurship and marketing in SMEs is what is called Entrepreneurial Marketing, "The term Entrepreneurial Marketing is used to describe the marketing processes of firms pursuing opportunities in uncertain

market circumstances, often under constrained resource conditions” (Becherer *et al.* 2006, pp. 17–32).

1.2. SMEs in Saudi Arabia

SMEs play a vast role for societies around the world; they might be recognized as an important source of employment and growth. “The terms ‘small business’ and ‘small and medium enterprise (SME)’ are sometimes used interchangeably, since medium-sized firms share many of the characteristics of their smaller counterparts” (Schaper and Volery, 2004). In a general sense, a business has been regarded as small if it has the following characteristics:

- It is independently owned and operated.
- The owners of businesses contribute mostly, if not all of the operating capital.
- The main decision - making function rests with the owners, who usually also work full time in the firm (accordingly, they are often referred to as owner- managers).
- The business has only a small share of the market in which it operates (Schaper and Volery, 2004).

Saudi SMEs play an important role in the growth of the economy. However, these SMEs are facing a vulnerable position due to their limited resources. Their success depends on their role in engaging in entrepreneurial behaviors. In an emerging economy of Saudi Arabia, SMEs attributes for 92 percent of the businesses, which is a very high portion of the economy according to the National US-Arab Chamber of Commerce’s Tradeline. Therefore, SMEs are considerably accountable for the employment of 80 percent of the national workforce (Kesting, 2010).

Furthermore, companies based on their revenues, can benefit from a national program known as The *Saudi Fast Growth 100*, which assist entrepreneurship and innovation. Most CEOs of the Saudi fast growth are known for establishing companies and were entrepreneurs.

1.3. Research Goals

The main goal of this study is to elaborate the meaning of EM, and the nature of the dimensions, which will be achieved by reviewing similar literature and examining previous studies related to this subject. Second goal is to test the impact of employing EM dimensions on the organizational performance within Saudi SMEs in Jeddah.

These dimensions are defined by seven indicators which were developed by Morris *et al.* (2002). The study intends to test if they have a significant impact on the organizational performance. These indicators are the seven core dimensions for EM which are: proactive orientation, calculated risk taking, innovativeness, opportunity focus, resources leveraging, customer intensity, and value creation (Morris *et al.* 2002).

1.4. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study can be related to its contribution from several perspectives, which are stated below:

1. Enhance the understanding the phenomenon of EM within the context of Saudi SMEs.
2. The study is an attempt to explore the impact of the implementation of the EM dimensions within Saudi SMEs, and their role in the improvement of the organizational performance.
3. This study offers new insight for Saudi entrepreneurs, owners and managers to develop their entrepreneurial behavior and to create a competitive advantage by addressing the dimensions that improve the performance of their organizations. Therefore, the study suggests that not all of the EM dimensions that are implemented within Saudi SMEs are associated with performance improvement. Accordingly, these owners and managers should know how to evaluate the EM dimensions to emphasize the implementation of the dimensions that add value.

2. Literature Review

The review of the literature will guide the development of the EM dimensions framework, with the aim of providing a better understanding about the extent of the implementation of these dimensions in Saudi SMEs in Jeddah, and their effect on the firm's performance. This will lead to the development of the hypotheses; these hypotheses will be based on the relationship between EM dimensions and their effect on the firm's performance.

2.1. Entrepreneurial Marketing

The study of Carson *et al.* (1995) offers an insight into how to perform the marketing practice in an enterprise. The authors seek to present some of the traditional marketing concepts and practices in a new way as an interface between marketing and entrepreneurship. While in this research, the definition by Morris *et al.* (2002) is adopted, as it will provide the answers to the hypotheses and will be the construction of the framework in this research.

EM is an area that is rich in research possibilities and definitions. For this research, the definition adopted for EM is one defined by Morris *et al.* (2002, p. 5): "The proactive identification and exploration of opportunities for acquiring and retaining profitable customers through innovative approaches to risk management, resource leveraging and value creation." This definition captures the interface between entrepreneurship and marketing and has seven underlying dimensions, namely: proactive orientation, calculated risk taking, innovativeness, opportunity focus, resources leveraging, customer intensity, and value creation, which explore the construct of EM in this paper in order to analyze the EM practices conducted in Saudi SMEs.

2.2. Entrepreneurial Marketing Dimensions

In the definition of EM by Morris *et al.* (2002) presented in the previous section, the authors correlated the seven dimensions as the core of the EM, these seven dimensions are proactive orientation, calculated risk taking, innovativeness, opportunity focus, resources leveraging, customer intensity, and value creation (Morris *et al.* 2002).

The seven dimensions were used to assess the EM in boutique hotels (Kurgunet *al.* 2011) described these hotels as "independent enterprises". The study further indicates that the dimensions were applied effectively in the hotels' activities with promising results. Another research was conducted by Becherer *et al.* (2012) to connect the relation between the dimensions and the firms' outcome and performance. Becherer *et al.* (2012) picked a random sample of executives and business owners, in the end, it would appear that EM dimensions directly and positively influence outcomes related to owner-operated SMEs.

A published research concerning the same dimensions was conducted based on the responses of managers from 49 education institutions, and the respondents were among active managers of these institutions (Rezvani and Khazaei, 2013). The results indicated that the dimensions have different priorities, and the authors suggested that these institutions should pay more attention to the lowest dimensions in their priority and should implement some programs, which might be beneficial to them if they want to gain a competitive advantage.

The effect of applying EM dimensions on firms' innovative performance in Turkish SMEs is reported by Hacıoglu *et al.* (2012). As the subject suggests, the study was conducted in Turkey. The sample consisted of 560 manufacturing SMEs managers and owners who participated in answering the researcher's questionnaire. Analyses of the results revealed that proactiveness, innovativeness, customer intensity, resource leveraging dimensions of EM are positively related with innovative performance. The survey also revealed that Turkish SMEs are risk averse. The other dimensions did not generate results and were not supported (Hacıoglu *et al.* 2012).

2.2.1. Proactiveness

Bateman and Crant (1993) argue that proactivity is a personal behavior. Proactiveness has been characterized as taking action to influence a firm's environment (Bateman and Crant, 1993).

Furthermore, the authors argue about the proactive orientation and several empirical investigations measuring proactive behavior and relating it to various measures of achievement, leadership, performance, (Bateman and Crant, 1999). A group sample was assigned to entrepreneurs as they described proactivity as "What I always wanted to do was find a better way of doing something; I don't want to do it in the traditional way" (Bateman and Crant, 1999, p. 64). When testing the impact of proactiveness, findings indicated that proactivity enhances the performance and that the organizations can benefit from the proactive behavior of their members.

Frese and Fay (2001) proposed that proactivity is one face of personal initiative and will have a positive impact on individual as well as organizational performance. Given all this, it is to be expected that proactivity will enhance organizational performance. This leads to the first hypothesis H_1 : *Proactiveness has a positive impact on performance.*

2.2.2. Opportunity Focus

Opportunity focus can be described as recognition and pursuit of opportunity are marketing actions critical to SMEs success. It is the ability of the firm to select the "right" opportunity that determines success (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994; Hamel, 2000).

Morris *et al.* (2002) discussed the fact that a raised opportunity can boost the organizational performance when they are acknowledged with the knowledge on how to exploit them. The awareness of the available opportunities allows firms to take the right action at the right time. This leads to the second hypothesis H_2 : *opportunity focus has a positive impact on performance.*

2.2.3. Calculated Risk Taking

According to Morris *et al.* (2004), risk can exist in businesses when organizations try to exploit opportunities and to use substantial resources to achieve that opportunities might be uncertain, therefore risk. Miles and Darroch (2006) argue that adapting EM does not necessarily mean that firms are risk takers or gamblers, they are risk accepters willing to accept rational measured risk. This leads to the third hypothesis H_3 : *Calculated risk taking has a positive impact on performance.*

2.2.4. Innovativeness

Carson and Gilmore (2000) argue that firms that concentrate on developing new ideas in terms of markets, products, or processes is known as innovation-focused marketing actions, which can be ranged from highly innovative new market creator to the incremental market builder. EM entrepreneurs tend to be innovation-oriented that is driven by ideas and intuition rather than customer-oriented driven by assessments of market needs (Morrish, 2011).

Morris *et al.* (2002) suggest that managers always try to find new operational activities, in addition to new segmentation, brand management, or service level and that innovativeness will reinforce the firm's position and enhance the performance. This leads to the fourth hypothesis H_4 : *Innovativeness has a positive impact on performance.*

2.2.5. Customer Intensity

A "customer-centric" is an organizational innovative approach to create, build, and sustain customer relationship according to Becherer *et al.* (2008), they argue that customer intensity is based on driving activities known as forces in the organization.

Jones and Rowley (2011) disused the importance of customer-focused employees as an indicator of quality for the firms. Furthermore, they argue that customer orientation was investigated and viewed as the "pillar of marketing". This leads to the fifth hypothesis H_5 : *customer intensity has a positive impact on performance.*

2.2.6. Resource Leveraging

Due to the importance of the resource leverage in new ventures as a result of facing limited resources, Gruber (2004) discussed the challenges that these new ventures might face in terms of the scarcity of financial and personnel resources. As a result, Gruber (2004) proposed two suggestions to entrepreneurs for this problem, entrepreneurs can either try to acquire additional resources, such as venture capital or bank loans, or to achieve a maximum effect of these scarce resources.

Morris *et al.* (2004) defined the meaning of leveraging as more work with less. Furthermore, they discussed that marketers must possess the required insight, experience, and skill to recognize an underutilized resource, and to get the optimal use of the available resources. This leads to the sixth hypothesis *H₆: resource leverage has a positive impact on performance.*

2.2.7. Value Creation

Value creation is the most important dimension of EM, Morris *et al.* (2002) argued that marketers must use a combination of resources to provide more value to the customers, in addition, marketers must figure untapped sources of customers value. This leads to the seventh hypothesis *H₇: Value creation has a positive impact on performance.* These above mentioned seven developed hypotheses are the framework in this paper.

3. Research Problem

The problem statement of this research is what is the effect of applying entrepreneurial marketing dimensions on firms' performance within Saudi SMEs in Jeddah? To answer the research problem, the following hypotheses will be answered to test the impact of seven independent variables on one dependent variable:

H₁: Proactiveness has a positive impact on performance.

H₂: Opportunity focus has a positive impact on performance.

H₃: Calculated risk taking has a positive impact on performance.

H₄: Innovativeness has a positive impact on performance.

H₅: Customer intensity has a positive impact on performance.

H₆: Resource leveraging has a positive impact on performance.

H₇: Value creation has a positive impact on performance.

4. Research Objective

The research aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. Empirically investigate whether or not the EM dimensions identified in the literature have been demonstrated by Saudi SMEs in Jeddah.
2. Explore the extent of applying EM dimensions and their effect on the organizational performance in Saudi SMEs in Jeddah.

5. Research Methodology

The aim of this study is to assess the relevancy of the seven dimensions of EM in Saudi SMEs in Jeddah. In order to achieve this aim, the study adopts a quantitative research method and the research design is an explanatory research paradigm.

The objective of using quantitative methods in this study is to test the findings in an emerging economy of Saudi Arabia. A questionnaire was carried out in this study as a data collection tool through a survey. The items in the questionnaire were based on relevant literatures dealing with EM by Becherer *et al.* (2012) to identify the hypothesized relationships, and to test the propositions.

An online questionnaire was conducted alongside with an e-mail distribution. The internet questionnaire was used as the main data collecting tool due to its ability to reach large number of

respondents. Besides, most of the SMEs managers and owners rely on the internet in conducting their businesses. Respondents' description and sampling method are described in section 5.1. The questionnaire items are presented in Appendix 1.

5.1. Sampling Method

For this research, probability sampling method was used since this method is considered to be the most reliable in selecting a sample that represents an entire population, and for this research, random sampling method has been used.

The respondents chosen were those who would be able to provide the necessary information to answer the research question of the study, for this reason, the population consists of managers, executives, and business owners of Saudi SMEs in Jeddah. These participants are considered to be the people who have the most comprehensive knowledge about the organization's characteristics, strategy, and performance, including EM adoption in their firms.

Because SMEs are dispersed all over the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the researcher first chose one province which is Jeddah, and then a random sample was created. The criteria for selecting SMEs as a sample were that they be independently owned and well-established firms. The sample size of the study was fifty managers and owners of firms located in Jeddah. A random sample was then created of the SMEs.

Respondents were contacted via e-mail or phone and were asked to participate in the study, each participant was given an option whether to complete the on-line form, or the e-mail form. Respondents received an email with a brief description of the topic of the research and contact information of the researcher. This email contained a hyperlink to a web-based questionnaire and the respondents were given the assurance that all the data they will give are used for the purpose of the research and the identities of the respondents will be confidential.

5.2. Research Design

The constructs of the questionnaire are developed by using measurement scales adopted from prior studies. EM is measured using 7 items. Participants responded to the statements by rating degree to which they agreed with each statement. All constructs are measured using five-point Likert scales ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Items for measuring Entrepreneurial Marketing are adopted from Becherer *et al.* (2012). The questionnaire was organized into seven sections, in total forty-two questions of dimensions were asked in the questionnaire.

5.3 Analysis

The data was analyzed using statistical software packages, such as SPSS. Data analysis was undertaken several steps: Descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and regression analysis was conducted to test the hypotheses.

6. Results and Discussion

The research investigates the impact of applying EM dimensions on firms' performance of Saudi SMEs in Jeddah. The quantitative analysis consists of several stages discussed below.

6.1. Scale Reliability

Reliability figures indicating that the scale used were reliable, Table 1 indicates the reliability statistics, Table 2 represents the scale statistics. the reliability was 0.973, which is above the acceptance level.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No. Of Items
0.972	0.973	42

Table 2. Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	No. Of Items
1.5276E2	1.024E3	31.99398	42

6.2. Exploratory factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is intended to explore the data if the links between the observed and latent variables are unknown or uncertain (Hair *et al.* 2010) the extent of relationships among all measured variables to every factor is represented in Table 3. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin is a measure of sampling adequacy which was used in this study to measure the suitability of the data to conduct factor analysis.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin is a measure of sampling adequacy which was used in this study to measure the suitability of the data to conduct factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin was 0.590, which is an indicator that the data used are suitable for performing factor analysis, the values that ranges between 0.5 – 0.7 are considered moderate.

Statistical significance is confirmed through The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity's values (chi-square with degrees of freedom 816=2.237, $r = 0.000$), this indicated that the relationships of the variables are sufficient, which indicate that the data in this study proved by the values of The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was suitable for factor analysis.

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.590	
	Approx. Chi-Square	2.237E3
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	861
	Sig.	0.000

6.3. Regression Analysis

In this study, regression analysis was conducted to test the hypotheses. A multiple regression was run to test the impact of Proactive Orientation, Opportunity Focus, Calculated Risk Taking, Innovativeness, Customer Intensity, Resource Leveraging and Value Creation on the performance. The variables (Opportunity Focus, Calculated Risk Taking and Value Creation) are statistically significantly with the performance.

Regression analysis results support H₂, H₃, H₇ hypotheses. On the other hand, H₁, H₄, H₅, and H₆ hypothesis are not supported.

As seen in Table 4, the adjusted R² is 0.94 percent of the variance of the performance and also of the three dimensions of the EM that have significant effect on performance.

The results in Table 4 also exhibits three level of significance, 10%, 5% and 1% significance level. At 1% significant level the variables Risk taking and Value creation are statistically significant, whereas the variable Opportunity Focus is statically significant at 5% significant level, moreover, estimates of the other two variables Innovativeness and Resource Leverage are not significant even at 10% level.

Table 4. Regression analysis results for entrepreneurial marketing and performance

Variables	Model
(Constant)	0.029 (0.241)
Proactive_av2	0.097 (0.08)
Focus_av2*	0.181** (0.086)
Risk_av2**	0.202*** (0.063)
Innov_av2	0.109* (0.06)
Consumer_av2	-0.004 (0.088)
Leverage_av2	0.202* (0.111)
Value_av2**	0.223*** (0.083)
N	50
R²	0.94

Note: *t* statistics in parentheses. *, ** and *** represent 10%, 5% and 1% significance level respectively.

7. Conclusion

The objective of this study was to investigate the role of EM on performance of Saudi SMEs in Jeddah. Specifically, this study sought to answer the research question: what is the effect of applying Entrepreneurial Marketing dimensions on firms' performance within Saudi SMEs in the city of Jeddah?

In addressing the research question, this study has confirmed that a sample of SMEs have demonstrated the seven EM dimensions that were identified in the literature. This means that the processes and practices of the EM activities within the sample of SMEs in this study involved elements of, proactiveness, opportunity focused, risk taking, innovativeness, customer intensity, resource leveraging, and value creation.

Analysis of the regression analysis revealed that opportunity focused, calculated risk taken, and value creation dimensions of EM were positively related with performance, whereas proactiveness, innovativeness, customer intensity, and resource leveraging were negatively related to the performance. It can be argued that small and medium sized Saudi firms do not tend to be proactive; although they must continually try to reach new product development and new technologies application as a way of improving their organizational performance.

Saudi entrepreneurs must emphasize the importance of innovativeness, this can also be indicated from the results, and this implies that they must always be on the lookout for new ideas to improve their businesses performance. Besides, Saudi entrepreneurs, and the owners and managers of Saudi SMEs do not seem to attach a great importance to consumers to reach higher organizational performance; this indicates that Saudi SMEs should place a high attention for satisfying their customer, which in return plays an important role for SMEs of doing business and marketing practices.

Saudi entrepreneurs are aware of resource leveraging as a tool to compensate for resource scarcity they suffer in reaching high performance. The value created for costumers is the most important part; creating value boosts the organizational performance.

7.1. Recommendations

The findings in study stated that not all EM dimensions are used by Saudi entrepreneurs to leverage the organizational performance. Saudi SME owners/managers in Jeddah, therefore, should revisit their EM capabilities and evaluate whether the dimensions are delivering value to

their firms. Furthermore, The Saudi Government, have developed many programs to support SMEs, Saudi entrepreneurs should exploit such efforts. Giving that, this study offers several recommendations as described below.

Opportunity focus is one of the three dimensions that were significantly related to the performance, it is recommended for Saudi entrepreneurs to make efforts to continuously identify new ways to select opportunities as well as identify new businesses. Due to resource constraint, there is a need to make a trade-off and to focus on core competency.

Risk taking is another dimension that was significantly related to the performance. Saudi entrepreneurs are able to take the risk associated with the ability to perform better. Although, they might try to utilize their opportunities efficiently to reduce the risk associated with picking the wrong opportunity.

Value creation is the third dimension that enhances the organizational performance as the results suggested. Saudi entrepreneurs make efforts to create value for their customers as the results indicated; however, a combination of the other dimensions should be adapted to further enhance this. Due to the limited resources, they should cooperate with others to offer more value for their customers, combining various dimensions can create synergies to deliver higher value addition for customers.

7.2. Perspective

There are certain limitations of this study. First, the scope of this study is limited, for future research, the study needs to enlarge the scope to improve, and verify the stated results. Second, this study is quantitative, for future research an advanced qualitative techniques analysis should be conducted. The study was restricted to a single province (Jeddah), further research should include other regions of the kingdom. However, due to limited research in this specific field, this paper can be seen as an initial step for future researchers who want to explore the field of EM within Saudi Arabia.

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APPENDIX 1. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS OF THE SURVEY

Read the statements carefully and tick the option that you feel applies to you (five-point Likert scales ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree)

	STATEMENT
1.	I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my company.
2.	I am always looking for better ways to do things in my company.
3.	I excel at identifying opportunities for my company.
4.	I am great at turning problems at my company into opportunities.
5.	When it comes to my company, I am more action oriented than reaction oriented.
6.	Nothing is more exciting in my company than seeing my ideas turn into reality.
7.	In my company, I enjoy facing and overcoming obstacles to my ideas.
8.	My management approach looks beyond current customers and markets for more opportunities for our company.
9.	I am good at recognizing and pursuing opportunities for my company.
10.	I would characterize my company as opportunity driven.
11.	My company is always looking for new opportunities.
12.	My company will do whatever it takes to pursue a new opportunity.
13.	My business would rather accept a risk to pursue an opportunity than miss it altogether.
14.	My business is willing to take risks when we think it will benefit the company.
15.	My company would not be considered gamblers, but we do take risks.
16.	My company tries to use innovative approaches if it will help them get the job done more efficiently.
17.	Being innovative is a competitive advantage for my company.
18.	My company tends to be more innovative than most of my competitors.
19.	My company's top management creates an atmosphere that encourages creativity and innovativeness.
20.	I frequently measure my company's customer satisfaction.
21.	I expect that all employees in our firm recognize the importance of satisfying our customers.
22.	My business objectives are driven by customer satisfaction.
23.	I pay close attention to after-sales service.
24.	I encourage my employees to strive for innovative approaches to creating relationships with customers.
25.	I closely monitor and assess my company's level of commitment in serving customers' needs.
26.	I ensure that business strategies in my company are driven by the goals of increasing customer value.
27.	Sometimes, my company does not pay attention to customers who think they know more about our business than we do.
28.	I make sure that my company's competitive advantage is based on understanding customers' needs.
29.	I have used networking and/or an exchange of favors to our advantage in my company.
30.	I have been able to leverage our resources by bartering or sharing.
31.	People who know me well would say that I am persistent, even tenacious, in overcoming obstacles.
32.	I use creative approaches to make things happen.
33.	My company prides itself on doing more with less.
34.	In the past, we have always found a way to get the resources we need to get the job done.
35.	My company has a small staff that delegates authority efficiently.
36.	I make sure that my company creates value for consumers with excellent customer service.
37.	I make sure that my company does an excellent job of creating value for customers.
38.	I make sure my company's pricing structure is designed to reflect value created for customers.
39.	I integrate business functions in my company to better serve the target market needs.
40.	I make sure my managers understand how employees can contribute to value for customers.
41.	Providing value for our customers is the most important thing my company does.
42.	My company's values are the driving force behind its operation.

Source: Becherer *et al.* (2012)