THE IMPACT OF MARKETING ORIENTATION QUALITY ON RELATIONSHIP EQUITY MANAGEMENT IN SERVICE SECTOR

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Abstract:

The success of a relationship equity management is heavily dependent on levels of marketing orientation quality. The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of marketing orientation quality (MOQ) on relationship equity management (REM) within banking sector. Results shows that the MOQ and its components Influence relationship equity (REM) and also point out that all items of MOQ are positively and significantly associated with (REM). This study contributes to the rare empirical investigation of the MOQ and REM. The paper provides detail discussion, Imitations and directions for future research.

Keywords- marketing orientation, relationship equity management

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1 Introduction

Marketing orientation is often stated as a critical factor in successful business performance. Previous studies suggested that superior market orientation would cause to superior firm performance in the market environment as most of the top companies are customer led (Whitehall Lukas, and Doyle, 2003). Subsequent studies have differentiated firms with market-oriented from minimal market-oriented ones (Narver and Slater, 1990; Jaworski and Kohli, 1993; Kumar Subramaniam, and Yauger, 1998) that to say firms market-oriented be realize better outcomes. Many researchers drawn attention to the adoption of marketing orientation powers each company's collection, processing, and diffusion of information, resulting in the company's knowledge of the customers' needs (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Narver and Slater, 1990).

The current study exercises a sample of senior marketing managers from Sudanese Banking sector to clarify the impact of marketing orientation quality on relationship equity management. The study proposes that marketing orientation quality influence relationship equity management. The next section present literature review and research hypotheses of the study.

2 Literature Review and Research Hypotheses

Research into customer equity has two fully-defined objectives (Blattberg, Getz and Pelofsky, 2001): (i) the economic measurement of customer relationships; and (ii) the identification of strategies that build profitable relationships. Vogel, Evanshitzky and Ramaseshan, (2008) argued that relationship equity influences the customer intentions to be loyal. Customer equity is influenced by three equity drivers which are a customer's perceptions of a firm's value, brand, and relationship efforts, respectively Rust, Zeithaml and Lemon, (2004).

All marketing costs or drivers of customer equity can be listed into three main categories—value equity, brand equity, and relationship equity (Rust Zeithaml and Lemon, 2000). Relationship equity involves factors that increase switching costs that are not subsumed by value equity and brand equity, such as frequent buyer programs and ongoing relationship maintenance activities. With the same line Severt and Palakurthi, (2008) identified relationship equity sub-drivers included: the interactions, responsiveness, and special treatment received from the convention center personnel.

The customer retention process marketing efforts should be focused on relationship equity, mostly taking into account the fact that customers constantly estimate competitor’s offers and customer value perception continuously changes (Flint, Woodruff and Gardial, 2002). Also Hogan, (2002) study was seek to maximize customer equity by managing the customer asset using a resource-based view In the leading firms that are moved to perform customer equity management as an introducing to restructuring marketing activities.

Similarly Rust *et al, (*2004, 2000) specified four customer equity management, which shows managers how to construct an information-based, customer-driven, competitor-cognizant, and financially accountable organization through strategic planning. Moreover, (Vogel, et al., 2008; Bick, 2007) argued that customer equity management was developed in terms of being influenced by three drivers – value, brand, and relationship.

On the other hand in the process of change from product-centered thinking to customer centered thinking (Sheth, Sisodia and Sharma, 2000), regarded that customer equity is often viewed as the corner stone of marketing strategy, this strategy applied by a marketing orientation quality. It is important to note that the customer equity models that are build only on financial value side measures do not invert customer relationship value (Helm, 2004).

As each customer equity component has a various importance level in a specific market, a firm should name the parts that have the towering impact on customer predilections (i.e. product quality, price, powerful brand and long-term worthy relationship) and handle its marketing efforts in the correct trend (Lemon, Rust and ZeithamI, 2001).

Apparently this is showed by the considerable number of money disbursed on customer relationship management programs and the prominence put on developing customer lifetime value (Cooil, Keiningham, Aksoy and Hsu, 2007).

With reference to marketing orientation, many researchers stressed the role of marketing orientation adoption that expedited each company's collection, processing, and diffusion of information, ending in the company's knowledge of the customer’s need (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Narver and Slater, 1990; Kalliopi and Christos, 2010).

Many banks have invested a great deal in marketing relationship management and data store housing tools, however financial institutions until now have a lot of business to do to reach the information that is truly pertinent and apply it properly in firms value creation (Roig, Garcia, Tena, and Monzonis, 2006). As a reason, the customer-provider relationship has arisen to be a basic strategic focus for firms (Palmatier, Dant, Grewal and Evans, 2006).

Research in some influxes have examined the disparateness of market oriented firms in expressions of their sales force management (Siguaw, Brown and Widing, 1994), new product development practices and innovation (Han, Kim and Srivastava, 1998; Lukas and Ferrell, 2000), channel relationships (Langerak, 2001), human resource management and internal customer orientation (Harris and Ogbonna, 2001; Conduit and Mavondo, 2001), learning orientation (Hurley and Hult, 1998; Farrell, 2000) and organizational culture (Homburg and Pflesser, 2000).

Kohli & Jaworski, (1990) conceived a market-oriented firm to be one in which the three props of the marketing general notions (customer focus, coordinated marketing and profitability) are manifest operationally. Therefore, it is necessary to marketers to identify, which marketing orientation components play a key role in improving relationship equity. Based on the above discussions, the following hypothesis was generated:

Hypothesis 1: H1. There is significant and positive relationship between the marketing orientation quality MOQ and relationship equity management REQ.

3 Research Method

The research methods and procedures followed recommended guidelines for theory development in marketing (Deshpande, 1983). Key respondent techniques were employed in the collection of data as the survey tool was specialized.

Data and procedures

In order to collect the data, the selected scale items were translated from English into Arabic language to avert translation errors and reduce loss or reduction of meaning. Further, a senior marketer with a good understanding of the aim of the study refined the construct measurements to fit with the banking circumstances. Pretests were conducted to ensure the specificity and precision of the questionnaire. A five-point Likert scale was used, with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 5 indicating strongly agree. The questionnaire approach and purposive sampling were chosen so that a larger group of senior marketer could be reached, thereby enhancing a wider understanding of the matter. Finally, both the Arabic version and English version were jointed in the questionnaire used 21 items to measure the scale.

The survey sample consisted of 150 senior banking marketing managers in Sudanese banking sector. A total number of 117 useable responses were returned, representing a return rate of 78 percent. The questionnaire contains two sections: section one covers the bank's grasp of marketing orientation quality, while section two deals with relationship equity management.

3.1 Measures

All the measurements of variables used in this study were drawn from literature and were adapted for the context of this research. Marketing orientation is defined as the organization-wide generation of market intelligence and disseminating/responding to market intelligence across departments in the organization (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993), the used measured were developed by Narver and Slater (1990), and Kohli and Jaworski (1990) specifically, the scale contained 6 items making reference to all 15 or 20 marketing orientation dimensions. Relationship equity is defined as the tendency of the customer to stick with the brand, above and beyond the customer's objective and subjective assessments of the brand (Rust *et al.*, 2000, p.57). Vogel *et al*, (2008) pointed that the value equity and brand equity are the primary drivers for future sales, while relationship equity influences the customer intentions to be loyal. The ten items performed to measure relationship equity are adopted from Rust et al, (2004).

4 *Analyses and results*

The data were analyzed in five phases. Firstly, descriptive analysis of the senior marketer profile was applied in order to survey the sample demographic of the study. Secondly, the descriptive statistics and correlations between the observed variables were calculated. Thirdly, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine whether the multi-item information derived from the questionnaire could be condensed into a smaller set of factors latent in the data. Fourthly, The Cronbach's alphas were calculated to prove the internal consistency of items in each of the two factors. Finally, hypotheses testing. Table1, shows the demographic data of the respondents, most of the respondents were male and married with age set (40 less than 50) years, majority are post graduated with experience of 20 years and more. The results of analyses are described as follows:

Table1 General Characteristics of the Respondents *(N=117)*

variable	Category	frequency	percent
Age	less than 30	9	7.2
	30 less than 40	29	23.2
	40 less than 50	59	47.2

	50 less than 60	28	22.4
Gender	Male	102	81.6
	female	23	18.4
Marital status	single	18	14.4
	married	104	83.2
	others	3	2.4
Educational level	secondary	2	1.6
	graduate	52	41.6
	postgraduate	71	56.8
Experience	10 less than 15 year	34	27.2
	15 less than 20 year	38	30.4
	20 and more	53	42.4

4.1 Goodness of measures

To assure the goodness of measures, Factor Analysis was conducted, following the assumptions recommended by Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black, (2010). First, there must be sufficient number of statistically significant correlations in the matrix. Secondly, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy should be at least 0.6. Thirdly, Bartlett's test of sphere-city should be significant at 0.05. Fourthly, communalities of items should be greater than 0.50. Fifth, the minimum requirement of factor loading should be 0.50 based on a 0.05 significant level, with value of cross loading exceeds 0.35. Also to provide a simple structure column for interpretation, the factors were subjected to Varimax rotation. Finally, Eigenvalues should be more than one for factor analysis extraction.

Factor analysis was done on six items, which was used to measure marketing orientation construct. Table2 shows the summary of results of factor analysis on marketing orientation and the items of marketing orientation quality are shown in appendix Q1. In the first run of factor analysis, all the items were found to have communalities more than 0.50 and all assumptions were satisfactory fulfilled, therefore remaining items had more than recommended value of at least 0.50 in MSA with KMO value of 0.86 (above the recommended minimum level of 0.60), and Bartlett's test of spherecity is significant ($p<.01$). Thus, the items are confirmed that the factor analysis was appropriate.

Table2 also shows that the items for marketing orientation loaded on one factor with Eigenvalues exceeding 1.0. This factor explains 74% of variance in the data (above the recommended level of 0.60). All the remaining items also had the factor loading values above the minimum of 0.50. The factor captures all the items of marketing orientation. Thus, the first name of this factor was returned as it is.

As shown in Table2 factor loading of marketing orientation items ranged from 0.724 to 0.924. Also, it can be seen that all the items reliability and correlation are significant. Thus, this study found that the marketing orientation quality consists of six items.

Table 2 Rotated factor loading for marketing orientation

Marketing orientation items:	Component matrix	Mean	St. D	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted	Corrected items- total correlation
Q1.4	**.924**	3.49	1.03	.906	.873
Q1.6:	**.915**	3.48	1.012	.907	.868
Q1.5:	**.914**	3.38	1.04	.907	.866
Q1.3	**.846**	3.75	1.05	.919	.772
Q1.2	**.827**	3.87	.97	.921	.756
Q1.1	**.724**	3.98	.98	.936	.633
Eigenvalues					4.45
Total Variance Explained (%)					74.17
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)					.86
Bartlett's Test of Spherecity					704.31

N= 117, Variables loaded significantly on factor with coefficient of at least 0.74

Factor analysis was also done on the 10 items, which was used to measure relationship equity. Table3 shows the summary of results of factor analysis on relationship equity and the items of relationship equity are shown in appendix Q2. In the first run of factor analysis, all the items were found to have communalities more than 0.50. Also to provide a simple structure column for interpretation, the factor were subjected to varimax rotation. Finally, all assumptions were satisfactorily fulfilled. Table 3 also showed that the items for relationship equity loaded on one factor. This one factor explains 71.18% of variance in the data and captures all the items. Thus, the original name of this factor was returned as it is. As shown in Table3 factor loading of relationship equity items ranged from 0.746 to 0.889. Also, it can be seen that all the items reliability and correlation are significant. Thus, this study found that relationship equity management consists of ten items.

Table 3 Rotated factor loading for relationship equity management

Relationship equity items:	Component matrix	Mean	St. D	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted	Corrected items- total correlation
Q2.4	**.889**	3.72	1.00	.949	.861
Q2.5	**.884**	3.60	1.06	.949	.850
Q2.3	**.871**	3.57	.99	.949	.833
Q2.1	**.864**	3.55	.95	.950	.828
Q2.7	**.861**	3.34	.90	.950	.825
Q2.6	**.860**	3.59	.94	.950	.820
Q2.2	**.855**	3.42	.94	.950	.823
Q2.8	**.821**	3.43	.95	.951	.783
Q2.10	**.773**	3.49	.99	.954	.727
Q2.9	**.746**	3.37	.93	.955	.702
Eigenvalues					7.12
Total Variance Explained (%)					71.18
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)					.92
Bartlett's Test of Sphercity					1157.34

N= 117, Variables loaded significantly on factor with coefficient of at least 0.74

4-2 *Reliability Analysis, validity and Descriptive Statistics:*

The scales used in this study were subjected to standard reliability and validity checks. Reliability is an assessment of the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of variables (Hair *et. al*., 2010). To test reliability, this study used Cronbach's alpha as a diagnostic measure, which assesses the consistency of entire scale, since being the most widely used measure (Sharma, 2000). According to Hair *et al.* (2010), the lower limit for Cronbach's alpha is 0.70. The results of the reliability analysis summarized in Table4 confirms that all the scales display a satisfactory level of reliability (Cronbach's alpha exceeded the minimum value of 0.70). Therefore, it can be ended that the measures have acceptable level of reliability and validity.

Table4 also shows that the reliability coefficient for marketing orientation and relationship equity management were .929, 955 respectively. Thus, the model was reliable for the sample and above the acceptable level. The MOQ and REQ constructs should have content validity, as the measurement items were developed based on both theories and practical of the literature. The validity for marketing orientation and relationship equity management were .964, 977 respectively. Moreover, this result agree with the pretest subjects which showed that the content of the construct was completely viewed by the measurement items used.

Also, Table4 also shows the Means and standard deviations of the marketing orientation, and relationship equity management. The table shows that the Sudanese banking industry banks confirmed more on marketing orientation (mean=3.67, standard deviation=0.87) than relationship equity management (mean=3.49, standard deviation=0.80). A long side all the Means value above the assumed Mean which equals (3.00).

Table 4 Reliability, validity and descriptive analysis for study variables

Variable	Mean	St. d	Number of items	Reliability	Validity
Marketing orientation	3.67	.87	6	.929	.964
Relationship equity	3.49	.80	10	.955	.977

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Table5 presents the results of the intercorrelation between the variables. The correlation analysis was carried out to see the initial picture of the interrelationships between the variables under the study. Therefore, the importance of conducting correlation analysis is to identify any potential problems associated with multicollinearity. Table5 represents the correlation matrix for the constructs operationalized in this study. This bivariate correlations allow for preliminary inspection and information regarding hypothesized relationships. The table shows that no correlations near 1.0 (or approaching 0.8 or 0.9) were detected, which show that multicollinearity is not a significant problem in this particular data set.

Table5 shows that marketing orientation quality are positively and significantly correlated with relationship equity management ($r = .538$, p–value < 0.01). This table provides a strong indication of association, to undertake a more complete examination of the proposed relationship and to assess whether such relations are direct or indirect, simple regression test was conducted. The next section of the analysis is testing the hypotheses.

Table 5 Person's correlation coefficient for the variables

Variables	Marketing orientation	Relationship equity
Marketing orientation	1	

Relationship equity	.538**	1

** p < .01 ، N= 117

4.4 Hypotheses Testing

This section discusses the results of hypotheses of the study. Given that no new emerged and eliminated variable from factor analysis, there is one hypotheses in this study followed by sub-hypotheses. to perform regression analysis, it is generally agreed that there are at least five assumptions (normality, linearity, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity, and outliers) should be met. The results of testing these assumptions are fulfilled.

4.5 *The Relationship between Marketing Orientation and Relationship Equity*

The results in Table6 for simple regression model show that 48% of the observed variability in REQ is explained by the MOQ variable (R^2=0.289, Adjusted R^2 0.283). Also the value of the F ratio of 47.95 ($p<0.01$) shows that it is secure to approve H1, that there is a positive relationship between marketing orientation and relationship equity management (ß=0.538, $p<0.01$). The beta weights show that MOQ (0.583) is relatively stronger in explaining the changes in REQ. Therefore, these results provide support for the assertion that the effort to become market oriented does lead to the relationship equity management.

Table 6 ***Simple Regression:*** The relationships between marketing orientation and relationship equity

Variables	Relationship equity ***(Beta coefficient)***	Sig
Marketing orientation	.538**	.000
R^2	.289	
Adjusted R^2	.283	
F change	47.95**	

Note: Level of significant: **p<0.01.

H1 predicts that there is a positive relationship between the MOQ components and REQ. Given that factor analysis revealed that the MOQ has six components we can add the sub-hypotheses that all the MOQ components have a significant positive effect on REQ.

The results in Table 7-8 for weighted Mean and Standard Deviation show that all the MOQ components comprises of (customer orientation, competitor orientation, inter-functional coordination, an intelligence collection and response to intelligence) have weighted mean between (3.40 to 4.19) agree of the observed variability in REQ. Also the value of an intelligence information dissemination weighted mean (3.38) is very near to agree rate so that it is protected to accept, that there is significant positive relationship between MOQ elements and REQ (full supported).

Table 7 The weights of respondent answers

Opinion	Weight	Weighted mean	Level
Strongly disagree	1	From 1.00 to 1.79	Strongly disagree
Disagree	2	From 1.80 to 2.59	Disagree
Neutral	3	From 2.60 to 3.39	Neutral
Agree	4	From 3.40 to 4.19	Agree
Strongly agree	5	From 4.25 to 5.00	Strongly agree

Table 8 The weighted mean and directions

Marketing orientation	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Missing	Weighted mean	Std. deviation	Direction
Q1	37	63	8	10	3	4	4.00	.966	Agree
	29.6%	50.4%	6.4%	8%	2.4%	3.2%			
Q2	32	58	19	11	2	3	3.88	.958	Agree
	25.6%	46.4%	15.2%	8.8%	1.6%	2.4%			
Q3	31	51	18	20	1	4	3.75	1.04	Agree
	24.8%	40.8%	14.4%	16%	.8%	3.2%			
Q4	24	35	36	22	1	7	3.50	1.04	Agree
	19.2%	28%	28.8%	17.6%	.8%	5.6%			
Q5	20	32	42	23	2	6	3.38	1.03	Neutral
	16%	25.6%	33.6%	18.4%	1.6%	4.8%			
Q6	21	36	40	21	1	6	3.46	1.01	Agree
	16.8%	28.8%	32%	16.8%	.8%	4.8%			

5 Discussion

Marketing orientation quality has been hypothesized to have significant and positive impact on relationship equity, The findings of this study show that marketing orientation quality is positively and significant related to relationship equity management.

This finding aligns with previous empirical studies shown that a strong market orientation is essential for the success of those firms pursuing innovation and seeking to set up their position fully in advance in order to preempt the competition (Slater and Narver, 1993). It significance for service sector to adopt a customer orientation as a predictor of success (Appiah-Adu and Singh, 1998; Pelham and Wilson, 1996).

Also this funding concurs with Homburg and Pflesser, (2000) who argued that focusing on market orientation as a value-laden strategic construct serves to give direction and purpose to efforts and projects within the organization.

Other authors coincided that marketing orientation companies are engaged more heavily than their competitors in strategy planning and adopted a long-term focus in order to strategically manage their customer relations, deliver customer value and so build customer loyalty while remaining concentrated on serving their principal targeted markets (Dalgic, 2000; Webster, 1994).

Therefore, many researchers argued the reason for that can be applying computer models to consumer data to attract new customers, Retain existing customers, make more loans and attract more deposits (e.g.. Borowsky, 1994).

The philosophy behind this findings are that marketing orientation quality (intelligent: collection, response, coordination, dissemination, competitor oriented and customer oriented) can offer benefits for marketing policies makers to utilize information gained and information to customize the relationship, to determine brand personality, relationship nature and best customers programs, to understand customers interests and emotional links. Moreover customers valued banks community programs.

5.1 Implications of the Study

The current study has supported the present knowledge on business firms marketing orientation quality within the domain of banking industry. The theoretical contribution focus on the positive relationship between marketing orientation quality and relationship equity management.

The third, theoretical contribution this research showed that the six components of marketing orientation quality do not equally contribute to relationship equity. While components of marketing orientation quality (customer orientation, competitor orientation, inter-functional coordination, response to intelligence, intelligence collection) have agreed impact on a proportion of relationship equity, intelligence information dissemination has neutral impact on relationship equity management. For managerial implication, these results have implications for managers in suggesting that MOQ related to successful relationship equity management in service sector.

5.2 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The findings of this study must be explained with caution because of some certain limitations. First, while the research sample adequately meets the acceptable statistical standards, as well as demonstrates sufficient construct, internal and external validity, its inclusiveness of the Sudanese Banking sector is potentially may be limited in terms of their generalizability across service sectors, as the study focused on banks only. Second, the cross-sectional nature of the research and no control variable introduced is an obvious limitation of this study. Third, the current study used only relationship equity as the outcome of MOQ quality, but the outcome of MOQ is not limited only to relationship equity. MOQ is also related to other organizational performance variables, namely – Value equity, brand equity,… ect. Future research should be extended by using other performance variables as the outcome of MOQ.

Finally, the R^2 value in this study is 0.29 for the direct relationships between marketing orientation quality and relationship equity management. In general, there are many factors, not just marketing orientation quality, that pinpoint relationship equity management. One thinkable factor is market environment such as demographic factors. Further studies should introduce such factors.

This research represents a bid to build and test a theoretical framework of marketing orientation quality and relationship equity management. However, based on the limitations mentioned above, this research provides some propositions for future research. These suggestions are as follows: First, future studies can repeat this research using larger sample and different contexts such as different sectors or countries.

Marketing orientation quality scale contains only six items, while there are many others that might be used to capture marketing orientation quality construct. Therefore, this warrants further research.

5 Conclusions

The aim of this study was to investigate impact of marketing orientation quality on relationship equity management. On the other hand, this work attempted to test the impact of marketing orientation quality components on relationship equity management, and adds to the growing set of research findings the role of each marketing orientation quality components played in that relationship equity. This research provided empirical evidence that marketing orientation quality can lead Sudanese banks to sustainable competitive advantage in terms of relationship equity management.

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AppendexQ1:

Q1.1: my bank marketing orientation comprises customer orientation.

Q1.2: my bank marketing orientation comprises competitor orientation.

Q1.3: my bank marketing orientation comprises inter-functional coordination.

Q1.4: my bank marketing orientation comprises an intelligence collection.

Q1.5: my bank marketing orientation comprises an intelligence information dissemination.

Q1.6: my bank marketing orientation comprises response to intelligence.

AppendexQ2:

Q2.1: My bank determines the nature and extent of relationship that our customers would like to have with our bank.

Q2.2: My bank examines our customers switching costs. What do our customers have to give up to switch to a competitor.

Q2.3: My bank evaluate whether loyalty programs are important to our best customers.

Q2.4: My bank determines whether our bank is up to the difficult challenge of developing and implementing a special recognition program for our best customers.

Q2.5: My bank engages in marketing research to understand our customers' interests and emotional links.

Q2.6: My bank provides benefits to our customers that link to emotional ties.

Q2.7: My bank found out whether our customers value the idea of community prior to implementing such a program.

Q2.8: My bank determines whether our bank has a distinctive" brand personality" that may make it a candidate for community building.

Q2.9: My bank before engaging in knowledge- building programs can be sure to get customer consent and buy-in for utilizing customer information to customize the relationship.

Q2.10 My bank utilize information gained from the customer to build a learning relationship and to offer customized benefits.