



MARKET ORIENTATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: CONCEPTUALIZATION, PREDICTORS AND CONSTRUCT

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Introduction

Market orientation (MO) has become the term used as central concept to indicate the extension to which a company implements the "marketing concept" (Agarwal et al, 2003). According to Kohli & Jaworski (1990), the marketing concept is a business philosophy, while the concept of market orientation refers to the actual implementation of the concept of marketing. A market orientation seems to provide a unified focus for the perspectives and projects of individuals and departments within the organization. In fact, an MO approach has been cited as the maximum expression of focus on customer value.

The strongest argument suggested in the literature for the adoption of an MO is its relation with the performance of the organization. (Kirca et al 2005; Slater & Narver, 2000; Day, 1994; Deshpande et al, 1993; Jaworski & Kohli, 1996). These studies, conducted in different industries, sectors and cultural contexts, generally result in the observation of a positive relationship between MO and business performance (Perin & Sampaio, 2004).

Model and Hypotheses

It is understood that MO is preceded by three essential dimensions: the involvement of top management, ie the belief of top management of the potential and interest of MO; the internal organizational culture, which builds on this belief and involvement, in terms of sharing of values, focus on the client's perspective, existing norms and beliefs and organizational processes, which address the necessary procedures for the analysis, adjustment and response to the Marketplace. It is sought to understand the importance that HEI attributes to market orientation and how this relevance is built considering the dimensions presented.

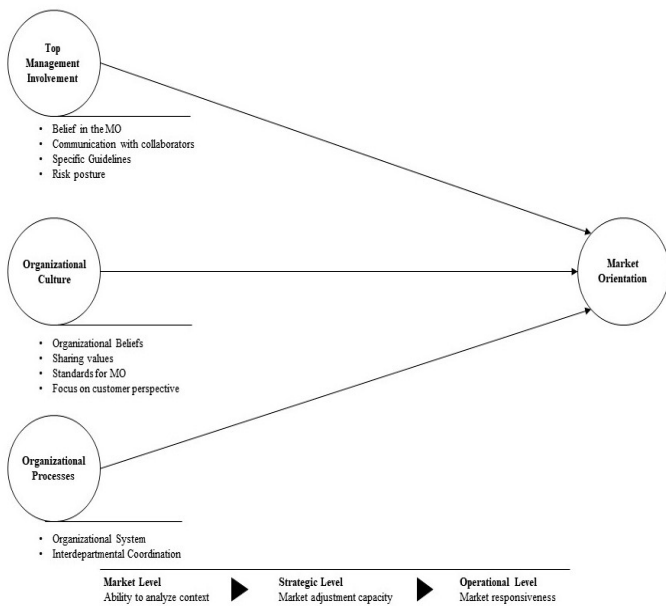


Figure 1. Model of the dimensions of market orientation

As shown in Figure 1, each of the dimensions under study presents a set of characteristics that define them and that allow their debate.

Through this model, it is intended to integrate what was considered, from the readings made, as the three major areas of MO construction and to understand how important each one is in the construction of market orientation in higher education.

Methodology and Data

It was followed the methodology proposed by Malhotra (2004), who argues that after the conceptual discussion and the presentation of the construct, the potential items should be presented to a group of specialists to debate and correct the proposed data collection instrument, since after this prior validation, a pilot study should be developed to fine-tune the instrument and correct potential failures and, finally, the execution of the data collection and its treatment, for presentation and discussion of results.

The target population of this study was the internal public of all Polytechnic Institutes, Non-Integrated Polytechnic Schools and Integrated Polytechnic Schools in existing universities in Portugal, in a total of 33 polytechnic institutions.

Results and Discussion

It was obtained 320 valid answers, which allow interpretations regarding the psychometric characteristics of the data collection instrument: sensitivity of the items, fidelity of the instrument of data collection and validity of the construct.

In terms of main attributes, the most important respondents are those who work as teaching collaborators, the Assistant Professor or Higher Technical categories, in relation to the years in the function the most obtained answer is over 15 years old, between 40 and 50 years old and the academic qualification most selected the masters and doctorates.

In the tests for the adjustment to the model, an acceptable quality of adjustment was obtained, according to table 1.

Table 1. Model adjustment indices

Chi-Square*	NNFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI	RMSEA
3013,001	0.88	0.90	0.99	0.99	0.074841

* $(p=0.000010)$ 1079 degrees of freedom

The strong correlation between the dimensions, observed in Table 2, helps to concluded by the existence of a hierarchical model, with a latent higher order factor, market orientation, and associated second order factors, the involvement of top management, organizational culture and organizational procedures.

Table 2. Matrix of Correlations of Factors

Factor	Factor 1	Factor 2
Factor 1	1.000	
Factor 2	0,827	1.000

This result is in agreement with Jaworski and Kohli (1996), who argue as essential the involvement of the top management for the existence of obstinate behavior for the MO.

From individual dimension analysis, the involvement of top management is positively perceived only in top management and in individuals over 15 years in function; in the organizational culture only the teachers attribute importance to this aspect, emphasizing the low results in the intermediate management and in the subjects with 10 to 15 years in the function; in organizational procedures, top management and faculty as well as individuals at the extremes of the function years respond positively.

Conclusions

The presented model seems to be adequate, so it may be a valuable resource for the study of the presence of MO and its dimensions in higher education. From the deconstruction and analysis of the synthetic indices for each dimension, some distance from the importance of each dimension to the MO of the organization was observed. Potentially, this fact is explained in the youth of MO as a strategy in the Higher Education Institutions and the need to make profound changes in the belief of orientation to the client.

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