

Marketing Orientation, Customer Satisfaction and Retention:

The Case of Telecommunications Services Market in Jordan

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Abstract

A great deal of attention has been devoted by researchers to examine different aspects of the relationship between marketing orientation (MO) and competitive advantage, mostly within causal relationship style research. However, the mechanisms and intermediate variables underlying this relationship remain vague and poorly investigated.

Drawing upon mixed method research utilising qualitative and quantitative techniques, this study aims to offer further insight into this relationship within Jordan's telecommunications market, focusing on customer satisfaction and customer retention as two prominent performance indicators in this market. Hence, this research set out to investigate the mechanisms and interrelationships that link marketing orientation and organisational performance, the issue that seems to be highly justified in the matured and competitive market where consumers have more choices, switching cost are decreasing and retention of the market base is becoming more and more difficult.

As a case study undertaken in Jordan's telecommunications market, the main four telecommunications operators in the market were represented. Quantitative data analysis was used to determine the variations between the main operators in the market regarding their adopted levels of marketing orientation. On the other hand, the qualitative technique - namely semi-structured interviews - represents the main instrument the study utilises to gain an in-depth insight into the relationship between marketing orientation (MO) and organisational performance. This qualitative tool enabled the researcher to construct a rich picture of the mechanisms and ways by which firms manage the different attitudinal dimensions of customer satisfaction and the behavioural dimensions of customer retention.

Results of the research confirm significant variations between high- and low-marketing orientation telecommunications operators with regard to the approaches, drivers and mechanisms by which firms manage their capabilities to achieve customer satisfaction and customer retention. Thus, two different patterns were indicated which were associated with the adopted level of marketing orientation of these firms.

The most important finding to come out of the research was that genuine marketing orientation is an integrated attitudinal-behavioural perspective. Hence, any deficiencies or even ignoring of any aspect will weaken a firm's overall value creation capability, the main mission of the marketing-oriented firm. In addition, internal culture emerged as a critical success factor for marketing-oriented firms. It serves as the glue that ensures a firm's values are adhered to, and also allows a clearer understanding of a firm's vision and mission, which in turn resulted in the fact that these firms are more capable to translate their attitudes into practice on the ground.

Moreover, the role of marketing orientation was substantial as it worked as a supportive environment that stimulates a firm's capabilities to integrate and coordinate its resources and competencies into new ones in such a way as to enhance its overall performance as well as to achieve congruence with the changing business environment.

The importance of this research stems from its nature and approach in studying the relationship between marketing orientation and organisational performance. The main issue being evaluated is different from the bulk of marketing orientation works that have focused on examining different aspects of marketing orientation and organisational performance within causal relationship-style research, and mostly within a short-run view. In contrast, this study is concerned with gaining in-depth understanding of this relationship through evaluating its mechanisms and interrelationships, the aspect that was treated as a black box in prior research.

Dedication

I lovingly dedicate this thesis to my parents, who have taught me to believe in what I'm doing and to never give up: And to my wife Dania, who supported me each step of the way, and to my children Liyan, Omar and Rand for their love and their endless support.

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Chapter One

General Introduction

1.1 The Context of the Research

In the age of digital communications and social networks, telecommunications service markets are flooded with complex catalogues of products and services offered to consumers who are constantly being invited to switch to other service providers (Bamforth & Longbottom, 2011). The days of double-digit growth are over. Competitors are now fighting for one another's customers and more attention is being given to cost controlling and low pricing techniques especially after the global financial crisis (2007/2008) (Davis, 2011). Meanwhile, in developing countries, telecommunications operators predominantly have strategic partnerships with other international entities that were also affected by the threat of total collapse of large financial institutions in Western markets. Similarly, telecommunications service providers in Jordan's market face critical challenges regarding their capabilities in delivering value to customers or maintaining their market share.

Today's telecommunications market is being shaped by new global imperatives resulting in aggressive competition. Hence, due to the high competition caused by the increasing penetration rate and the turbulent environment, and because of the fact that the telecommunications sector which falls under service marketing has its own set of difficulties since its offered services are intangible in nature (Yeboah, 2012), telecommunications service providers face increasing challenges in retaining their current customers. According to Su et al. (2009) the heated competition provides consumers with more choices, i.e., the acquisition cost increased and customer loyalty decreased.

Whether in the individual or corporate market "the power in the communications market has clearly shifted to the consumer. Never before have the barriers to switching communication providers been so low" (Jacada, 2008, p.3).

The solution for such a challenge has been suggested in the literature (e.g. Lo, 2012; Rootman et al., 2011; Gronroos, 1994, 1996; Ravald & Gronroos, 1996); that firms should centralise on developing lasting and profitable relationships with customers [i.e. value-driven relationship marketing (V-dRM) approach]. This approach emphasises the

centralising of attention toward activities and relationships through creating and delivering value rather than the core product-orientation strategies.

According to Reichheld and Sasser (1990), existing customers are more economical to maintain and less price sensitive than new customers. In a similar study, Reichheld and Schefter (2000) found that new customers cost from 20% to 40% more than old customers, and in many cases the cost of acquiring a new customer is more than five to six times the cost of retaining an existing one (Alsemgeest & Smit, 2013; Reichheld, 1996).

By the same token, many industries (e.g. insurance, broadband providers, telephone, and vehicles maintenance services) offer their services on a contractual basis. In telecommunications in particular, the firm-customer relationship is the key issue. Once a subscriber adopts a particular service provider, this “long-term relationship with the focal operator is of greater importance to the success of the company in competitive markets than it is in other industry sectors” (Gerpott et al., 2001, p. 250). Hence, in order to achieve the desired marketing performance in such a competitive and dynamic environment, telecommunications service providers may need to approach their marketing strategies from a relationship perception. Meanwhile, the applications of Value-driven Relational Marketing (V-dRM) view (Buttle, 2009, 1996; Gronroos, 2000; Peck et al., 1999; Ravald & Gronroos, 1996), namely *customer satisfaction* and *customer retention*, simultaneously represent the two foremost concerns of telecommunications service providers. Both applications reflect telecommunications providers’ desired performance with regard to ensure the mutual value generation for parties (Berry, 1995), and to maintain active customers base, in addition to generation of repeat purchase and creation of exit barriers (Andaleeb, 1996).

The ways by which telecommunications service providers manage their capabilities to achieve customer satisfaction and customer retention are being influenced by their adopted strategic visions and orientations (Day, 1990; Day & Wensley, 1988). Meanwhile, **marketing orientation (MO)** represents a strategic alternative with prime responsibility for identifying and meeting customers’ needs, and treats marketing as a guiding philosophy for the whole organisation (Narver & Slater, 1990).

In this connection, to illustrate the mechanisms by which marketing orientation leveraging service providers’ capabilities to achieve the intended marketing objectives

represented in customer satisfaction and customer retention appears to be a worthy area of pursuit.

Research on marketing orientation in the provision of the telecommunications service in Jordan is a worthy research area; since different aspects of marketing orientation within the context of developing countries have not been given the attention they deserve (Ismail et al., 2009) particularly in the services context (Mahmoud, 2011). It is worth noting that, in such a market, despite the apparent reticence or lack of cooperation in research which is caused by competition (Wright, 1996), It is still possible, and necessary, to carry out research in the field.

Jordan has achieved a distinct reputation in terms of high education quality and research in comparison to other regional countries (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research/Jordan, 2013), a feature which has been considered by both; private and public sectors in Jordan. Moreover, Jordanian telecommunications operators' attitudes towards research are affected also by their strategic partnerships with the international telecommunications operators who promoted their image as partners for the local communities and sponsors for social responsibility activities and research. Consequently, telecommunications provision in Jordan represents an appropriate field for conducting research as it has an advantage compared to other sectors in which research is highly esteemed and supported.

Most marketing orientation research focuses on the causal relationship between marketing orientation and a firm's organisational performance mainly the financial. However, the mechanisms that underlie the links between marketing orientation and firm's organisational performance remain vague and poorly investigated, particularly in tech-based markets where 'marketing myopia' is expected (Davies & Bursh, 1997; Levitt, 1960).

As a case study conducted in Jordan telecommunications market, this work evaluates the interrelationships and mechanisms linking marketing orientation with both customer satisfaction and customer retention. Thus, it represents an attempt to achieve a big picture of the different patterns that telecommunications service providers (TSPs) adopt in order to manage the two fundamental organisational objectives in the

telecommunications market (i.e. customer satisfaction and customer retention) in Jordan as a developing and highly competitive market.

By the same token, this research follows a case study approach which seems to be the preferred methodology when an in-depth investigation is needed (Feagin et al., 1991). Meanwhile in a case study the researcher can use multiple sources of data (Yin, 1984) in order to confirm the validity of findings; the same applies to triangulation (Tellis, 1997) the adopted methodology strategy in this research.

1.2 A Justification of the Research Theoretical Framework

Despite the importance of research carried out examining the relationship between marketing orientation and the achievement of competitive advantage, the mechanisms that link marketing orientation and competitive advantage have not been explored sufficiently and remain a neglected area that requires further investigation.

One of the fundamental propositions in marketing strategy is that a marketing orientation is positively related to a firm's performance. The early work of Atuahene-Gima (1996) criticised research that postulated a positive direct link of this relationship for ignoring its inter-relationships and not providing a satisfactory interpretation for this association.

According to Doyle and Armenakyan (2014), although it has long been appreciated that marketing orientation as a strategic alternative is a positive organisational performance antecedent, there is a need to identify the organisational 'mechanisms' within the marketing orientation-performance relationship and to determine the implications, processes and capabilities that are demonstrated or occur because of marketing orientation.

Similarly, Tsiotsou and Vlachopoulou (2009) highlighted the lack of research on the 'inter-relationship' between marketing orientation and performance and justified investigating the mechanisms through which marketing orientation contributes to performance.

Matear et al. (2002) indicated three 'mechanisms' by which firm performance is built; direct, mediated and moderator. Despite the role of processes that underlie the links between marketing orientation and performance, however, this aspect was treated as a

black box by the bulk of related empirical studies (McNaughton et al., 2002). Consequently, the theoretical framework of this study was intended to deal particularly with the gap that emerged from the literature review. It is focused on gaining insight into this relationship — not to re-examine it — through investigating the mechanisms that link marketing orientation (MO) and competitive advantage in Jordan's telecommunications market according to the Value-driven Relationship Marketing view (V-dRM) [i.e. represented in customer satisfaction and customer retention].

The theoretical framework of the study took into account two key aspects; the first is the consistency with the purpose of the research which aims to achieve an in-depth understanding of this relationship by finding out the drivers, intermediate variables and mechanisms implemented by firms while managing the organisational performance with the aim of achieving the big picture (patterns). Second, the adopted model was developed in a way that enables achieving a balanced view while evaluating marketing orientation-organisational performance relationship, taking into account both attitudinal and behavioural dimensions. Thus, in this regard, the research theoretical framework follows the perceptions of White and Yanamandram (2007) which indicated the combination of behavioural and attitudinal dimensions of performance when evaluating aspects of a firm's organisational performance such as satisfaction/dissatisfaction, repurchase intentions, retention and loyalty.

It is crucial to note that the intended outcome of applying the research framework is to allow for building a big picture (by identifying existing patterns) regarding the attitudes and behaviours of firms' managers towards those marketing strategies focusing on customer satisfaction and retention. It is not to investigate the marketing practices of these operators in detail.

As this research aims to achieve further insight into the relationship between marketing orientation and competitive advantage approached from the V-dRM view, customer satisfaction and customer retention constitute the main pillars of the theoretical framework of the research.

Customer Satisfaction

Relevant literature viewed customer satisfaction as a state of mind (Bateson, 1991; Hunt, 1977) expressing customer emotions that evolved regarding a particular product/service or supplier, or the way in which offerings were supplied.

This research approaches customer satisfaction (CS) in Jordan's telecommunications market from the attitudinal perspective. Consequently, this study adopts the logic of the **Expectation Disconfirmation Model (EDM)** (Van Montfort et al., 2000; Oliver, 1993; Oliver & Desarbo, 1988) which is widely adopted in marketing research (Hom, 2000). EDM considers customer expectations that has been ignored by previous models (e.g. perceived performance paradigms). In addition, it approaches satisfaction as judgment processes result from experience rather than the highly standardised view of Norms Models. Thus, the adoption of EDM which represents a 'dominant' satisfaction paradigm (Liao et al., 2009) will enable to identify the drivers of customer satisfaction and to track the mechanisms that lead to this state of mind. Thence, to evaluate the variations between the different service providers in managing these processes taking into account the differences in their adopted levels of marketing orientation.

Customer Retention

While relevant literature viewed customer satisfaction as attitude (Oliver et al., 1994; Bateson, 1991), customer retention was approached from behavioural perspective (Alshurideh, 2010; Kamakura et al., 2005). Meanwhile, the **Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM)** emerged as an alternative stance to attitude theories of consumer behaviour (Fagerstrom, 2005). As a neo-Skinnerian theory (Skinner, 1974) (i.e. behaviour is shaped by its consequences) proposed by Foxall (1990), the BPM was intended to interpret consumer behaviour as occurring at the intersection of the individual's consumer setting with his learning history of reinforcement and punishment by utilitarian and informational consequences (Foxallet al., 2011). This model represents an attempt to incorporate the situational variables that recent attitude theories have only implicitly recognised (Oliveira, 2007) through presenting consumer behaviour in terms of the scope of the setting in which it occurs (Foxall, 1996).

The theoretical assumptions of the BPM were adopted widely in evaluating different aspects in marketing research; e.g. consumer intention (Oliveira, 2007), repeat buying (Oliveira-Castro et al., 2005), customer retention (Alshurideh, 2010), attitudes and

behaviour relationships (Foxall et al., 2005) and consumer awareness (Ibrahim et al., 2013). It is argued that BPM “has proved successful in offering a viable operant interpretation” (Fagerstrom et al., 2010) in such areas of consumer behaviour research.

This research follows the logic of the Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM), which is based on considering the situational variables through presenting consumer behaviour in terms of the scope of the setting in which it occurs. Henceforth, the adoption of BPM which offers different applications that consider the setting and consequences of consumer behaviour - e.g. utilitarian reinforcement, learning history, informational punishment and others (Foxall & Greenley, 2000) - will allow for interpreting the mechanisms of building customer retention behaviour.

Figure 1.1 presents a proposed framework that maps a path from marketing orientation to competitive advantage through highlighting the mechanisms that link marketing orientation and the components of customer satisfaction and customer retention.

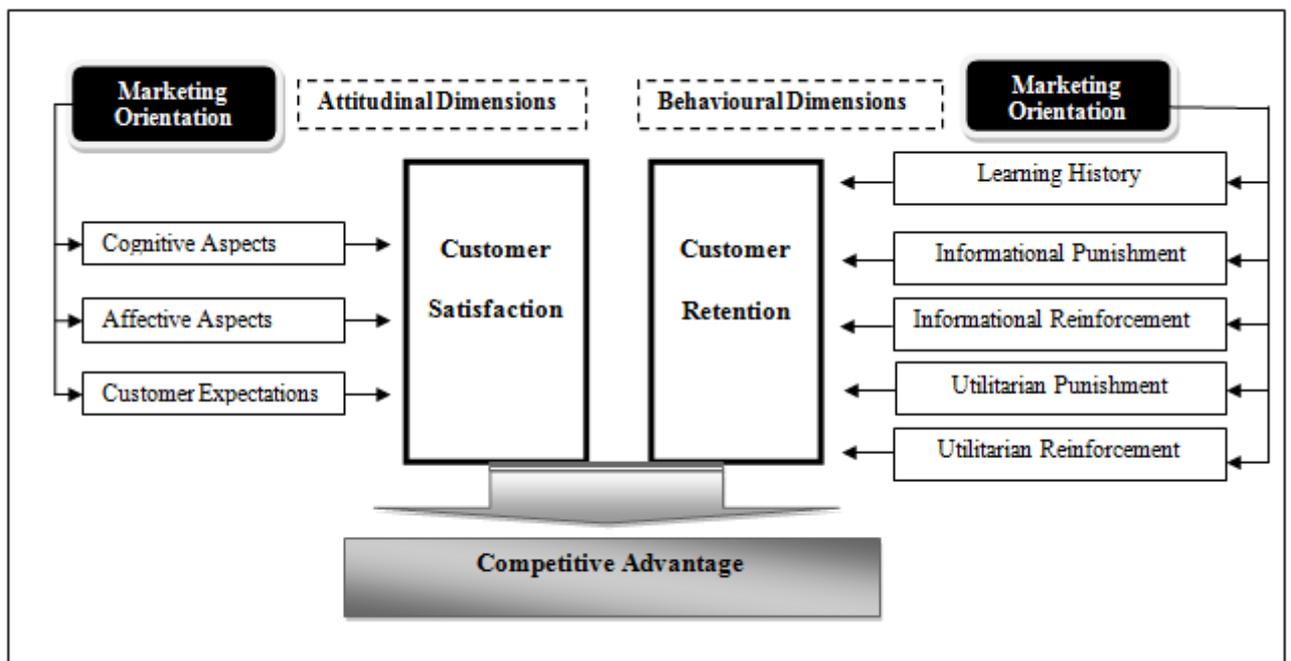


Figure 1.1: Marketing Orientation and Organisational Performance: Mechanisms and Interrelationships

Source: Adapted from Foxall et al. (2011), Van Montfort et al. (2000), Foxall and Greenley (2000), Oliver (1993) and Oliver and Desarbo (1988)

1.3 Background and Motivation

1.3.1 My Journey towards a PhD

My journey towards a doctorate evolved through the different stages of my academic study, as well as my career experiences. From a scholarly perspective, I was convinced that the PhD degree in Marketing will prepare me to contribute to improving the current research in Jordan, since the PhD programme designed to train tomorrow's researchers whose work will advance the frontiers of the discipline of marketing.

On the other hand, a PhD in marketing will provide me the opportunity to influence the behaviour and thinking of marketers and policymakers in Jordan. Since most research is grounded in the reality of firm or consumer behaviour, many scholars see their theories and recommendations as enacted in the actual practice of management or public policy.

My practical experience in the field of marketing in several companies was a revelation for me as it helped me realise how the philosophy of marketing has been neglected. From a personal perspective, it gave me a reference point. It helped me diagnose different facets of marketing myopia in the Jordanian market, whether in the implementations or in the theoretical understanding of marketing by managers.

My most recent experience included being a marketing supervisor for about five years at a well-known home appliances company (the exclusive agent in Jordan of familiar brand names such as Phillips, Siemens and Whirlpool). At this stage it became obvious to me that marketing orientation – both in its attitudinal meaning and its behavioural implications – is absent among decision makers and at different levels in the market. Moreover, in many businesses there has been a large misconception in identifying marketing and shortening its comprehensive sense within the narrow applications of advertising management and sales.

Undertaking my Master's degree broadened my horizons and opened my mind to the key role of telecommunications among a country's backbone services. The telecommunications industry is an essential background that affects efficiency and growth across a wide range of other industries (Rossotto et al., 2003). Telecommunications "enhance national productivity by reducing transaction costs, improving marketing information, and accelerating the diffusion of knowledge"

(Greenstein & Spiller, 1995; Antonelli, 1991 cited in Khaligh et al., 2012, p. 153). Meanwhile, telecommunications and the associated information and communication technology (ICT) are binding ingredients of Jordan's services-oriented economy with 14.7% contribution to GDP in 2011 (Global Finance, 2012).

It was from this point that my interest in this vital sector grew. It also motivated me to link the academic thought of marketing with the practical performance of telecommunications service providers in Jordan's market through evaluating the influence of marketing orientation as a strategic alternative on firms' capabilities and on the patterns by which competitive advantage is being built and sustained.

Contrary to the behaviour of popular family-owned businesses or even other small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Jordan, marketing is given great attention by telecommunications operators. Because of the industry's extensive resources and its specific market structure (i.e. not niche) where the role of marketing is highly perceived and managed by experienced specialists, the provision of telecommunications services in Jordan (PTSJ) offers a unique study field in which research is readily executable because of the apparent support of this sector for research.

Finally, it is crucial to emphasise that one of the critical challenges facing research in developing countries and Jordan in particular is the missing link between the outputs of conducted research and the practical applications on the ground. How to benefit from research findings may provide the main stimulus for communities to promote and fund further research. This is particularly the case because research in an environment such as the telecommunications industry, which is mainly based on innovation and creative ideas, represents the most appropriate tool by which service providers try to match between outcomes of their operations and customers' unending needs and desires.

1.3.2 Telecommunications Industry is Different

A. *Liberalisation and Deregulation Policies*

The telecommunications sector is changing radically due to the combination of globalisation, market forces and innovative technologies. Meanwhile, 'liberalisation' and 'privatisation' represent two prominent developments (Chan-Olmsted & Jamison, 2001) of the telecommunications global environment in recent years.

Over the past two decades, the telecommunications sector has undergone extensive changes. Traditionally, telecommunications services were provided under monopoly conditions through government entities that represented the role of operator and regulator at the same time. From the mid-1980s, many countries witnessed the wave of liberalisation that reformed the telecom market structure and announced the ending of monopolistic role of government national operators (BT, 2006).

The dramatic change in the governance paradigm from state-owned monopoly to market competition was driven by two factors - *technological* and *managerial*, as indicated by Bar and Borrus (1997, p.3). Technological factors refer to the shift toward new innovative patterns of communication (e.g. cooperative computing, point-casting, and multimedia MUDs⁽¹⁾) that are being provided based on the unprecedented development in the technological capabilities of the underlying infrastructure and network platforms, such as digitisation and new computer architectures, new generations of cable and wireless modems, and innovations in network management. On the other hand, managerial aspects are concerned with the shift in considering the driving forces of the market from the supply to the demand side and from providers to users as drivers of network evolution.

Fuelled by the increasing competition and the rapid pace of innovation in information and communications technologies (ICT), development attained by telecommunications regarding the transition from monopoly towards a competitive market model has witnessed different levels of liberalisation (Telecommunications Management Group, 2006, pp.4-5).

Privatising the national operators represents the initial wave of liberalisation. However, telecommunications is still being regulated firmly by governments whilst the compliance and commitment of the private operators with the “rules of the game” was the dominant theme of this stage.

1- **Cooperative computing:** is the shared and cooperative use of dispersed computing resources to accomplish a common purpose by physically remote users as in the development of an auto subsystem. **Point-casting:** is the broadcast of information tailored to individual or small group preferences. **A MUD:** or multi-user domain is a virtual meeting place where online computer users gather to interact (Bar & Borrus, 1997).

The second level of liberalisation refers to the stage when governments started managing the provided services and the entry of new operators through establishing the licencing rules, spectrum, and other telecommunications legislation in order to regulate the market.

Finally, the third wave of liberalisation is associated with the full competition reflected in the disappearance of all exclusivity manifestations of incumbent operators.

Jordan began liberalising its telecommunications sector in 1995 when a new ‘Telecommunications Law’ was passed creating the ‘Telecommunications Regulatory Committee’ (TRC). Compared to other Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) markets, the provision of telecommunications services in Jordan (PTSJ) is viewed as an advanced one regarding several related criteria; these include the distinct base of information technology and the professional and experienced skills the PTSJ possesses, foreign investments, number of mobile network operators (MNOs), penetration rate ⁽¹⁾ that exceeded 120% (TRC, 2012a), and market liberalisation.

Starting in the mid-1990s, the TRC strongly supported liberalisation and deregulation policies and by the end of 2005, the PTSJ was fully liberalised. Currently, the telecommunications sector in Jordan is characterised as one of the few fully open markets in the MENA region (Rasmala, 2011a).

The current stage of deregulation that PTSJ has witnessed may reflect an advanced level of liberalisation in which PTSJ is viewed as “one of the most open telecommunications markets in the Middle East” (Qawasmeh & Bataineh, 2010, p.30).

B. Telecommunications and Competition

The telecommunications industry has its own unique features compared to other industries. The intense competition which is viewed as a key regulatory aim in both developed and developing countries (Armstrong & Sappington, 2006; Waverman et al., 2005) is a dominant characteristic that distinguishes telecommunications from many different markets.

1- Penetration Rate: It is a market indicator used in telecommunication Industries, which describes the rate of active mobile phone numbers within a specific population.

Although several manifestations of competition (e.g. attracting foreign entry, privatisation, granting new licences) are being systematically adopted by regulation, competition in telecommunications is not a goal for regulators per se. The presence of competitive conditions will assure a sustainable and efficient industry supply through promoting economic efficiency and ensuring that costs are minimised and resources are directed to their highest value usage (Lehr & Glassman, 2001) which in turn will result in enhancing operators' capabilities in satisfying customers' needs. In addition, competition is a means to generate and capture new opportunities for economic growth and industrial innovation opened up by the new information technologies (Bar & Borrus, 1997, p.2).

Studies have consistently shown that competition within the telecommunications market serves "welfare and consumers better than the former state monopoly, both from a static as well as from a dynamic perspective" (de Bijl & Peitz, 2002, p.27). Moreover, competition has a direct influence on expanding services, stimulating innovation (Jamison et al., 2009) and increasing consumer choice and service quality (Lehr & Glassman, 2001) in addition to its role in raising telecommunications penetration (Hamilton, 2003).

Hence, effective competition represents a desired objective for the different regulatory authorities. According to the UK telecoms regulatory authority (Ofcom), "competitive markets with incentives to innovate are fundamental to meeting consumer needs"; therefore, regulation "should be directed towards achieving effective competition and, as necessary, protecting consumers" (Ofcom, 2000, 1.4).

The intended aim of effective competition by regulatory [i.e. "customer satisfaction and protection of consumers' interests" (Ofcom, 2000, 1.3)] represents "a priority" and central theme in marketing orientation (MO) (Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1997). Consequently, marketing orientation (MO) offers an appropriate strategic alternative links between regulations consequences and the appropriate strategic alternative. Marketing orientation provides marketers in telecommunications with a straightforward and explicit strategic approach in which belief in putting the customer's interest first is a priority (Deshpande et al., 1993).

Although liberalisation, open market policies and the fierce competition are dominant within the telecommunications market, telecommunications services remain, to a large extent, produced and operated by a limited number of operators.

In real world markets, the ideal of perfect competition seems to be abstract rather than practical; according to Lehr and Glassman (2001), “This is certainly the case with telecommunications.” For example, in 2011, the UK’s mobile telecommunications market was estimated to have 80.28 million subscribers. However, only five mobile network operators (MNOs) were licenced by the UK telecom regulatory authority to operate in the market (Telecoms Market Research, 2011) as shown in figure 1.2 below.

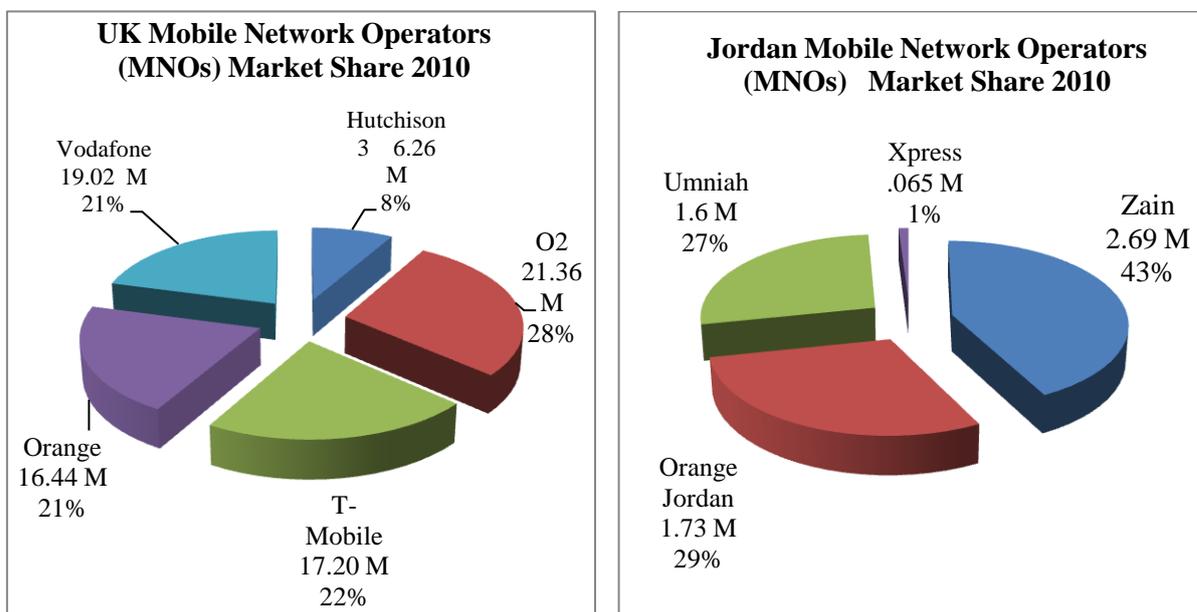


Figure 1.2: A Comparison of Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) and Market Share: the UK and Jordan

Source: Adapted from Telecoms Market Research (2011) and Rasmalah (2011a)

Similarly, India’s telecommunications market with an estimated 894 million subscribers is catered for by just 15 licenced mobile network operators (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, 2012). It is worth noting that the provision of telecommunications service in Jordan (PTSJ) has four main telecommunications operators — as the highest number of operators in one country in the MENA region — competing in a country with 6.4 million mobile subscribers as figure 1.2 above shows.

Henceforth, in terms of number of telecommunication services operators, PTSJ is a highly competitive market with four licenced mobile network operators (MNOs)⁽¹⁾ in addition to many mobile virtual network operators (MVNOs)⁽²⁾. The nature of such competition is expected to complicate telecommunications operators' missions in achieving their intended objectives in terms of delivering value to customers and maintaining their market base (Su et al., 2009).

Another challenge to telecommunications is related to the huge financial requirements of the extended networks, the infrastructure, and the skills which constitute considerable economic and technological barriers in the telecommunications industry. Consequently, telecommunications is mainly an economic scale-based industry

where the presence of substantial economic barriers to entry limits the extent of free entry and exit. Telecommunications infrastructure requires substantial investments in long-lived capital assets that must be made in relatively large increments (lumpy investment) and may be substantially irreversible (sunk) (Lehr & Glassman, 2001, p.7).

In addition, the regulatory legislations (e.g. licencing requirements, spectrum, interconnection and numbering regulations, etc.) complicated new entry and restricted the number of operators in telecommunications markets.

In today's communication market where the fourth generation (4G) of telecommunication technology and smart phone applications is common, telecommunications mobile represents the main and most dynamic market share. In Jordan, by the end of 2011, mobile penetration rate had surpassed the fixed line penetration rate by a ratio of 17:1 (TRC, 2013). It is argued that the decline of fixed-line subscribers may illustrate the growing global trend of customers towards mobile communications services and the associated contemporary services with less attention to the traditional landline call phone services.

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- 1- **MNOs:** Mobile Network Operators are TSPs who have their own a spectrum licence, and their own mobile infrastructure (Ofcom, 2011).
 - 2- **MVNOs:** Mobile Virtual Network Operators are telecommunication services providers using the infrastructure of one of the mobile network operators (MNOs). Thus, MVNOs are characterised by neither having their own mobile licence nor own mobile infrastructure, but the MVNOs have the direct customer relationship with the end user (Ofcom, 2011).

In this research, Jordan's telecommunications market is represented by the main Mobile Network Operators (MNOs); as these firms constitute (i) the main licenced bodies that provide the different telecommunications services in the market (e.g. mobile, land line, data etc) and who also (ii) exclusively have the networks and infrastructure needed to provide telecommunications services.

C. *'Telecommunications Service Providers-Customer Relationship' as a Key Success Factor (KSF) in Telecommunications*

Various difficulties are associated with marketing of techno-based services, e.g. operation-marketing interactions (Kim et al., 2011; Piercy, 2007), the unique characteristics of services (Yeboah, 2012), and the dynamic life cycle of its offerings (Ahn et al., 2004). Moreover, marketing of telecommunications services is different in various aspects from manufacturing (Akkermans & Vos, 2003) or other non-technology-based services (Gentzoglani, 2007; Peppard & Rylander, 2006; Ahn et al., 2004; Todeva & John, 2001). Hence, creating and maintaining competitive advantage in telecommunications markets requires an appropriate strategic relational perspective (Aydin et al., 2005).

Specifically, in the telecommunications industry, there are two foremost concerns for service providers: the first is to manage a firm's resources and capabilities within a value-creating strategy to gain competitive advantage [customer satisfaction] (Silva & Yapa, 2009; Peppard & Rylander, 2006). The second is to protect a firm's subscriber customer base to maintain the brand's life and cash flow in the long-term [customer retention] (Aydin et al., 2005).

As subscriber customers are at the centre of personal and business communication in such market, service providers enjoy a unique relationship with their customers, which they can take advantage of to better serve these customers (Bamforth & Longbottom, 2011, p.2). The matter which will be reflected in enhancing firms' ability to develop and maintain their relationships with customers. According to the 'Nordic school' service marketing perspective (Gummesson & Gronroos, 2012; Gronroos, 2006, 1996, 1994), a firm's reliance on the simple marketing mix strategies with the omission of consideration of the interactive relationships within its environment (e.g. customers, employees, suppliers, etc.) will not enable it to build sustainable and profitable customer-service provider relationship.

Generally, telecommunications are characterised as mature markets reflected by the high penetration rates at the global level. Accordingly, in such a saturated market, while telecommunications service providers (TSPs) lean towards attracting other competitors' subscribers, "competitors too are looking to attract customers in a similar fashion, and the practice eventually become zero-sum game" (Peppard & Rylander, 2006, p.128). Globally, penetration rates have exceeded the number of population in many markets (TRC, 2012 a; Ofcom, 2011). It seems a kind of marketing myopia that a firm builds marketing strategies in such an environment acquiring new customers [expanding their market share horizontally] rather than giving attention to maintaining, and developing their existing market base within continual value creating relationship strategy.

Several factors contributed to the sensitivity of firm-customer relationship in telecommunications, e.g. the low switching cost, regulatory authorities' role in enhancing competition and expanding customer choices, short products life cycle, the intense media campaigns and the diversity of alternative offers and suppliers.

Customer retention is often a hot spot in marketing research. Consequently, in telecommunications, service provider-subscriber relationship is seen as a prominent feature differentiating telecommunications from other industrial or services markets. In such a market, relationship characteristics (e.g. depth, length and breadth of relationship) significantly contribute to interpreting switching behaviour (Polo & Sese, 2009) which in turn affects a firm's capability in maintaining its market base.

In conclusion, it is obvious that, despite the limited number of mobile network operators in the telecommunications industry, it is considered as one of the most dynamic and competitive markets all over the world.

1.4 The Purpose of the Research and Research Objectives

The purpose of the study is to develop an in-depth understanding of, and to gain further insight into, the relationship between marketing orientation (MO) and competitive advantage approached from the Value-driven Relationship Marketing View (V-dRM) in Jordan's telecommunications market. Hence, the researcher intends to investigate the mechanisms and interrelationships that underlie the relationship between marketing orientation and each of customer satisfaction and customer retention.

First, the research investigates/identifies the mechanisms, intermediate variables and interrelationships of this association, in order to achieve an overall picture of the process(es) by which value creation capability is achieved [i.e. customer satisfaction] and sustained [i.e. customer retention] by firms under the influence of such strategic alternatives [i.e. marketing orientation]. In addition, the research investigates the influence of marketing orientation on firms' dynamic capabilities in this market as a tech-based, volatile and fast-changing environment. Thus, the expected outcomes are intended to meet the following two objectives:

Research Objective (I): To investigate the mechanisms that link marketing orientation and firms' sustainable competitive advantage in the view of V-dRM, through:

(I. a): Determining the adopted level of marketing orientation for each telecommunications service provider in Jordan's market.

(I. b): To investigate the mechanisms of the relationship between marketing orientation and customer satisfaction for each telecommunications operator in the market.

(Evaluating the variations between telecommunications service providers with regards to managing the components of customer satisfaction based on the logic of the Expectations Disconfirmation Model (EDM))

(I. c): To investigate the mechanisms of the relationship between marketing orientation and customer retention for each telecommunications operator in the market.

(Evaluating the variation between telecommunications service providers with regards to managing the components of customer retention based on the Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM))

Research Objective (II): To evaluate the influence of marketing orientation on service providers' dynamic capabilities.

(The applications of the Dynamic Capability View (DCV) (i.e. innovation, integration, and adaptation).

1.5 Summary of Potential Contributions

The broader academic view emphasises that the essential requirements for achieving competitive advantage in services are more difficult and more complex than manufacturing (e.g. Palmer, 2001; Lovelock et al., 1999; Zeithaml et al., 1985). Matthyssens and Vandembemt (1998) also pointed out the difficulties of the evaluation of 'services' by consumers because of its intangible nature (see also Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 2006). Consequently, this research is an attempt to contribute to knowledge by highlighting the influences of marketing orientation (MO) as an alternative strategic approach on service providers' patterns and related mechanisms of building competitive advantage.

Although much previous research was carried out on marketing orientation, the majority of these studies were highly quantitative and focused on examining the causal relationship between marketing orientation and organisational performance (e.g. Charles et al., 2012; Mokhtar et al., 2009; Dikmen et al., 2005; Panayides, 2004; Vorhies & Harker, 2000; Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1999, 1997; Greenley, 1995; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). Other researchers evaluated marketing orientation within many different contexts; e.g. demand-based perspective (Zhou et al., 2009), international context (Tirado et al., 2012), export performance (Usman et al., 2012; Akyol & Akehurst, 2003), and new product context (Gatignon & Xuereb, 1995). However, the ways in which a firm's resources and capabilities are being transformed into competitive advantage and the influence of marketing orientation on this process represents a distinct gap in marketing orientation literature which was poorly evaluated in most related empirical studies.

Contrary to previous studies, this research pushes the focus towards the mechanisms, details and drivers of the relationship between marketing orientation and organisational performance. Hence, the focus of evaluation is directed at [into] this relationship to facilitate a better understanding of it, rather than simply measuring it. Thus, this research intends to add to the literature by gaining more insight of the mechanisms and interrelationships that link marketing orientation and competitive advantage represented by two of the prominent organisational performance indicators: *customer satisfaction* and *customer retention*.

In technology-driven markets, “periods of sustained competitive advantage have grown shorter over time” (Wiggins & Ruefli, 2005 and McNamara et al., 2003 cited in Esper et al., 2007). Hence, the rapid technological innovations and economic uncertainties in telecommunications represent considerable challenges for service providers in maintaining competitive advantage in the volatile environment.

Despite the importance of research carried out on the relationship between firms’ marketing orientation and competitive advantage, the effect of marketing orientation on organisational performance from a long-term perspective [the sustainability of competitive advantage] has not been explored sufficiently, and much of such research was often approached within causal quantitative perceptions (Gebhardt et al., 2006). Within the same argument, and according to the research framework, customer satisfaction and customer retention represent two main components of the value-driven relationship marketing (V-dRM) view. Particularly, customer retention is viewed as a long-term intended strategic organisational performance which poses the most foremost concern for all operators in today’s globalised and borderless telecommunications market. Accordingly, while investigating the influence of marketing orientation on the ways by which the different components of customer retention are built [according to the Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM)], this research aims at extending marketing orientation literature through investigating its influence on firms’ organisational performance within its long-term view.

1.6 Significance of the Research

This study goes beyond examining the causal relationship between a firm’s strategic orientation and organisational performance in tech-based services. Located within a broad relationship marketing backdrop, this research considers the variation in the adoption of marketing orientation amongst telecommunications operators and evaluates its effect on the ways in which firms achieve their strategic goals. The study also aims to identify the critical practical drivers of superiority in the market. In other words, it intends to contribute to improving the efficiency relating to ‘Resource-Allocation Decisions’ in Jordan’s telecommunications market, with the hope that decision makers will be better able to determine the high-leverage sources and critical capabilities that would stimulate superiority in the long run.

A great deal of inclination towards technology orientation, features and product development policies are the observed underpinnings for differentiation in tech-based markets (Qawasmeh & Bataineh, 2010; Davies & Bursh, 1997).

The importance of the study stems from being contrary to the conventional managerial practices (i.e. tech-based solutions) in such markets. Meanwhile the shared strategic market factors - for instance, liberalisation, standardisations, alliances and the consequences of transfer of technology - all neutralise the advantage of tech-driven solutions which seem to be popular and already applied by all operators in the market.

This research is grounded in the assumption that telecommunications service providers (TSPs) have alternatives other than the traditional technical-based solutions for differentiation. The entrepreneurial orientation perception presents innovation and creativity as important aspects that should be permeate all firms' managerial and operational activities; e.g. processes, actions, methods, practices and decision-making styles. Also, innovation and creativity are viewed as crucial antecedents for success within such dynamic and rapidly changing environments (Madhoushi et al., 2011). Zeithaml et al. (2001) indicated the key success factor of 'innovative service companies' by acknowledging that different groups of customers vary widely in their behaviour, desires and responsiveness to marketing. Therefore, telecommunications as an innovation-based domain represents a fertile ground for creative service marketing applications research (Choi & Chu, 2001).

Furthermore, literature on marketing strategy indicates the positive association between marketing orientation and the organisational performance which represents the total outcomes of a firm's marketing mix strategies. On the other hand, the Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV) assumes that the integration and the coordination of a firm's different resources and capabilities will enhance its performance in creating value and responding to changing environment.

Consequently, while illustrating the implementations of DCV by telecommunications operators that have different levels of marketing orientations, this research is an attempt to bridge the strategic dimension of marketing orientation (as a strategic alternative) with the practical aspects of the marketing mix. Meanwhile, dynamic capabilities play an intermediate role that coordinates, combines and configures (Teece, 2009; Newbert, 2007) firms' different resources within their value-creating strategies.

1.6.1 Aspects related to the Provision of Telecommunication Services in Jordan (PTSJ)

Telecommunications service provision in Jordan is considered a key component in the services-oriented economy (Central Bank of Jordan, 2008) which employs more than two-thirds of the country's labour force. With 65.2% as a total contribution from the service sectors in 2011 (Global Finance, 2012), the telecommunications industry contributed to Jordan's GDP with 14.7% as shown in figure 1.3 below.

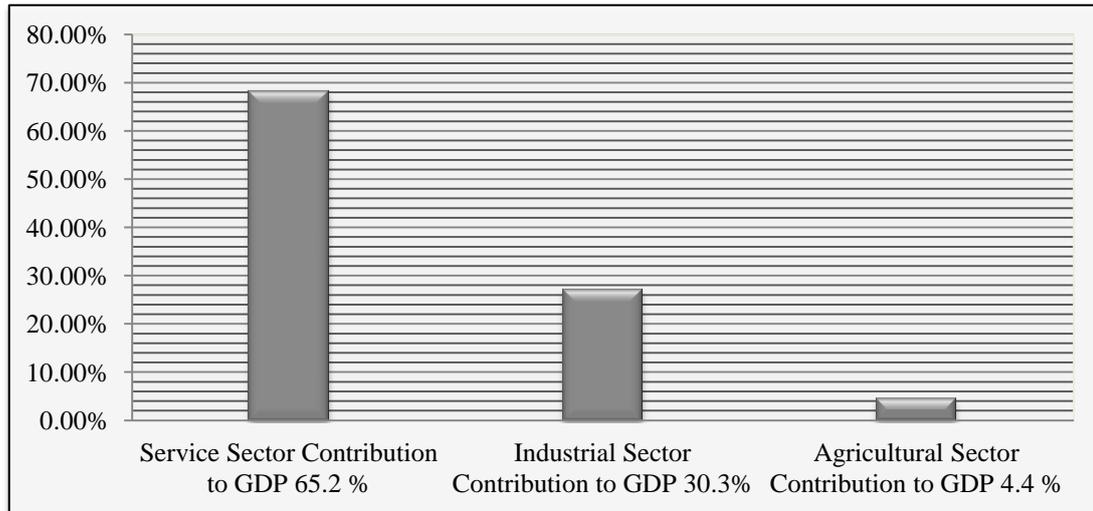


Figure 1.3: Service Sectors Contribution to GDP (2011) - Jordan

Source: Adapted from Global Finance/ Jordan Country Report (2012)

It is observed that, from 2008, the telecommunications market in Jordan has witnessed a slowdown in customer growth due to the market shift to the stage of maturity (Rasmalah, 2011a; Zain, 2008) resulting in increasing competition intensity in the market.

As a consequence of the new market phase, the telecommunications service providers (TSPs) targeted others' market shares while the penetration rate of Mobile Phone and Radio Trunking subscribers to the main telecommunication market in Jordan exceeded the overall total population by the end of 2009 (TRC, 2012a) as shown in figure 1.4 below.

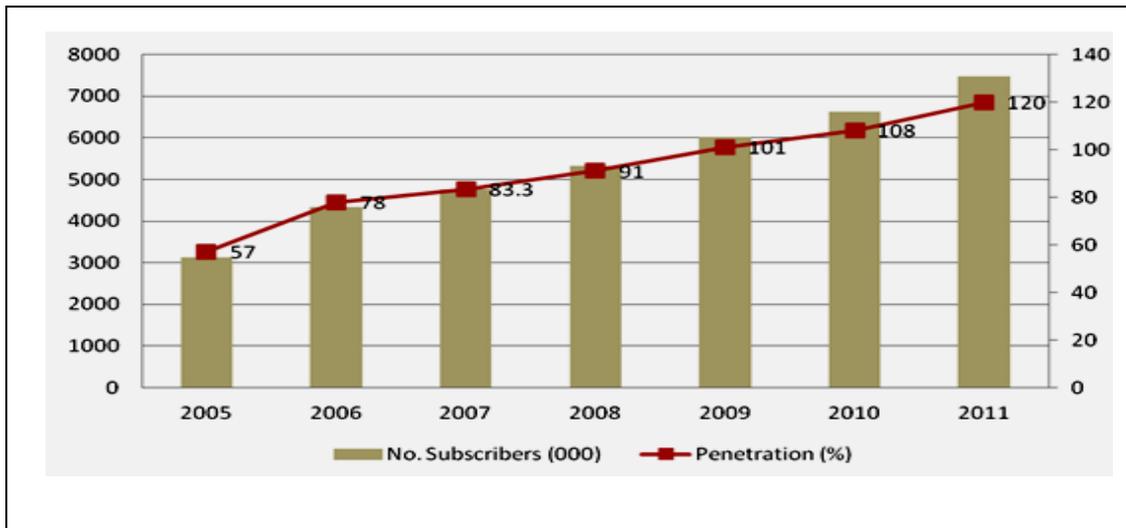


Figure 1.4: Mobile Phone Subscribers and Penetration Rate (2005-2011)

Source: Telecommunications Regulatory Commission-Jordan (TRC) (2012a)

Theoretically, as a result of the stiff competition, competitors resort to aggressive low prices competition (Porter, 1985) which was resulted negatively on the levels of firms' ARPU ⁽¹⁾. Starting from 2006, Jordan's market monthly ARPU has declined steeply. Compared to 37 USD by the end of 2004, Jordan's ARPU dropped to 17 USD in 2007 (Batelco, 2007) and stood at 12.8 USD at the end of December 2010 (Market Publishers, 2011).

In addition, as competition has a negative effect on prices (Porter, 1985), it also has similar influences on market share which in turn represents an important determinant of a firm's future profitability (Klemperer, 1995).

Hence, the maturity stage of market, the tough competition, and dramatic ARPU decline all represent considerable challenges facing telecommunications providers' survival and growth, which in turn indicates the need for developing the strategic thoughts adopted in building competitive positions in the provision of telecommunications services in Jordan.

In light of this understanding, to elaborate on how the adoption of marketing orientation supports telecommunications providers' capabilities in building sustainable competitive advantage is a vital and justified issue since the findings will lend support to the overall performance of Jordan's telecommunications industry.

1- ARPU: A common financial market indicator used by telecommunication industries which measures the total revenue divided by the total numbers of subscribers.

1.7 The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. This introductory chapter paves the way for understanding what the researcher seeks to evaluate, what the significance of the study is, and how the researcher intends to accomplish his aims and objectives.

As a starting point, the context of the thesis, justification of research model, background and motivation, in addition to a summary of potential contributions are covered in the **General Introduction**.

In **Chapter Two, Reviewing the Literature** is accomplished within three main parts; part (i) evaluates the main perspectives conceptualising *marketing orientation (MO)*, measuring marketing orientation, marketing typology, and then identifies the gaps in the related literature. In addition, this part also reviews the *Value-driven Relational Marketing (V-dRM)* view which represents a considerable shift in recent literature from the product–orientation to the resources–orientation perception. Part (ii) highlights the *Research Theoretical Framework*. Thus, the Expectations Disconfirmation Model (EDM), the Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM), and the Dynamic Capability View (DCV) are reviewed in detail. Part (iii) discusses additional facets relevant to the research context. Hence, this part is concerned mainly with marketing of services.

Chapter Three outlines the **Methodology** employed in this research. This chapter describes the research philosophical position, the research approach and the research domain in detail, and also examines the used instruments and sampling methods relevant to different phases of the research and the techniques employed.

Triangulation enables researchers to expand the methodological alternatives horizontally and vertically, aiming at increasing the validity and creditability of evaluation findings. Consequently, triangulation is illustrated as an appropriate research technique in such a high-competition and dynamic market.

Moreover, data analysis strategy and relevant techniques adopted for the research are discussed. This is followed by an explanation of the research ethics procedures which have been followed in accordance with UH Research Ethics Committees (REC) relating to all research stages.

Chapter Four builds a comprehensive **evaluation of the telecommunications service provision in Jordan (PTSJ)**. Different aspects within the PTSJ, e.g. telecommunications operators, market indicators, infrastructure and technology were highlighted.

While chapter two (Literature Review) developed the theoretical background of the research framework, the aim of this chapter is to facilitate an understanding of the context in which theories or recommendations would be practiced on the ground.

The **Data Analysis** process builds on the preceding chapters' work. Identifying each firm's key factors in managing the different components of customer satisfaction and customer retention represents the main body of **Chapter Five**. The data analysis process follows two different approaches: *qualitative* analysis is concerned with finding out managers' experiences and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation; while *quantitative* analysis is undertaken to measure telecommunications operators' levels of marketing orientation.

Chapter Six presents the research **Findings and Discussion** in relation to research objectives and questions. This chapter is mainly concerned with highlighting the findings relevant to the different patterns that comprise firm' key factors and linking the variations between these patterns to firms' adopted levels of marketing orientation. Thus, it discusses the influence of firms' marketing orientation on the ways by which each component of customer satisfaction and customer retention is being managed.

Chapter Seven, the Conclusion, is the final chapter of this thesis which draws conclusions from the previous work. This chapter sets out the complete picture of the research and a consolidation of the results; to achieve this, a reflection on the research objectives is given. This is followed by discussion of the research contribution to marketing knowledge, and a summary of the chapter.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Overview

The main objective of this chapter is to explore and critically analyse relevant literature and to identify gaps in order to build a comprehensive theoretical background. Consequently, this chapter is divided into three main parts. *Part one* highlights each of marketing orientation and value-driven relational marketing (V-dRM) view. Section 2.2 discusses the different perspectives of marketing orientation, marketing orientation and firm performance, alternative orientations, and marketing typology. Section 2.3 focuses on the value-driven relational marketing (V-dRM) perspective and its main pillars; customer satisfaction and customer retention, in addition to customer retention aspects in telecommunications services.

Part two (section 2.4) discusses in detail the theoretical framework of the research. This part comprises four sub-sections covering the theoretical aspects of the research model, starting with a summary of the research framework (section 2.4.1). From an attitudinal perception, section 2.4.2 highlights customer satisfaction and the Expectation Disconfirmation Model (EDM) as an adopted analytical tool. Section 2.4.3 focuses on customer retention and the Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM). In addition, the logic and applications of the Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV) are illustrated in section 2.4.4.

Part three highlights additional facets relevant to the research context. Hence, the third part of the chapter covers marketing of services and critical aspects in marketing of services. Section 2.5 presents a brief summary of the chapter.

Literature Review: Part One

2.2 Marketing Orientation (MO)

In the early words of Drucker (1954) and Levitt (1969) “the purpose of a business is to create and keep a customer” an explicit invitation for positioning the customer at the heart of marketing strategy, in which the customer represents the focal point for a successful business. Literature on marketing orientation suggests that creating superior

customer value is a major goal for marketing-oriented firms (Narver & Slater, 1990). This process is based on a firm's capability in understanding and fulfilling customers' needs, and managing market knowledge (i.e. gaining, disseminating and responding to knowledge) efficiently through the firm (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990).

In today's competitive market, firms that aim to build a sustainable competitive advantage, developing a coherent marketing orientation is a priority. "Putting a genuine concern customers above all else" (Palmer, 2001, p. 265) should be dominant internal organisational culture controlling all firm's activities at all managerial levels.

The debate over marketing orientation effects on the achievement of organisational performance included a considerable overlapping between the definitions of both terms: marketing orientation and market orientation. Panayides (2004, p.46) illustrated the managerial related level - operational or cultural - as a key issue in differentiating between the two concepts: "to be oriented towards the function or practice of marketing is to be marketing oriented. To have a corporate philosophy or culture geared towards customers, competitors, and the organisational links that disseminate information on both, is to be market-oriented."

Although some authors have a tendency to highlight the distinction between marketing orientation and market orientation, arguing that the "difference is more than semantic" (Ngai & Ellis, 1998, p. 121), the vast majority of related studies have made no distinction between the two orientations (e.g. Ismail et al., 2009; Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1999, 1997; Golden et al., 1995; Lichtenthal & Wilson, 1992; Gummesson, 1990; Payne, 1988).

The bulk of empirical studies carried out on marketing orientation were inspired by two main works that have attracted the attention of scholars and practitioners; Narver and Slater (1990), and Kohli and Jaworski (1990). While Narver and Slater (1990) approached marketing orientation from a cultural perspective, Kohli and Jaworski (1990) developed their marketing orientation conceptual framework principally based on a behavioural perception in which managing knowledge activities related to customer and market (i.e. market intelligence) was the main component in the proposed framework.

As integrated perception, marketing orientation represents a synthesis of attitudes as well as of behaviours (Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1999). Consequently, marketing orientation could be defined as a set of beliefs that puts the customer's interest first (Deshpande et al., 1993), thereby constituting an organisational culture focusing on the creation of superior customer value (Narver & Slater, 1990) through tracking, disseminating, and responding to customer needs and preferences (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993).

Since marketing orientation is viewed as an "organisation culture that most effectively creates the necessary behaviours for the creation of superior value for buyers" (Narver & Slater, 1990, p.21) in that vein, marketing orientation represents a "supportive setting" (Day, 2011) for a firm's capabilities in order to enhance its ability in creating value and responding quickly to a changing environment. Accordingly, the presence of such a 'supportive environment' will result in supporting the continuity of the firm's superiority in the long term.

2.2.1 Perspectives of Marketing Orientation

Based on the variation of their strategic alternatives, their organisational philosophies and priorities, firms vary with regard to understanding, considering and practicing marketing. A comprehensive reviewing of marketing orientation literature revealed different perspectives, which were largely rooted in the two original works in marketing orientation as mentioned above; the works of Narver and Slater (1990) and Kohli and Jaworski (1990). Literature on marketing orientation can be categorised into different five perspectives as suggested by Lafferty and Hult (2001, p.95): the *culturally-based behavioural* perspective, the *market intelligence* perspective, the *decision-making* perspective, the *strategic* perspective, and the *customer orientation* perspective.

A. *Culturally-based Behavioural Perspective*

The culturally-based behavioural perspective (Menguc, 1996; Siguaw et al., 1994; Narver & Slater, 1990) views marketing as an organisational culture by which the achievement of sustainable competitive advantage is attained through delivering superior value for customers. According to Narver and Slater (1990, p.21), marketing orientation "*is the organisational culture that most effectively and efficiently creates the*

necessary behaviours for the creation of superior value for buyers and, thus, continues superior performance for the business”.

Consequently, the culturally-based behavioural perspective conceptualises marketing orientation as encompassing three behavioural components: customer orientation, competitor orientation, and inter-functional coordination. Although the culturally-based perspective comprises different elements, it is however argued that this perspective is essentially customer-oriented as the attention given to customers’ orientation elements is almost twice as important as competitor orientation or inter-functional coordination (Gauzente, 1999).

B. Behavioural Intelligence Perspective

In line with marketing intelligence perspective (Vorhies et al., 1999; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Kohli et al., 1993; Kohli & Jaworski, 1990) marketing orientation refers to the implementations of marketing concept where all activities are mainly driven by the quality of information about market requirements, customer needs, and the coordination in managing and responding to this information.

Firms that practice marketing from the market intelligence perspective will be able to establish a set of information marketing-related capabilities that will enable them to achieve superior performance (Vorhies & Harker, 2000). Thus, marketing orientation reflects the implementations of the marketing concept within the informational management (IM) view. According to Kohli and Jaworski (1990, p.6), marketing orientation *“is the organisation wide generation of market intelligence pertaining to current and future customer needs, dissemination of the intelligence across departments, and organisation wide responsiveness to it”.*

Comparing marketing-oriented organisations to non-marketing-oriented ones, the former are more likely to manage and respond to information about market conditions efficiently (Vorhies & Harker, 2000; Vorhies et al., 1999; Kohli et al., 1993). Likewise, Trout and Ries (1985) have signified the critical efforts of market intelligence for firms in achieving competitive advantage. However, marketing orientation is not restricted in the narrow concept of marketing intelligence. On the contrary, managing the market information process should cover all potential internal and other exogenous areas (Mokhtar et al., 2009). In addition, marketing orientation intelligence activities are

concerned not only with present needs of customers, but also future needs and expectations (Gauzente, 1999).

Kohli and Jaworski (1993) developed a marketing orientation measurement tool [Markor] which was widely adopted in later studies (e.g. Bunic, 2007; Vorhies & Harker, 2000; Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1999). The developed measurement gauge was to evaluate marketing orientation within the behavioural perspective approach focusing on three sub-dimensions of the market orientation construct; namely (i) generation of market intelligence, (ii) dissemination of market intelligence across departments and (iii) the degree of responsiveness to the market intelligence activities.

Although the cultural aspects of Narver and Slater's (1990) perspective were excluded from the marketing intelligence perspective, however, both perspectives are apparently similar (Gauzente, 1999) in considering the importance of information sharing and inter-departmental coordination in creating customer value.

C. Decision-making Perspective

The decision-making perspective conceptualises marketing orientation as an organisational decision-making process. According to Shapiro (1988), in marketing-oriented firms, all "*strategic and tactic decisions are made interfunctionally and interdivisionally*" (p. 121), and "*divisions and functions make well-coordinated decisions and execute them with a sense of commitment*" (p. 122). Clearly, two main characteristics could be concluded from Shapiro's (1988) definition of marketing orientation. The first is that marketing orientation gives great attention to information sharing which should be "*permeate every corporate function*" (Shapiro, 120). Second, the commitment among the employees of such firms to pursue strategic and tactical practices and decisions in an interfunctional and interdivisional manner facilitates well-coordinated decision making among the firm's departments/divisions.

D. Strategic Focus Perspective

The strategic focus perspective approaches marketing orientation from the viewpoint of strategy development and execution. Strategic management offers different alternative levels for strategic analysis (e.g. market, business or customer) (Lafferty & Hult, 2001). Meanwhile, the business unit is the adopted analysis level in this perspective as indicated by Ruekert (1992, p. 228); "*the level of market orientation in a business unit*

is the degree to which the business unit obtains and uses information from customers, develops a strategy which will meet customer needs, and implements that strategy by being responsive to customer needs and wants". Consequently, evaluating to which degree a particular firm is marketing-oriented requires covering three areas; its ability to manage (to obtain and use) information from customers, its ability to develop a sophisticated strategy to meet customers' needs, and the way the strategy responds to customer's needs.

E. Customer Orientation Perspective

According to Deshpande et al. (1993), customer orientation and marketing orientation are two sides of the same coin. "*Customer orientation is the set of beliefs that puts the customer's interest first, while not excluding those of all other stakeholders such as owners, managers, and employees, in order to develop a long-term profitable enterprise*" (Deshpande et al., 1993, p. 27). This perception of marketing orientation has been criticised as competitor orientation aspects were excluded as being almost antithetical to its assumptions (Lafferty & Hult, 2001). However, from a practical view of point, it was argued that customer orientation and marketing orientation are identical as customer retention is the centre of attention of this perspective (Mokhtar et al., 2009).

To summarise, literature on the various perspectives conceptualising marketing orientation can be categorised into two general perspectives: attitudinal focus and behavioural focus researches. In addition, as a result of sharing the same roots [the works of Narver and Slater (1990) and Kohli and Jaworski (1990)] the different perspectives of marketing orientation have several common components (Lafferty & Hult, 2001) that all perspectives relatively included. (i) The emphasis on meeting customer needs and creating value for the customer, (ii) the importance of shared knowledge (information) about customers and competitors, (iii) the inter-functional coordination of marketing activities and relationships, and (iv) being responsive to market activities by taking the appropriate action. Accordingly, these areas of similarity represent a basic conceptualisation of the marketing orientation construct encompassing the essential ingredients for measuring marketing orientation within its integrated perspectives; the attitudinal and the behavioural.

2.2.2 Firm's Marketing Strategy and Competitive Advantage

Gaining competitive advantages over rivals lies at the heart of a firm's strategic planning in today's dynamic and highly competitive environment.

Firms' different orientations have different influences on the achievement of competitive advantage and on the ways in which firms manage their capabilities to achieve it (Vorhies & Harker, 2000; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Day, 1990; Day & Wensley, 1988).

Many studies have addressed how to create, manage and sustain competitive advantage which represents the most effective strategic alternative for dealing with challenges that threaten a firm's organisational survival (Srivastava et al., 2001).

2.2.2.1 Schools' Thought on Competitive Advantage

Related literature focuses on two schools of thought theorising relative perceptions of competitive advantage of the firm; the positioning school and the capabilities (resources)-based view.

(i) **The positioning school** adopts a strategic analytical view where the core thought is the idea of positioning the firm within the context of its industry based largely on Michael Porter's Five Forces Framework (1979).

The 1977 work by Hatten and Schendel, *Heterogeneity within an Industry*, represents the root of the positioning school logic (Mintzberg et al., 1998). Within an economic context the interesting question the authors intended to highlight was, "why did these different firms (i.e. in the U.S. brewing industry) experience different degrees of success?".

According to Hatten and Schendel (1977, p. 7), "the importance of market structure lies in the way it induces firms to behave. Their behaviour in changing prices, outputs, product characteristics, selling expenses, and research expenditures".

In his first Harvard Business Review article, *How Competitive Forces Shape Strategy* (1979), Michael Porter's work started a revolution in the strategy field when he developed what is now a very popular framework: the Five Competitive Forces Model. Porter's model, which is viewed as an analytical strategic purposes framework (Ciobanasu, 2012) uses analytical tools to find out where the company is positioned in the market and how to define it.

From a strategic viewpoint, an environmental threat represents any factor, or organisation outside a firm that has the potential to negatively impact the level of a firm's performance (Christensen et al., 1982). Thus, the objective of developing such a model was to assist managers to evaluate their firms' strengths and weaknesses within the competitive environment and to help in analysing and neutralising (Barney, 1996) these potential threats. Application of the model can also help the management team to view the industry from a boarder perspective than would typically be the case (Bowman & Faulkner, 1997) leading to the construction of better competitive strategies.

In line with the **positioning school** perspective, the key to evaluating a particular player's profitability is an understanding of its positioning in its industry. In contrast with the Resource-Based View (RBV) (Grant, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984) which concentrates on a firm's internal capabilities and resources in achieving competitive advantage, Porter's (1980) five forces framework represents an opposing academic viewpoint pays more attention to the external environmental variables (Ciobanasu, 2012, p.10).

As a proponent of the positioning school, Porter's five forces approach assumes that, a firm achieves competitive advantage through *low cost* or *differentiation* by defending its attractive market and keeping competitors off balance through pricing strategies or strategic investment (Day, 1994). Here too, a firm evaluates its overall competitive environment by focusing on five aspects in order to develop its particular competitive strategy. Porter (1985) named five forces that determine industrial attractiveness and long-run profitability, and which also affect a firm's performance in differentiating its products, image, and position from those of its rivals:

- The threat of entry of new competitors (new entrants).
- The threat of substitute products/services
- The bargaining power of buyers
- The bargaining power of suppliers
- Rivalry between existing competitors

According to Porter's work (1980, 1985), overall cost leadership, differentiation, and focus represent different generic competitive alternatives and visions. Moreover, Porter (1980, p. 41) stressed that at the very least, a firm has to adopt a certain competitive strategy; a firm that does not have clear orientation is "stuck in the middle" firm, a state

which reflects an extremely poor strategic situation in which a firm possesses no competitive advantage.

(ii) The Capabilities (Resources)-Based View of firm assumes that the organisation's performance is determined – mainly - by the efficient deployment of the firm's internal resources and competencies. Spearheaded by the works of Wernerfelt (1984), Grant (1991) and Barney (1991), the RBV is viewed as one of the most influential and cited theories in the field of strategic management. It offers an appropriate tool for analysing a firm's resource position (Wernerfelt, 1984) and provides a theoretical base regarding the link between the deployment of the firm's distinctive resources and the achievement of competitive advantage which in turn results in the firm's superior performance (Hooley et al., 1999).

“Why firms are different” is the central statement that the RBV revolves around. In line with the RBV stance, the basis for creating a sustainable competitive advantage is drawn from a firm's distinct capabilities that comprise a bundle of valuable, rare, inimitable and non- substitutable (VRIN) resources (Barney, 1991). Thus, the central proposition of the RBV is that, in order for a firm to achieve a state of sustainable competitive advantage (SCA), it must acquire and control these VRIN resources and capabilities efficiently (Kraaijenbrink et al., 2010).

The fundamental difference that distinguishes the resource-based view (RBV) from other perceptions draws on the notion that the RBV is seen as an attempt “to look at firms in terms of their resources rather than in terms of their products” (Wernerfelt, 1984, p. 179), the logic which was embedded in a substantial body of further studies providing a powerful theoretical perspective (Peng, 2001).

Consequently, the RBV represents an inside-out view (Connor, 2002; Long & Vickers-Koch, 1995; Day, 1994; Ulrich & Lake, 1990) where its perspective emphasises that competitive advantage is achieved through managing a firm's unique existing resources. In other words, firms have to approach their competitive strategies from the capability perspective rather than from the market position (Hamal & Prahalad, 1994).

Consequently, with regard to firms' inside-out view, “firms focus on their distinctive, hard-to-imitate core capabilities, rather than portfolios of products and markets” (Long & Vickers-Koch, 1995).

To conclude, in line with the RBV logic, decision makers should distinguish the critical and advantage-creation resources (Barney, 1991) from other basic ones and should concentrate investments in these unique internal resources and capabilities (Day, 1994; Vorhes & Harker, 2000) in order to raise the overall performance of their businesses.

2.2.2.2 Marketing Orientation (MO) and Firm Performance

To achieve competitive advantage in the market place is the desired outcome of the managerial activities of a firm, through investing in its resources and capabilities (Hooley et al., 1999). Maintaining competitive advantage - in turn - will result in the achievement of superior performance. The transformation process in which resources (inputs) are generated into business performance (outputs) (Nath et al., 2010) is accomplished through the firm's functional capabilities (marketing and operations). As an intermediate stage, marketing and operation capabilities link resources and skills together to be deployed advantageously (Day, 1994). The above processes are influenced by a firm's adopted strategic alternative(s) (e.g., marketing orientation, product orientation, sales orientation, etc.).

Several studies were conducted at the aim of assessing the 'level' (Ruekert, 1992) or the 'degree' (Tesar et al., 2000; Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1999) of marketing orientation adoption and firms' performance. Although some studies' outcomes could not support a significant direct effect between marketing orientation and business performance (e.g. Han et al., 1998; Siguaw et al., 1998; Greenley, 1995; Diamantopoulos & Hart, 1993 cited in Mokhtar et al., 2009, p.79), the positive association between marketing orientation with organisational performance was the common finding of most studies.

A comprehensive review of 111 studies on marketing origination-business performance relationship undertaken by Bunic (2007) reveals 78% positive effects of marketing origination measures of business performance, 22% non-significant effects, and 1% negative effects.

It is worth noting that the majority of marketing origination studies report results from samples of heterogeneous firms across Western industrial sectors. Consequently, the main marketing orientation constructs, i.e. the MKTOR scale of Narver and Slater (1990) and the MARKOR scale of Kohli and Jaworski (1993, 1990) were developed and tested principally on studies of large manufacturing firms (Mahmoud, 2011)

within Western cultures (Mokhtar et al., 2009). Hence, some studies were conducted in response to the argument: marketing orientation constructs need to be validated within small- and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) in developing countries.

The research conducted by Mahmoud (2011) investigated SMEs in the Ghanaian market. The study aimed at measuring the impact of marketing orientation antecedents (e.g. organisational commitment, interconnectedness, reward system) on firms' performance. Although the research findings demonstrate the appropriateness of the fundamental marketing orientation proposition represented in the positive influence on firms' performance in the context of SMEs, it was, however, a causal relationship design research.

A similar study conducted by Charles et al. (2012) adopted a causal research design based on the Resource Based View (RBV) logic in linking marketing orientation and organisational performance in the Kenyan manufacturing sector. The authors argued that marketing-oriented firms enjoy a knowledge advantage that differentiates them from their competitors, which may enable them to perform better in managing the surrounding environment, and hence to achieve the intended performance. Their research findings supported the above assumption and confirmed the positive influence of marketing orientation on firms' ability to respond to dynamic environment and to attain organisational performance. Although the research considers the relational role of a firm's processes while evaluating the effect of the business environment on the relationship between marketing orientation and a firm's performance, it was also a causal quantitative study. In addition, great attention was paid by the authors to the financial indicators, e.g. return on sales (ROS), return on assets (ROA), and return on investment (ROI), for measuring the organisational performance.

As an empirical design research, and in order to determine the factors that increase a firm's export capability Usman et al. (2012) evaluated the relationship between marketing orientation and marketing mix, and their influence on a firm's export performance. The study findings clearly confirmed the positive impact of effective implementations of marketing orientation such as information system and export commitment on enhancing a firm's export performance measured by export revenues as a financial performance indicator.

Some scholars considered marketing orientation as a firm capability (Day, 1994) while others viewed it as a critical source of competitive advantage (Pelham & Wilson, 1996; Slater & Narver, 1994). But to which extent does marketing orientation create a source of sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) this was the prominent question of Kumar et al.'s (2011) study. Within a nine-year period of causal design research, Kumar et al. (2011) highlighted the effect of marketing orientation on the 'sustainability' of firms' performance. Contrary to many studies on marketing orientation, the authors investigated business performance in both the short and the long run using longitudinal financial data (e.g. sales and net income) extended from 1997 to 2005. The study called for further research in the same line assessing marketing orientation influences on more unexplored measures specifically, such as customer loyalty and satisfaction.

In conclusion, despite the importance of previous research on marketing orientation, a distinct body of these studies adopted an *empirical research design* to assess the *causal relationship* between marketing orientation and firms' performance (e.g. Usman et al., 2012; Bunic, 2007; Dikmen et al., 2005; Vorhies & Harker, 2000; Ngai & Ellis, 1998). Meanwhile only limited attention was given to the mechanisms that underlie the links between marketing orientation and a firm's organisational performance in many of the proposed conceptual frameworks. Moreover, these studies focused more on the *financial indicators* to evaluate the effect of marketing orientation on competitive advantage represented in organisational performance, while marketing indicators such as customer satisfaction and customer retention were yet to be evaluated in detail.

To conclude, the vast majority of previous research on marketing orientation has developed its conceptual frameworks based on the static view of competitive advantage, which essentially adopts short-run financial performance measurements. However, the mechanisms that underlie 'marketing orientation-organisational performance' relationship within the long-term perspective [the sustainability of competitive advantage] has not been given the attention it deserves by scholars, and only few studies attempted to highlight this critical issue (e.g. Kumar et al., 2011; Gebhardt et al., 2006) which also adopts a causal quantitative approach in order to assess this relationship.

2.2.2.3 Marketing Orientation and Corporate Culture

The key success factor for today's businesses is no longer cash, but the effective management of the relational aspects of firms' offerings and operations, e.g., human capital and knowledge. Meanwhile, corporate culture significantly affects the ways these firms manage the relational (or even the basic) aspects of provided services.

In line with the culturally-based behavioural perspective of marketing, the desire to create superior value for customers and attain sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) drives a business to create and maintain the culture that will produce the necessary behaviours (Narver & Slater, 1990). Hence, marketing orientation represents the implementation of market culture that emphasises customer satisfaction as a key issue that leads to the market's superiority and competitiveness.

In relevant literature, corporate culture is viewed in different ways. The work of Hajipour and Ghanavati (2012) focuses attention on the effect of corporate culture upon a firm's market orientation (MO). Shiu and Yu (2010) investigated the relationship between internal marketing and organisational culture and argued that a customer-oriented organisational culture will positively affect internal marketing. Within service context research, Stuart (1998) examined the influence of organisational culture on new service design and introduction.

Corporate culture is defined as the patterns of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members as a correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 1984, p. 3). In a similar stance, and based on cognitive organisation theory (Weick, 1985) organisational culture focuses on managerial information processing and views organisations as knowledge systems.

Organisational culture represents the values, attitudes, expectations, norms, beliefs, faiths, and assumptions in an organisation shared by all the business members (Deshpande & Farley, 1999; Deshpande et al., 1993). The sharing of such values allows an organisation to address the ever-changing problems of adaptation to the external environment and the internal integration of organisational resources, personnel, and policies to support external adaptation (Steven, 2000 cited in Shiu & Yu, 2010, p.796).

In addition, organisational culture distinguishes the unique characteristics of each company and can also serve as both a determinant and a controlling mechanism, guiding and moulding employees' attitudes and behaviour (Robbins, 2000).

Wallach (1983) developed an Organisational Culture Index (OCI) in which corporate culture is classified into three main categories; bureaucratic, innovative and supportive. While bureaucratic culture refers to a hierarchical and compartmentalised style within the usually structured, stable, mature and power-oriented organisations, an innovative culture represents a creative and challenging work environment. A supportive culture which is seen as relationships-oriented and collaborative reflects the values of teamwork and offers a people-oriented, encouraging, trusting work environment.

From the above literature, it is clear that corporate culture plays an important role in promoting organisational success, as it works as a glue that binds all the values of a firm, and this can only be achieved by ensuring that an appropriate culture is developed or shaped in the organisation that matches the managers' values, attitudes, and behaviours (Shiu & Yu, 2010, p. 796).

2.2.3 Alternative Orientations and Marketing Typology

Firms' philosophies and visions vary towards the adoption of a particular strategic orientation. Also, firms are different with regard to their considerations about marketing as an adopted strategy: marketing oriented, product (quality) oriented, sales oriented, production oriented, or even agnostics in marketing (Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1999; Hooley et al., 1990; Bois, 1980).

Marketing orientation reflects the purpose of a business as the creation and retention of satisfied customers (Day, 1994), and establishes satisfying customers' needs as the core factor for sustaining profitability by deploying a firm's resources and capabilities efficiently. On the other hand, product orientation proponents argue that the quality of their products sells itself (Payne, 1998).

Since firms' philosophies and visions are varied, many studies have been carried out to explain the different orientations of firms. Building on the work of Fayed (1973), Payne (1988) suggested a classification of different orientations. The author drew match between five different strategic inclinations and their associated attitudes: marketing orientation, product orientation, cost orientation, capacity orientation, and erratic

orientation, as shown in table 2.1 below. Later, Avlonitis and Gounaris (1999) suggested sales orientation, production orientation and agnostics in marketing as conflicting attitudes to marketing orientation in firms.

Table 2.1: Firms' Alternative Orientations

Types of Orientations	Typical Associated Attitudes
Marketing Orientation	We make our profit by creating opportunities to more effectively satisfy our customers' needs within the constraints of our resources and skills limitations
Product Orientation	The quality of our products sells itself, and customers will always need our product
Cost Orientation	The only way to improve our profits is to reduce our marketing and production costs
Capacity Orientation	The more we make, the more profitable it becomes. So let's go there and make the customer buy
Erratic Orientation	You just cannot plan ahead in this industry, nobody knows what's going to happen from one day to the next

Source: Payne (1988)

2.2.3.1 Marketing Typology

The academic definition of marketing which refers to the “process through which companies create value for their customers and for themselves” (Kotler et al., 2008) highlights marketing within its operational context. In practice, marketing comprises many activities, including market research, enhancing sales, communicating, promoting and advertising, and market data analysis. Despite the apparent characterisation of the functional aspects in the above definition of the ‘concept’ of marketing, there is a broad consensus that marketing is considered as an organisational philosophy or attitude, which offers a particular approach to doing business (Bernard, 1987; Brown, 1987).

In order to categorise decisions makers' attitudes toward marketing, related literature suggested various classifications aimed at developing a typology of current approaches to marketing and exploring related implementation. Marketing typology, which refers to the different stages that firms move through within the levels of marketing orientation, was introduced by Keith (1960) who suggested production orientation, sales orientation, and marketing orientation as three different ‘eras’ of marketing developments. Although

Keith's (1960) notion regarding the adoption 'level of marketing orientation' based on marketing typology was criticised because of the limitations (Fullerton, 1988) associated with the historical perspective of marketing orientation development, Keith's marketing typology was later adopted by several studies (Tesar et al., 2000; Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1997; Bois, 1980) as a useful descriptive tactic.

In addition to '*market analysis and adaptation*' as an organisational attitude to marketing (Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1997), the study conducted by Hooley et al. (1990) identified four distinct approaches for marketing. The '*marketing philosophers*' approach marketing from an attitudinal perspective in which marketing represents a dominant culture guiding (Gatignon & Xuereb, 1995) all organisation activities at all levels. In line with this view, as marketing is a philosophy, it also has behavioural consequences where the functional aspects according to this view are reflected in the affirmation of the 'prime responsibility for identifying and meeting customers' needs'. Consequently, marketing philosophers are these companies [which] believe that marketing is primarily a company culture (Slater & Narver, 1995) with a priority in satisfying customers' needs (Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1997). It is a business philosophy which puts the customer at the centre of all the organisation's considerations (Palmer, 2001).

'*Sales supporters*' consider marketing as a primary function (e.g. sales and promotion) not as a guiding philosophy. According to this understanding, marketing is clearly restricted to the selling department functions; meanwhile proactive functional orientation of identifying customer needs is neglected. '*Departmental marketers*' confine marketing to what the marketing department does; however they consider marketing beliefs in satisfying customers' needs, but they are not committed to the adoption of full marketing orientation. Finally, '*Unsure*' represent the lack of clarity within marketing as Hooley et al. (1990, pp.11-12) argued.

In conclusion, the following key issues can be concluded from reviewing the literature on marketing orientation:

- Firms' different orientations have different influences on the achievement of competitive advantage and on the ways firms manage their capabilities to achieve it (Vorhies & Harker, 2000; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Day, 1990; Day & Wensley,

1988). Consequently, a great deal of attention has been devoted to assessing the causal relationship between the adopted level (degree) of marketing orientation (MO) and the achievement of competitive advantage represented in different aspects of firm's organisational performance, mostly within the short run. However, the mechanisms that underlie the links between marketing orientation and firm's organisational performance were poorly investigated, particularly in services where intangible assets create more ambiguity in this relationship.

- The main areas of similarities among the general perspectives of marketing orientation namely; (i) identifying customers' needs and the emphasis on creating value for the customer,(ii) the inter-functional coordination of marketing activities and relationships. (iii) The shared knowledge and information management through managing the generation and dissemination of intelligence activities, and finally (iv) responsiveness activities represent essential components of integrated; cultural and behavioural marketing orientation measurement.

- Furthermore, marketing typology offers an appropriate classification scheme that enables those concerned to achieve a comprehensive perspective of the actors' considerations within a particular sector regarding *'to which extent the concept of marketing is clear and adopted by marketers, and how they consider marketing'*.

2.3 Value-driven Relational Marketing (V-dRM)

Marketing is witnessing the rise of the values-driven era and organisations are shifting to become more customer-centric (Rababah et al., 2011). The value-driven relational marketing (V-dRM) approach (Peck et al., 1999; Gronroos, 1997; Buttle, 1996; Ravald & Gronroos, 1996) represents a considerable development in marketing thought as a transition from a product-oriented to a resource-oriented view. In line with the V-dRM perspective, marketers have to go beyond the simplistic concept of a product in order to achieve a valuable perceived satisfaction by customers (Gronroos, 1997).

In the same line, the relationship between service provider (seller) and customer (buyer) has evolved from the transactional perception which views marketing exclusively as an art of selling, into a relational view as shown in figure 2.1 below.

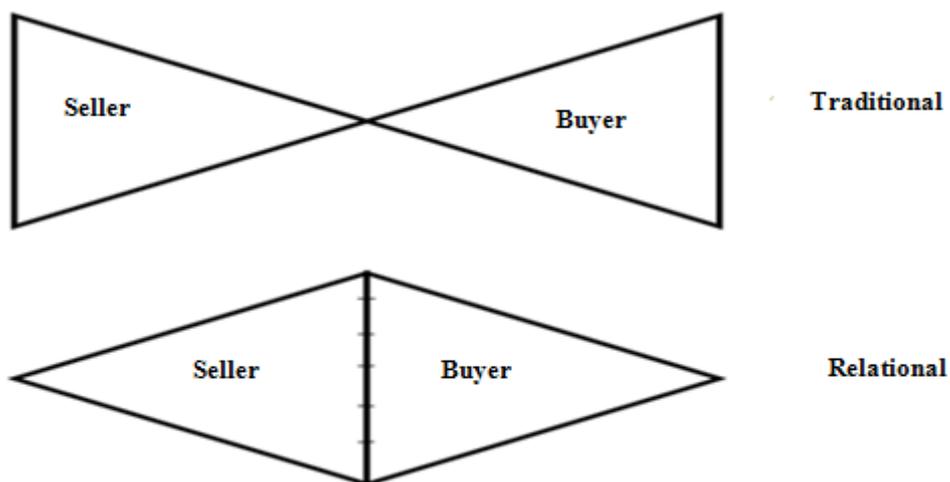


Figure 2.1: Two Models of Seller/Buyer Interaction

Source: Buttle (1996)

Approaching marketing based on a “product-centric” perception is no longer valid in today’s information age where “customer is king” represents the ideal rule that controls all marketing strategies and tactics in such competitive markets (Kotler et al., 2010).

2.3.1 Approaches of Value-driven Relational Marketing (V-dRM)

A. Value Creation (Customer Satisfaction) Approach

Approached from a relationship perception, marketing is concerned —mainly— with creating and delivering customers the desired value advantageously. In line with the V-dRM perspective in order to achieve the targeted marketing goals, the firm should

be a “value carrier” (Ravald & Gronroos, 1996) that offers customers a better value than its rivals (Ponsonby & Boyle, 2004). A recent *formal definition of marketing* (American Marketing Association, 2004) strongly highlighted both; *value* and *relationship*. “Marketing is an organisational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering *value* to customers and for managing *customer relationships* in ways that benefit the organisation and its stakeholders.”

According to Gallarza et al. (2011, p.181), several aspects contributed in positioning value at the heart of marketing research. Value is ‘*synchronically*’ (i.e. viewed at a moment in time) important for marketing. While marketing comprises the activities for exchanging offerings that have value for customers, consumer value represents one of the main “axiomatic roots” for marketing theory explaining the exchange relationship itself. Moreover, value is ‘*diachronically*’ (i.e. pertaining to changes over time) important for marketing concerning the continuous evolution of marketing thought.

Intense competition and the rapid changes in today’s dynamic markets, where customers are also becoming more demanding, have stimulated marketers to shift toward value-driven marketing. Such an approach requires the focus to be on satisfying customers, and ensuring that the firm’s promise [value] is delivered efficiently (Walters & Lancaster, 1999) through the continuous evaluation of all firm-customer touch points (Mithas et al., 2005).

The value-based strategy reflects the firm’s ability to establish a value creation relationship with customers and to manage it profitability. Chatain (2011, p.79) argued that a firm’s value creation capability is measured by its ‘added value’ and highlighted three components of interest in the value creation relationship; product line capability, client-specific knowledge and client-specific economies of scope.

According to Aaker (1996) a common challenge for many companies is the exaggerated reliance on product-related brand characteristics. Instead, he advocated for adopting more relational and boarder view of brand strategy as firm’s real value lies outside the business itself: in the minds of potential buyers (Tuominen, 1999).

Moreover, literature has highlighted other additional aspects of value. For example, Swaminathan and Moorman (2009) pointed out the role of marketing alliances and strategic networks in establishing a firm’s value and concluded the positive impact of the firm’s ability to manage a network of previous marketing alliances [marketing alliance capability] on value creation.

Customer Satisfaction and Perceived Value

Perceived value is rooted to the equity theory (Adams, 1965) that attempts to explain satisfaction in terms of perceptions of fair/unfair based on both customers' and supplier's rational evaluation and comparison to the related inputs and outcomes (Oliver & DeSarbo, 1988).

The concept of 'value' is fundamental to marketing theory (Holbrook, 1994). Value represents a central topic that is positioned at the core of marketing research particularly when evaluating customer responses in services (Gallarza et al., 2011, p. 187). Customer satisfaction and value have a strong and interrelated relationship; hence customer satisfaction is recognised as being highly associated with 'value' (Athanasopoulos, 2000, p. 192).

Furthermore, the concept of value has an economic (i.e. transaction value) dimension and a psychological dimension; thus value has "meaningful epistemological implications for marketing as a discipline" (Gallarza et al., 2011). Accordingly, value—whether the economic or the psychological aspect—has been employed extensively by many marketing studies alongside other major constructs such as customer satisfaction, customer retention and service quality.

From the consumer's viewpoint, value as essential requirement for satisfaction can be perceived within several forms; value can be viewed as more reliability (Sharma & Singh 2012) and more convenient by a particular consumer. Value can be viewed as less expensive (Gale et al., 2006), as faster services (Campbell et al., 2011), or as a non-additional cost service (Collins, 1986). Furthermore, value may take the form of information, as in the case of a 'call centre' at a telecommunications service provider (TSP). Also, it may take the form of a more personalised service when a particular TSP sends their customers a congratulatory letter on personal occasions, or when a particular consumer's complaint is treated as a priority according to the TSP's customer service recommendation as an important customer.

Prior studies have conceptualised perceived value as a component of service quality (Santouridis & Trivellas 2010), a main determinant of customer loyalty (Brodie et al., 2009; Oh, 1999), a determinant of satisfaction (Hutchinson et al., 2009; Gallarza et al., 2009), and also as a major contributor to purchase intention (Chang & Wildt, 1994). According to Zeithaml (1988), value which is viewed as the perceived benefits relative to costs constitutes a main component of customer satisfaction.

It was obvious that the above studies viewed perceived value [as an antecedent rather than outcome] for the achievement of superior marketing performance represented in customer satisfaction meanwhile, perceived quality (Yuan & Wu, 2008) and perceived value (Kashyap & Bojanic, 2000) constitute its two main ingredients. On the contrary, other scholars have considered value as an outcome to satisfaction [rather than antecedent] (Chiou, 2004; Petrick & Backman, 2002), or as an outcome of loyalty [rather than antecedent] (Petrick et al., 2001).

Gallarza et al. (2011) highlighted the “confusion of terminology” regarding value, satisfaction and quality which reflects the variation in identifying the causal relationships between them. Meanwhile, the vagueness of the conceptual obstacles (i.e. value is ‘polysemic’ in marketing literature) and methodological constraints (no consensus on value dimensions) reflects a considerable challenge that hinders researchers in assessing the relationship between value and other variables.

In order to deal with such overlap “hybrid constructs” were suggested by Gallarza et al. (2011) highlighting the interrelated relationships within a conceptual delimitation linking value, quality, and satisfaction (figure 2.2) in which each pair of concepts was focused on independently.

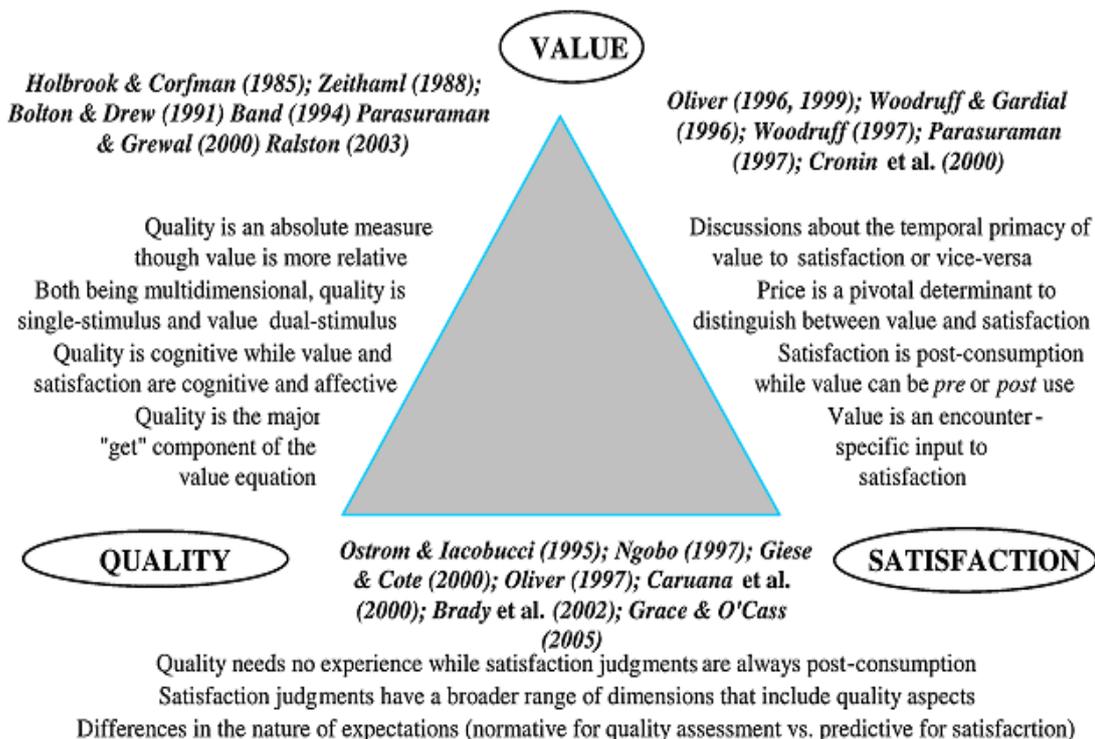


Figure 2.2: Conceptual Delimitation: Value, Quality, and Satisfaction

Source: Gallarza et al. (2011, p.185)

In conclusion, despite the debate over the satisfaction-value relationship, a distinct body of marketing literature has considered value as an essential requirement [input] to satisfaction (e.g. Srivoravilai et al., 2011; Yang & Peterson, 2004; McDougall & Levesque, 2000; Fornell et al., 1996). According to Gallarza et al. (2011, p.185), “it appears more common to understand value as an antecedent of satisfaction, rather than satisfaction as an antecedent of value.” In a somewhat different tone, Allred et al. (2011) argued that a firm’s capability to create value could be investigated by measuring its achieved performance with regard to customer satisfaction in addition to other indicators such as productivity, for instance.

B. Firm-Customer Relationship (Customer Retention) Approach

In a competitive business environment where markets mature and all companies become relatively experienced in handling technology, the firm-customer relationship becomes a key source for differentiation (Kar, 2006). In such an environment, the simplistic concept of a product as a prefabricated package of resources is not sufficient (Gronroos, 1997, p. 417). Instead, one has to go beyond the product concept to understand the value-creating benefits of an offering within long-term relationship view.

Relationship marketing is considered as an umbrella philosophy for the relational approach in marketing (Kanagal, 2009) where the overall focus is directed toward interactions, dialogue and management of value amongst the different actors (Kar, 2006). According to the relational marketing perspective (Peck et al., 1999; Gronroos, 1999, 1997; Ravald & Gronroos, 1996) marketing includes the process of establishing, maintaining and, when necessary, terminating relationships with customers and other stakeholders —at a profit— (Gronroos, 1999) by a series of relational exchanges.

The term ‘relationship marketing’ (RM) was used in marketing literature in different contexts. Brodie et al. (1997, p. 384) categorised these multiple uses within four levels. At one level, relationship marketing is seen as a technology-based tool of database marketing used by firms to acquire and manage customers. At a second broader level, relationship marketing focuses on the relationships between a business and its customer base, with the emphasis on customer retention. At a third, relationship marketing is considered to be a form of “customer partnering” where the buyer is involved in the design of the product or service offering, a processes that is being managed within a cooperative manner. At the fourth and broadest level, as a “catch-all” phase, relationship marketing includes incorporating different operational and relational

aspects, such as databases to personalised services, loyalty programmes, brand loyalty, internal marketing, personal/social relationships and strategic alliances.

Obviously, *Customer Retention (CR)* is linked to relationship marketing (Kanagal, 2009) which can be described as the marketing goal of preventing a firm's customers from going to the competitors (Roberts-Lombard, 2009), and also entails keeping customers active with the firm (Peppard & Rylander, 2006). Consequently, customer retention is the main component of three core customer management processes constituting the customer lifecycle; (i) customer acquisition, (ii) customer retention, and (iii) customer development (Buttle, 2009).

From a strategic viewpoint, customer retention is a key issue as “a cost effective and profitable strategy” (Sharma, 2012) in the dynamic and highly competitive environment. It is of crucial importance to emphasise the attention given to customer retention within markets whose offerings are introduced generally based on constant relationships with customers (e.g. insurance services, telecommunication services, maintenance contracts and consulting services, etc). It is more economical to keep customers than to acquire new ones (Cohen et al., 2007) where the cost of acquiring a new customer is far greater than the cost of maintaining the firm-customer relationship because firms' expenses related to attracting and acquiring customers are mainly incurred at the initial stages of the commercial relationship (Reichheld & Kenny, 1990).

In line with relationship marketing view, establishing a successful firm-customer relationship requires an understanding of customer behaviours and a focus on those customers who can deliver long-term profit to the firm (Winer, 2001). Consequently, the broad definition of customer retention includes all firms' efforts that aim at maximising the proportion of valuable customers and minimising the proportion of customer defections (churn rate). Thus, customer retention should be managed with the aim of reaching the level of customer development by increasing the value of existing customers (Buttle, 2009) which represents an advanced phase of the consumer lifecycle.

Customer Retention (CR) in Telecommunications Services

Given the increased competition, telecommunications service providers (TSPs) face considerable challenges in maintaining their existing valuable customers where the power in such market has clearly shifted to the consumer (Jacada, 2008). As penetration

rates within telecommunications markets reach saturation, TSPs can increase their revenues and maximise the value of their market base through focusing on existing customers (Buttle, 2009; Peppard & Rylander, 2006). Accordingly, customer retention (CR) is viewed as an essential 'intermediate' goal for TSPs on their way to superior performance (Gerpott et al., 2001).

Research carried out in this area (precisely in telecommunications) pushed the focus to the crucial role of the firm's customer retention strategy in maintaining competitive advantage. Sustaining the superiority in such markets is achieved through retaining customers and keeping them loyal to the firm's brand within a broad value-driven relationship marketing view (Ali et al., 2010; Vanniarajan & Gurunathan, 2009; Silva & Yapa, 2009; Lim et al., 2006; Aydin et al., 2005; Gerpott et al., 2001).

Interestingly, to the contrary, Voss and Voss (2008, p.14) posited that retention strategy can be "productive in stable, but not in dynamic market." Although the apparent paradox of Voss and Voss's viewpoint to the bulk of related research lies in considering customer retention productivity within a dynamic environment, a reconciliation of the two viewpoints is achieved through more insight into the context of Voss and Voss' work and its definition of dynamicity which was linked to 'market density'. In line with previous literature, the study of Voss and Voss (2008, p.3) stressed the importance of customer retention in the markets that are characterised by the limited number of competitors as the case of telecommunications;

when competitive density is low, a customer retention strategy emphasising close relationships with customers and adaptive learning enhances performance. When competitive density is high, a customer acquisition strategy emphasising innovation and competitor learning enhances performance.

The ability to retain customers in the face of competition is a major concern for telecommunications service providers. Recently, the telecommunications market has witnessed a radical development towards considering the firm-customer relationship from engaging in transactions and generating revenue through network usage to firm-customer partnership models.

One key shift is raising focus on customer retention as conceded by Peppard and Rylander (2006, p. 4):

the early practice among operators was to push services at customers focusing on customer acquiring as main marketing tactic. Today, the focus is on better understanding customers and their preferences, and segmenting the customer base, focusing on providing differentiating offerings aiming at retention their marketing base.

To summarise, in telecommunications, customer retention (CR) is a long-term objective that is being achieved through a comprehensive relationship marketing strategy that determines which customers are to be retained, or who has the greatest strategic value to the service provider (Jacada, 2008); this is a critical issue. Meanwhile, it is not guaranteed that every customer retention programme generates contribution. Therefore, the concept of customer lifetime value (CLV) plays an important role (Silva & Yapa, 2009) in assessing whether it is worth retaining relationships with such customers (Gummesson, 2004) or not.

Customer Retention and Switching Barriers

According to Buttle (2009, p.258) customer retention is the mirror image of customer defection or churn and high retention is equivalent to low defection. Consequently, switching barriers was advocated as a strategic tool with the aim of controlling switching behaviour through establishing the restrictions and the impediments of customers' changing of suppliers.

From both theoretical and empirical viewpoints, the costs associated with switching barriers have a central role in explaining customer switching behaviour. Switching cost is recognised as critical driver of customer retention that leads to stable and long-lasting relationships (Polo & Sese, 2009). Switching costs can be classified into two main types: procedural switching costs and financial switching costs (Wen-hua et al., 2011). Similarly, Klemperer (1995) argued that switching cost could be categorised into three types: transaction, learning, or contractual costs.

Although literature considers customer satisfaction as a fundamental determinant (Sharma & Singh, 2012) or expected antecedents (Dick & Basu, 1994) of loyalty, satisfied customers may not be loyal customers because of low switching barriers (Chang & Chen, 2008). In a similar study, it was pointed out that more than a third of the customers who are totally satisfied switched for different reasons (Zhang Yancai, 2008 cited in Wen-hua et al., 2011).

As many telecommunications service markets have been liberalised within the last couple of decades, more competition and more challenges are expected to face incumbent services providers. Within an exploratory study, Wieringa and Verhoef (2007) found that quality represents the most important driver of switching intention. In

addition, switching costs and current demand for offered services were indicated as influencing factors that affect customers' switching decisions in the liberalised market.

In addition, the influence of price on the behaviour of current customers (Bolton & Lemon, 1999) and customer service (customer interface quality) (Chang & Chen, 2008) have been confirmed to critically influence the success of managing switching behaviour within tech-based markets.

With regard to relationship variables, the study conducted by Polo and Sese (2009) pointed out the drivers of switching cost variables in the telecommunications services industry. The depth, length and breadth of the relationship between the telecommunications service provider (TSP) and the customer represent three essential relational variables affect customer consideration regarding switching costs. While depth is reflected in the frequency of service usage over time, length refers to the duration of this relationship, and breadth of a relationship represents the diversity in customer purchases of additional products or services during this relationship.

One prominent example of a switching barrier in telecommunications particularly is the restrictions of 'Number Portability'⁽¹⁾ which refers to the difficulties and control imposed by TSPs on keeping the same number (e.g. mobile, landline) while a particular customer is switching to another company. Thus, in many countries until regulatory authorities impose regulations on the telecommunications companies to prevent this, number portability still represents one of the main weapons adopted by TSPs to increase the perceived cost of switching.

1. Number portability is a regulated facility which enables subscribers of publicly available telephone services (including mobile services) to change their service provider whilst keeping their existing telephone number. Its purpose is to foster consumer choice and effective competition by enabling subscribers to switch between providers without the costs and inconvenience of changing telephone number (Ofcom, 2012).

Literature Review: Part Two**2.4 Research Theoretical Framework**

In order to address the research purpose of gaining further insight into the relationship between marketing orientation (MO) and the achievement of competitive advantage through investigating the mechanisms by which customer satisfaction and customer retention are being managed, a theoretical framework was proposed through the inclusion of three main analytical perspectives; (1) the Expectation Disconfirmation Model (EDM) (Van Montfort et al., 2000 ; Oliver, 1993; Oliver & Desarbo 1988; Oliver, 1977), (2) the Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM) (Foxall et al., 2011; Foxall & Greenley, 2000; Foxall, 1994, 1992), and (3) the Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV) (Teece, 2009; Newbert, 2007; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Helfat, 1997).

2.4.1 A Summary of the Research Framework

The developed framework aimed to break down both pillars of the Value-driven Relational Marketing (V-dRM) view - namely customer satisfaction and customer retention - into components and more analysable units. The technique is intended to help determine the influence of marketing orientation on each specific component or part of the two dimensions through evaluating the variation between the main telecommunications service providers in Jordan's market —*taking into account their different levels of marketing orientation* — in managing these components of customer satisfaction and customer retention as shown in table 2.2 below which details the different dimensions of research framework, its applications, and justifications.

Table 2.2: Four Domains Conceptual Framework

Domain	Application	Justification
<p>(1)</p> <p>Marketing Orientation (MO)</p> <p><i>(Research Main Domain)</i></p>	<p>One central attention in marketing strategy is the association between firm's adopted strategic orientation and the organisational performance.</p> <p>Consequently, this research investigates the mechanisms and interrelationships that link marketing orientation and telecommunications service providers' (TSPs) performance</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Cont'd</p>	<p>Reviewing literature on marketing orientation (MO) pointed out that, the vast majority of research conducted on marketing orientation was held in Western cultures, and within industrial context. Such research was focused mainly on assessing the causal relationship between marketing orientation and different aspects of the organisational performance.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Cont'd</p>

Domain	Application	Justification
<p>Marketing Orientation (MO)</p> <p><i>(Research Main Domain)</i></p>	<p>...regarding satisfying and retaining customers (i.e. sustained competitive advantage) in Jordan telecommunications market.</p>	<p>However, the ways in which this performance is being developed and the influence of marketing orientation on this process were neglected. Thus, the <i>mechanisms</i> of this relationship have yet to be explored in detail, especially in service markets where inherent characteristics of services constituted methodological constrains in such relevant research.</p>
<p>(2)</p> <p>Value-driven Relational Marketing (V-dRM)</p> <p>a. Customer Satisfaction</p> <p>b. Customer Retention</p>	<p>In telecommunications industry there are two foremost concerns for TSPs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To manage firm's resources and capabilities within value creation strategy [Customer Satisfaction] 2. To protect firm's subscriber customer base in the long run in order to maintain brand's life and cash flow [Customer Retention] 	<p>Since customer satisfaction and customer retention represent two success factors in telecommunications. Simultaneously, the same marketing objectives constitute main pillars of the V-dRM view which focuses on maintaining a long-term and profitable relationship with customers as an appropriate approach in the high mutual-relationship market.</p>
<p>(3)</p> <p>Research Analysis Tools</p> <p>(a) Expectation Disconfirmation Model (EDM)</p>	<p>Expectation Disconfirmation Model (EDM) is used as an adopted framework that enables the researcher to identify the drivers of customer satisfaction and to track the mechanisms that lead to.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Cont'd</p>	<p><u>Customer Satisfaction (CS) as an Attitude</u></p> <p>Satisfaction feeling is a state of mind. Since customer satisfaction is an emotions and beliefs rather than behaviours hence, the Expectation Disconfirmation Model (EDM) (Van Montfort et al., 2000; Oliver, 1993) approaches customer satisfaction from attitudinal perception offering three main dimensions to be analysed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Expectation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personnel contact - Word-of-mouth - Promotional claims and advertising 2- Affective aspects of satisfaction: Perceive value, Corporate image, Communication, Value Added Services (VAS) 3- Cognitive aspects of satisfaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceived service quality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality of core - Quality of addition - How: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff - Delivery <p style="text-align: right;">Cont'd</p>

Domain	Application	Justification
<p>Research Analysis Tools</p> <p>(b)</p> <p>The Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM)</p>	<p>The Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM) is used as an analytical tool to investigate the mechanisms by which customer retention is being built.</p>	<p><u>(Customer Retention (CR) as a behaviour)</u></p> <p>In relevant literature, customer retention was approached from behavioural perception. Meanwhile, The Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM) (Foxall, 2011, 2007, 1990) as an analytical consumer behavioural paradigm offers different techniques attributed to the behavioural aspects of CR behaviour (Alshurideh, 2010). In line with the BPM customer retention behaviour could be interpreted through the following applications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning history behaviour - Utilitarian reinforcement behaviour - Utilitarian punishment behaviour - Informational reinforcement behaviour - Informational punishment behaviour <p>The adoption of such technique will enable the researcher to investigate the ways by which CR behaviour is achieved, and then to interpret the influence of MO on these processes.</p>
<p>(4)</p> <p>Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV)</p>	<p>The Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV) is used as an analytical tool (Luna-Reyes et al., 2012) in evaluating firms' approaches and mechanisms of creating and maintaining value (i.e. CS and CR).</p>	<p>As a theory of value creation (Tywoniak, 2007), DCV is seen as an appropriate analytical framework enables the researcher to define the processes, drivers and mechanisms a firm utilises/follows to transform its resources and capabilities into competitive advantage through the different applications it offers, namely: integration (coordination), innovation, and adaptation.</p>

As indicated earlier, marketing literature views **Customer Satisfaction** as an *attitude* (Chang & Wang, 2011) or as an *emotion* (Westbrook & Reilly, 1983) generated by the consumption of product/service. Consequently, the adoption of the **Expectation Disconfirmation Model (EDM)** logic as an analytical tool in this research facilitates the achieving of a detailed perception of the patterns and mechanisms by which each telecommunications service provider in Jordan's market manages customer expectations (Susarla et al., 2003; Olson & Dover 1979) and the different affective and cognitive (Gallarza et al., 2011) aspects of customer satisfaction; taking into account that these processes are being affected by firms' adopted orientation.

In other words, the adoption of the EDM analytical perspective helps in identifying the ways by which each service provider manages customer comparison [confirmation/disconfirmation] of pre-exposure performance[expectations] (Oliver et al., 1994) and post-exposure perceived performance (Bateson, 1991). The process which concludes the mechanisms by which customer satisfaction is developed from a manager perspective.

Figure 2.3 below highlights the main components of the research theoretical framework. Each of the marketing orientation aspects and its proposed influence on the attitudinal dimensions of Expectation Disconfirmation Model (EDM) and the behavioural dimensions of Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM) is illustrated.

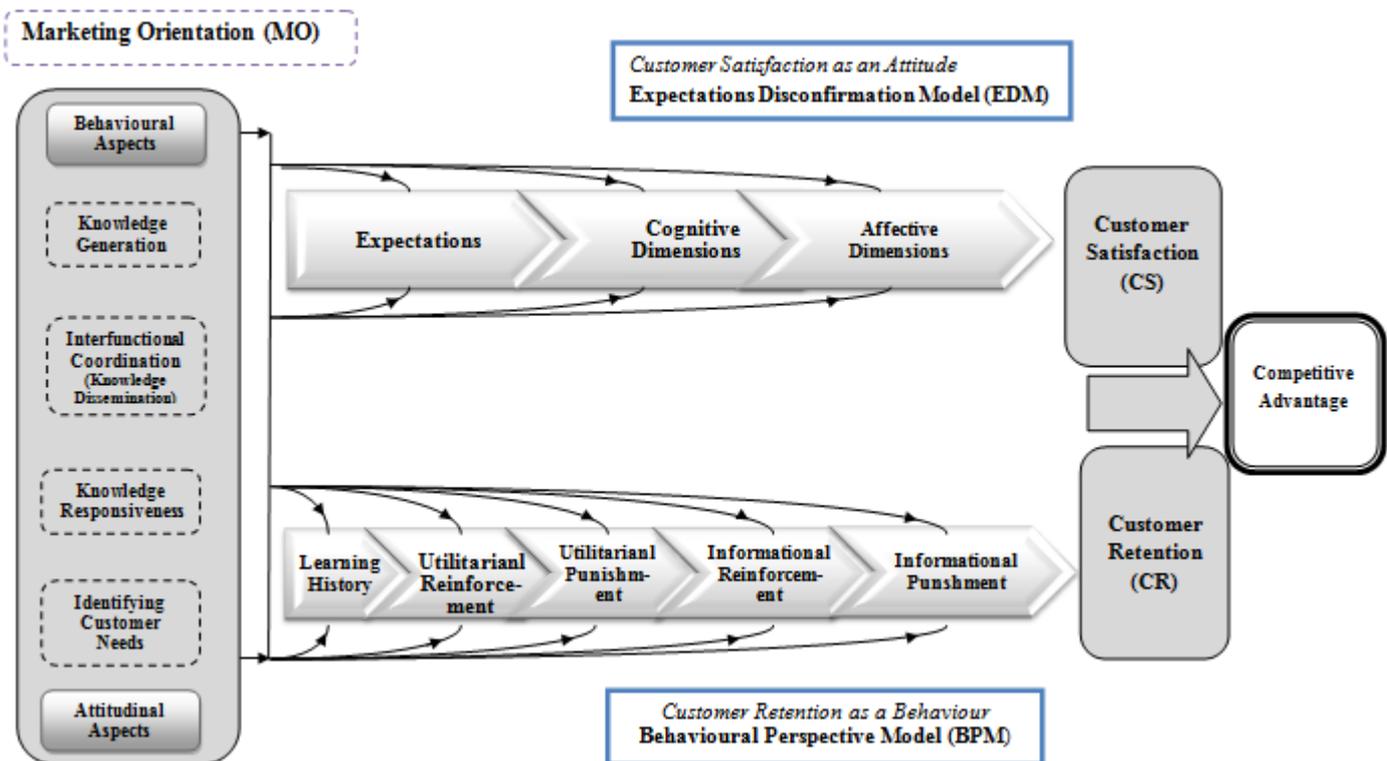


Figure 2.3: Marketing Orientation, Customer Satisfaction, and Customer Retention: Areas of Evaluation

Source: Ashour (2014)

While customer satisfaction was viewed as an attitude, literature approached **Customer Retention (CR)** from the behavioural perception (Alshurideh, 2010; Kamakura et al., 2005). Meanwhile, the **Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM)** provides an appropriate analytical framework offering different applications stemming from the

behavioural characterising of consumer behaviour, e.g. learning history, utilitarian reinforcement, utilitarian punishment, informational reinforcement and informational punishment (Foxall et al., 2011) (figure 2.3). Thus, the adoption of the BPM enables the researcher to interpret and explain the mechanisms by which customer retention behaviour is being built as it occurs in its setting (Foxall & Greenley, 2000).

Moreover, this research employs the **Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV)** (Newbert, 2007; Wang & Ahmed, 2007) as analytical tool within a comparative approach to evaluate the influence of adopted levels of marketing orientation for telecommunications operators on the outcomes of the prior analytical instruments; the Expectation Disconfirmation Model (EDM) and the Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM) (*i.e. the mechanisms of building customer satisfaction and customer retention*) for each firm. At this phase of the analysis, evaluation is concerned with investigating to which extent the specific components and sub-dimensions of customer satisfaction and customer retention for each firm were based on *innovation, integration, and adaptation*, the three substantial capabilities of creating and sustaining competitive advantage in the dynamic environment (Teece et al., 1997). Accordingly, the adoption of the logic of the Dynamic Capabilities View as the analytical theory that focuses on ‘what firms do’ [their substantive and dynamic capabilities] rather than on ‘what firms are’ (McGuinness, 2008) was to add more breadth and depth to the analysis and findings achieved by EDM and BPM.

2.4.2 The Expectation Disconfirmation Model (EDM) as an Analytical Tool

(The first pillar of the research framework)

Customer Satisfaction as an Attitude

The concept of customer satisfaction is attracting much attention in today’s globalised and borderless telecommunications market. During the last decade, many researchers focused on customer satisfaction within the tech-based services; meanwhile information systems (IS) represented the general domain for many studies (e.g. Wang & Chang, 2013; Venkatesh & Goyal, 2010; Liao et al., 2009; Wang & Liao, 2007; Thong et al., 2006). However, many similar studies were undertaken in telecommunications services particularly (e.g. Khuhro et al., 2011; Ul-Haq et al., 2011; Wang & Li, 2011; Mokhtar et al., 2011; Gerpott et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2001).

2.4.2.1 Definition

Customer satisfaction is an emotional response (Westbrook & Reilly, 1983) and a state of mind that results from a “comparison” (Bateson, 1991) between expected and perceived service. Customer satisfaction reflects customer judgement of the perceived benefits against the perceived sacrifice of ownership (McNaughton et al., 2002). Thus, it is an evaluation of evolved emotion based on the performance of the product/service (Hunt, 1977). Prior definitions of satisfaction were synthesised by Oliver (1997, p.12) into the following:

Satisfaction is the consumer’s fulfilment response. It is a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product of service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment, including levels of under- or over-fulfilment.

It is argued that Oliver’s definition of satisfaction is “remarkable” (Hom, 2000) as it differentiates between consumer (i.e. the direct user of the product/service) and customer (i.e. who may buy the product/service or pay for it, but not for their use) whereas satisfaction with a product/service is a construct that requires experience and use of a product or service. Moreover, to define satisfaction as judgment means a short-term state of mind “that can readily change given a constellation of circumstances.” In addition, this definition of satisfaction includes a “lower threshold” which refers to under-fulfilment of satisfaction level, and “upper thresholds” which reflects an over-fulfilment of satisfaction level (Hom, 2000, p, 102). Meanwhile, these different levels of satisfaction are determined through the combination of expectations and disconfirmation (Venkatesh & Goyal, 2010) and the result will be to enhance or inhibit the intention for adoption (Liao et al., 2009).

2.4.2.2 Models of Customer Satisfaction

Research on satisfaction included different paradigms. The Technology Adoption Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989; Davis et al., 1989) and the Transaction-Cost Approach (TCA) (Williamson, 1987, 1975) represented main models that were adopted to interpret satisfaction within the context of techno-based products/services.

While the first model assumes the “ease of use” and the “usefulness” as crucial factors that influence customer intention to adopt a new product/service, correspondingly, TCA relies on “human behaviour-bounded rationality and opportunism” in order to interpret

satisfaction antecedents and outcomes. However, various critiques have been voiced on the transaction-cost approach (TCA) as it overlooked the role of power relations (Perrow, 1986) and the forms of social embeddedness (Granovetter, 1985) while interpreting satisfaction.

On the other hand, the logic of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was extensively adopted by researchers to predict user satisfaction and acceptance of product/service benefits (Liao et al., 2009). In line with TAM, a feeling of satisfaction is an expected outcome of customer experience with the physical benefits generated by the “use of the technology” relevant to the provided product/service. This attitude is attributed to both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000; Davis et al., 1989). In accordance with TAM, “perceived enjoyment” (i.e. the extent to which the activity of using the product is perceived to be enjoyable in its own right) (Wang & Li, 2011) can be viewed as an intrinsic motivation, whereas “perceived usefulness” and “perceived ease of use” represent prominent examples of extrinsic motivations (Thong et al., 2006, p. 803). However, TAM also has been criticised as an extremely technological perspective, whereby its parsimonious explanatory power renders it insufficient to incorporate the effects of individual or organisational factors on the adoption process (Wu et al., 2011 cited in Wang & Li, 2011, p.145).

In their work ‘A Comparison of Current Models of Consumer Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction’, Erevelles and Leavitt (1992) evaluated the applications of ‘expectancy’ and ‘comparison’ in the current satisfaction research paradigms in order to differentiate among the different satisfaction approaches and to provide an evaluation of customer satisfaction models. Consequently, seven different models were illustrated.

In addition to the Expectation Disconfirmation Model (EDM) which is widely adopted in marketing research (Hom, 2000), Perceived Performance Models, Multiple Process Models, Attribution Models, Norms Models, Affective Models and Equity Models represent different areas of logic that satisfaction research is based on.

According to the Perceived Performance Model, satisfaction is determined based on the consumer perceived performance of product/service. The Multiple Process Model on the other hand postulates that satisfaction is a multidimensional process in which a particular customer may use different standards in order to evaluate his level of

satisfaction. Then Norms Model is similar to the Expectations Disconfirmation Model as both view satisfaction as a comparison process resulting in a state of mind based on specific standards for performance.

Relevant literature includes different aspects of criticism directed to many of these paradigms. For instance, Perceived Performance Models were criticised for giving less attention to customer expectations while assuming that satisfaction is determined based on the consumer's perceived performance of product/service rather than the expectations of customers. Similarly, Norms Models were also criticised because of their logic in approaching satisfaction which assumes that a consumer's judgment is based on his perception regarding what 'should' happen as a comparison standard rather than considering what 'will' happen in the consumption experience [expectations].

2.4.2.3 The Expectation Disconfirmation Model (EDM)

The Expectation Disconfirmation Model (EDM) (Van Montfort et al., 2000; Oliver, 1993) was originally a marketing research paradigm conceptualising a consumer's repurchase intentions (Liao et al., 2009). The EDM is considered as a 'dominant' model in satisfaction research (Hom, 2000) which has been widely applied at both the micro (Habin et al., 2010; Venkatesh & Goyal, 2010; Ha, 2006; Teas & Palan, 2003) and macro (Van Ryzin, 2005; Thompson & Yarnold, 1995) levels of evaluation.

Consistent with the perspective of EDM, a combination of pre-consumption expectations and disconfirmation determines the satisfaction level (Venkatesh & Goyal, 2010) of consumers (figure 2.4). Thus, consumers' judgment about products/services is attributed to their prior expectations about the characteristics or benefits offered by a given product or service (Oliver, 1980). According to the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm, repurchase intention is a series of three-levels process; (i) experience, (ii) disconfirmation (verification) and (iii) adoption (Oliver, 1980). EDM postulates that, satisfaction is a subjective assessment that one's needs and expectations have been positively met (Voss & Cova, 2006); thus satisfaction is a strong predictor of consumers' continuance usage (loyalty), and a key determinant of retention and repurchase intentions.

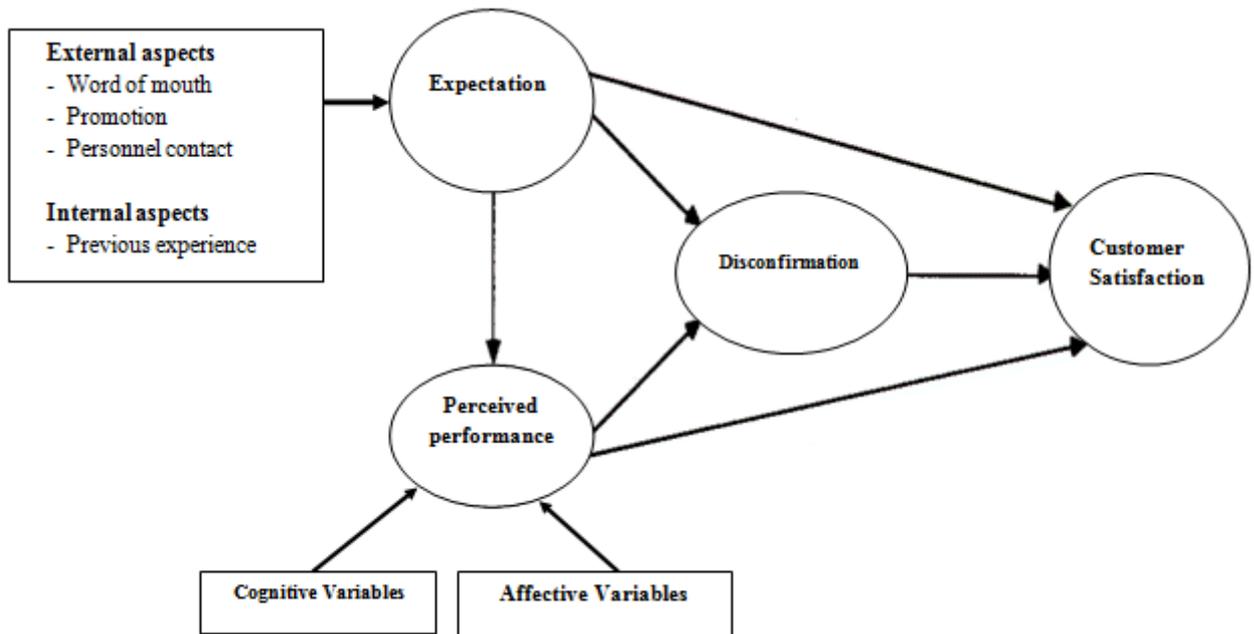


Figure 2.4: The Expectation Disconfirmation Model (EDM)

Adapted from Hom (2000) and Bateson (1991)

2.4.2.3.1 Expectations

Expectation is defined as a set of pre-exposure beliefs about the product/service (Venkatesh & Goyal, 2010). According to Oliver (1997), the formation of consumer expectations is influenced by internal and external factors. Each of advertising, word-of-mouth, personnel contact (Bateson, 1991) and promotional claims (Oliver, 1997) represents external factors that affect the expectations in the end-user's mind in the context of products and services in the marketing domain (Habin et al., 2010). Also, consumers' past (Bateson, 1991) and current experiences (Habin et al., 2010) constitute important internal aspects influencing the formation of the expectations process as shown in figure 2.4.

While some early satisfaction research followed the notion of “*accommodation*” (associated with “Cognition Theory” (Festinger, 1985; Heider, 1958) or the notion of “*assimilation*” (related to the “Assimilation Theory” (Piaget, 1968) in explaining the tendency of consumers to ‘adapt’ or to ‘assimilate’ the level of perceived performance with their initial expectations (Habin et al., 2010; Liao et al., 2009), over the past couple of decades, satisfaction research has witnessed a considerable shift in adopting the Expectancy Disconfirmation Model’s logic in perceiving expectation in interpreting satisfaction and repurchase intention.

To summarise, customer satisfaction is conceptualised as a cumulative construct that represents the feelings of the consumer which are affected by service expectations, performance perceptions and past satisfaction (Johnson et al., 1995). In line with the Expectations Disconfirmation Model, expectation is viewed as ‘estimative expectation’ that is assumed to be a direct path influencing customer satisfaction or an indirect preceding factor to disconfirmation (Ha, 2006, p.138). The gap between expectations and actual performance which is termed in marketing literature as ‘expectancy disconfirmation’ (Habin et al., 2010) will lead to positive or negative disconfirmation. Specifically, an individual’s expectations are positively disconfirmed when performance is better than expected, negatively disconfirmed when it worse than expected, and confirmed when performance is approximately equal to experiences (Ha, 2006).

2.4.2.3.2 Perceived performance of service

Service quality and customer satisfaction are two core concepts that are at the crux of the marketing theory and practice (Spreng & Mackoy, 1996). Thus, a firm’s capability to deliver high quality services represents a key to superiority that will in turn result in satisfying and retaining its customers (Shemwell et al., 1998) in the long run.

The classic definitions of service quality, e.g. “Conformance to Standards” and “Fitness for Use” (Feather & Sturges, 2003), clearly emphasised the need for standards of quality for the comparison of expectations with performance (Lewis & Booms, 1983) by consumers. Service quality is defined as “the extent of discrepancy between customers’ expectations or desires and their perception of what is delivered” (Zeithamil et al., 1990, p.19). As the definition of service quality includes a ‘comparison of expectations with performance’, in that vein, the work of Parasuraman et al. (1985) was focused on identifying the drivers of the potential gaps between expectations and experience.

The *first gap* results from the variation between customer expectations and management perceptions of these expectations. The *second gap* represents the difference between management perception of customer expectations and service quality specifications. The *third gap* reflects the difference between service quality standards and specifications and service actually delivered. The *fourth gap* is known as the market communication gap which represents the difference between the ‘promise’ - or what is communicated to customers about the service - and the service actually delivered. Finally, the *fifth gap* represents the variation between expected service and experienced service.

Subsequently, the emergent gaps were considered through developing the SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988); a 22-item instrument comprising five main aspects of service quality measurement; reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness. According to Jeng and Bailey (2012) SERVQUAL remains a key model for perceived quality research, because it clearly diagnoses the potential gaps between the marketer and customer perceptions with regard to provided offering.

Criticisms of the model, however, do exist (Buttle, 1995). According to Sureshchandar et al. (2002, p. 364), despite SERVQUAL's reasonable predication of service quality, the scale gives more attention to factors of "human interaction/intervention in the service delivery." Meanwhile, some other important functional or production elements, "namely the service product or the core service, systemisation/standardisation" have been neglected by the SERVQUAL. In response, Sureshchandar et al. (2001) proposed five different aspects conceptualising service quality: (i) core service, (ii) human element of service delivery, (iii) systematisation of service delivery (non-human element), (iv) social responsibility and (v) tangibles of service (servicescapes) which refer to the physical environment in which the service is assembled (Booms & Bitner, 1981).

According to Gronroos (1984), establishing a long-run relationship with the customers requires an understanding of what the customers are really looking for and what they evaluate. In order to conceptualise the 'perceived service quality' Gronroos (1984) differentiated the *technical quality* (outcome quality of the service) from the *functional quality* (process quality of the service). Particularly, in the services market, the evaluation of service quality relies on both the functional and the technical aspects of the offered service (Voss & Cova, 2006). In addition to the customer's judgement of the core service, the "perceptions of the manner in which the service is delivered, such as the quality of customers' interaction with service personnel," delivering, billing system and others represent important functional facets of service quality (Voss & Cova, 2006, p.204).

Advances in technology seem to be a dominant characteristic in tech-based markets. Specifically, telecommunications market is witnessing a seemingly endless introduction of new telecom services and associated complementary products (e.g. Mobile Commerce Services, Social Media Platforms, GPS Services, iPhone, iPod, and iPad). Consequently, considering technology developments' effects while assessing customer perceived value is an essential issue which could be achieved through the focusing on

three dimensions; efficiency, experience and innovation, as conceded by Campbell et al. (2011, p. 179).

2.4.2.3.3 Components of Perceived Performance Measurement

Related literature has suggested several components that formulate a customer's state of mind (satisfaction/dissatisfaction) regarding the provided service. Hence, satisfaction judgment covers a broader range of dimensions. However, such variables are derived from two main dimensions that condense the notion of satisfaction - cognitive and affective - as shown in table 2.3 below.

Perceived service quality which refers to a "consumer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority" (Zeithaml, 1988, p.3) represents an essential component of satisfaction measurement. According to McDougall and Levesque (2000), perceived service quality comprises two variables - what and how a consumer perceives the service. While core quality (basic) refers to the perceived quality of [what] a consumer has received, the relational aspects (Gronroos, 1985) (e.g. personnel contact, delivering, complaints etc.) represent [how] service was delivered, as a main dimension of perceived quality.

Table 2.3: Components of Perceived Performance Measurement

Dimensions of Customer Satisfaction	
Cognitive Dimensions	Affective Dimensions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceived Service Quality: - What: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality of core <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SERVQUAL-related variables (e.g. reliability, tangibles etc) - Other related variables (e.g. ease of use, innovation, call clarity and coverage etc) - Quality of addition (similar to variables of quality of core variables) - How: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SERVQUAL-related variables e.g. empathy, assurance etc. - Staff - Delivery - After sale services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceived Value - Corporate Image - Communication - Brand Name - Value Added Services (VAS)

Source: Adapted from Wang and Li (2011), Gallarza et al. (2011), Zeithaml (1988) and Gronroos (1984)

Research conducted in the field of telecommunications services conceptualised value added services (VAS) as a component of service quality (Santouridis & Trivellas, 2010), an antecedent for customer satisfaction (Khuhro et al., 2011; Ali et al., 2010), or as main factor affecting consumers' brand selection (Alom et al., 2010). Consequently, value added services (VAS) which are noncore services (Alom et al., 2010) have been perceived to be strategic 'non-price tool' intended to differentiate the service(s) of one provider from the other (Sharma & Singh, 2012) through its incorporated value.

In addition, after sale services (Nemati et al., 2010) and corporate image (Andreassen & Lindestad, 1998; Oliver, 1980) were also highlighted in the literature as different ingredients of customer satisfaction.

In particular, research carried out on evaluating customer satisfaction in telecommunications included other, different, variables - ease of use, time efficiency (Devaraj et al., 2002), customer support services, call clarity, user friendliness and customer complaint (Khuhro et al., 2011) - as important aspects in the evaluation process. In addition, pricing plan, coverage of the calling area and clarity of sound, precision of billing service and easy access to provider, (Lee et al., 2001), and trust (Nawaz & Usman, 2011) constituted different sub-dimensions of satisfaction measurement scale in telecommunications research.

From the above, it could be concluded that customer satisfaction is a pre-consumption [expectations] post-consumption [perceived performance] judgment process (Oliver, 1997, 1980) including a broader range of dimensions. From a manager's perspective, organisational superiority is achieved when an organisation succeeds in managing the potential gap between expectations and the cognitive and affective aspects of perceived performance.

Thus, each of the included variables in the developed figure (2.3) below constitutes a crucial aspect that should be taken into account in managing customer satisfaction. With regard to perceived performance variables, firms need to maximise the level perceived performance of each of the cognitive (e.g. perceived service quality: what and how, after sale service, etc.), and the affective dimension (e.g. perceived value, corporate image, etc) of performance (figure 2.3).

Customer expectations should be managed in a way to achieve a balance between firm's capabilities (managerial and technology) and the level of promise made, taking into account that to adopt 'inflated expectations' represents a challenge, as any

deficiency in meeting commitments of promoted promises will cause a negative and long-term influence on consumer satisfaction and retention which is basically a learning history-based behaviour.

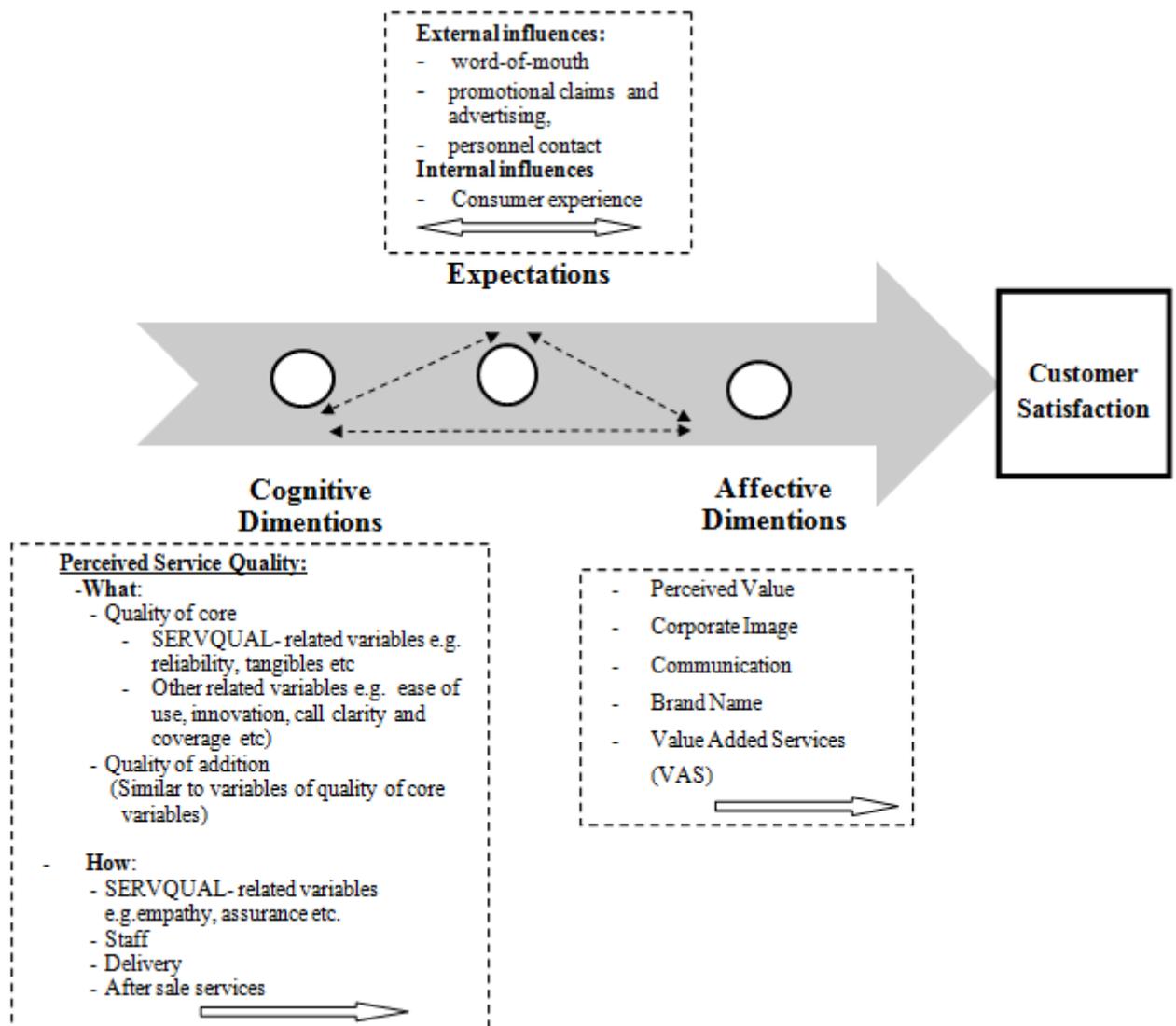


Figure 2.5: Customer Satisfaction: Drivers and Mechanisms/Attitudinal Perspective

Source: Ashour (2014)

To conclude, the above aspects — in practice — embody the scope in which a firm manages its different marketing capabilities in order to enhance the overall perceived performance by the end customer as well as to manage customer expectations efficiently. In other words, these dimensions represent the specific points, units, or functional areas in which each telecommunications service provider manages the

comparison process [confirmation/disconfirmation], its antecedents [expectations, experience and perceived performance] and consequences [satisfaction/dissatisfaction], the notion which concludes the mechanisms of building the satisfaction state for a consumer.

2.4.3 The Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM) as an Analytical tool

(the second pillar of the research framework)

Customer Retention (CR) as a Behaviour

The telecommunications industry represents one of the most dynamic and competitive markets. In such a high-velocity environment, to maintain market share seems to be the foremost concern for telecommunications service providers (TSPs). Consequently, the key success factor in telecommunications depends on how TSPs can establish and maintain sustainable value-driven relationship with their customers. Hence, success in such a market relies on a firm's ability to protect its "subscriber base" and to attain customer loyalty which is a "necessity for the maintenance of a brand's life in the long term" (Vanniarajan & Gurunathan, 2009; Lim et al., 2006; Aydin et al., 2005, p.89).

Relationship marketing encompasses attracting, maintaining and enhancing customers' relationships with the firm (Berry, 1995); and how to maintain this relationship over the lifetime of the customer represents the most prominent aim for service providers (Ryals, 2002).

Customer retention is the "maintenance of continuous trading relationships with customers over the long term" (Buttle, 2009, p.258). According to Jeng and Bailey (2012), it refers to the repeated transactions on a contractual-based relationship with customers, either formal or informal, over a period of time. Customer retention is thought to be the repeated patronage of a marketer or supplier by a customer (Alshurideh et al., 2012). Also, it can be viewed as a rate displaying the "percentage of customers at the beginning of the period who still remain customers at the end of the period" (Payne, 2000, cited in Petzer et al., 2009, p.33).

In the context of services, Cronin and Taylor (1992) affirmed the positive influence of customer satisfaction on repurchase intention. In telecommunications research (e.g. Ranaweera & Prabhu, 2003) it reflects the customer's future propensity to stay with their current service provider. Consequently, customer retention describes the state

when a customer keeps on buying the same provider's offering over a long period of time (Blattberg et al., 2001).

As mentioned earlier, many previous researchers confirmed the notion that it costs a company less to implement a retention strategy than it does to implement a customer acquisition strategy. Contrary to acquisition, in the retention strategy, where there is a likelihood of a long 'customer lifetime', the cost of serving existing customers tends to fall and their purchases increase during their lifetimes (Alshurideh et al., 2012). In other words, through extending the customer lifecycle, relationship management schemes (Gilbert, 1996) can reduce the cost related to existing customers, the matter which is reflected directly to profitability (Bentley, 1999).

As the cost of losing customers is rising, service providers should search for innovative ways in order to retain their existing customers (Petzer et al., 2009). Consequently, such service providers are more likely to survive than others according to Choi and Chu (2001) who highlighted the critical role of 'services' in this regard.

Customer retention, loyalty, and purchasing behaviour are three interrelated concepts. Yin and Kannan (1999) defined loyalty as consisting exclusively of repeat purchase behaviour, and it has a direct effect on profitability as Bentley (1999) stated. Jeng and Bailey (2012) argued that the construct of customer retention focuses on repeat patronage while Zeithaml et al. (1996) described customer retention as future behavioural intentions. Ranaweera and Prabhu (2003) followed Cronin et al. (2000) who treated behavioural intentions and customer retention as synonymous constructs. Correspondingly, Hennig-Thurau and Klee (1997) argued that, although the three terms (customer retention, loyalty and purchasing behaviour) seem to be closely related, customer retention has a more prominent functional role in firms' relationships.

In the same line of argument, customer satisfaction and customer retention are often studied simultaneously as two interrelated constructs. To a large extent, marketing literature considered customer satisfaction as a fundamental determinant of long-term retention. Customer retention is one of the most important indicators of customer satisfaction (Danesh et al., 2012); hence, the former is considered as a motivator of the latter (Jeng & Bailey, 2012).

A distinct body of related literature has agreed that the more satisfied customers are, the greater is their customer retention (Alshurideh et al., 2012; Ranaweera & Prabhu, 2003;

Gerpott et al., 2001; Anderson & Sullivam, 1993); however, this is not always the case, as switching barriers can restrict dissatisfied customers from making changes.

In conclusion, the behavioural aspects of customer retention are clearly highlighted in the different definitions of the concept. Prior research viewed customer retention within its behavioural context as *repeated transactions* (Jeng & Bailey, 2012), *repeated patronage* (Alshurideh et al., 2012), *customer keeps on buying* (Blattberg et al., 2001), and *keeping customers active with the firm* (Peppard & Rylander, 2006). Consequently, the evaluation of customer retention should be approached from a behavioural perception as Kamakura et al. (2005) and Alshurideh (2010) argued.

2.4.3.1 The Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM)

Relevant literature has highlighted different customer retention paradigms which in general were presented in “curve-fitting” regression models (Fader & Hardie, 2007) applying statistical analyses techniques with the aim of predicting consumer repurchasing and retention behaviour. To a large extent, such paradigms were influenced by the statistical meaning of the definition of customer retention as a rate displaying the “percentage of customers at the beginning of the period who still remain customers at the end of the period” (Payne, 2000, cited in Petzer et al., 2009, p.33).

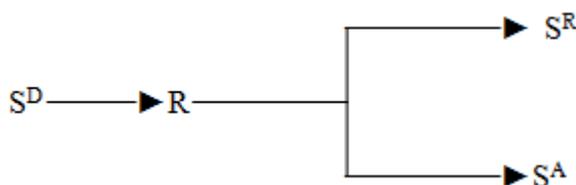
Furthermore, the Theory of Reason Action (TRA) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985) represent prominent models that many customer retention studies were based on. However, TRA was criticised because of the inadequate attention given to non-attitudinal personal and situational variables, which should be taken into account. Similar criticism was made about TPB represented in its inadequate capability in considering non-attitudinal situational variables while evaluating consumer behaviour (Fagerstrom, 2005).

Meanwhile, the **Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM)** (Foxall et al., 2011; Foxall & Greenley, 2000; Foxall, 1990) represents an alternative stance to attitude theories of consumer behaviour (Fagerstrom, 2005). Although the BPM was considered as an alternative theoretical approach that emphasises situational variables (Medina & Sandoval, 2011; Fagerstrom, 2005), the development of BPM was not aimed “to eliminate alternative explications” as “the inevitability of plurality of explanatory mechanism is in fact a central to its approach (Foxall, 1992, p.198).

In line with the logic of BPM, consumer behaviour is interpreted as occurring at the intersection of the individual's consumer setting with his learning history of reinforcement and punishment by utilitarian and informational consequences (Foxall et al., 2011).

The BPM views purchase and consumption responses as a “function of the relative openness of the setting in which they occur and the informational and hedonic reinforcement available in or promised by the setting” (Foxall, 1992, p. 189). Thus, BPM explains consumer behaviour in terms of the contingent relationships among the behaviour in question, its stimulus antecedents, and its reinforcing and punishing consequences (Foxall, 1990). Moreover, the BPM provides an environmental perspective to consumer behaviour through the inclusion of situational aspects into the analysis of consumer behaviour. In other words, the consumer's situation which is constructed by the combination of the individual's learning history and the setting (Oliveira, 2007) exerts a direct influence on the shaping and maintenance patterns of behaviours involving rewarding and aversive reinforcements.

The BPM represents an adaptation of the three-term contingency: stimulus (S^D), response (R) and consequence (S^R or S^A) which are illustrated as a chain of events as follows:



Thus, consumer behaviour (R) is predicted from the reinforcing (S^R) and punishing consequences (S^A) it has previously produced in the context of a setting (discriminative stimulus) (S^D) (Foxall et al., 2011; Fagerstrom, 2005; Foxall & Greenley, 2000). Consequently, the three-term contingency identifies what responses (R) are reinforced (S^R) or punished (S^A) in the presence of what situations or discriminative stimuli (S^D) (Foxall et al., 2011). In practice, the reinforcing consequences are expected to increase the probability of repeated purchase (customer retention). Conversely the punishing consequences may have the contrary effect (customer churn).

Consistent with the view of BPM, consumer behaviour is interpreted based on two situational dimensions: the consumer behaviour setting, and the utilitarian and informational reinforcements generated by the consumer's learning history (Foxall, 2007a; Foxall, 1998).

Each of utilitarian reinforcement and informational reinforcement is seen as indirect benefits/aversive. While utilitarian consequences are mediated by the product or service and are related to services' functional benefits, informational consequences are mediated by other people, and are related to feedback upon consumers' behaviour, such as social status and prestige (Foxall et al., 2011).

The above discussion is illustrated in figure 2.6; the interaction between discriminative stimulus (learning history and consumer behaviour setting), the behaviour, and the reinforcing and the aversive consequences.

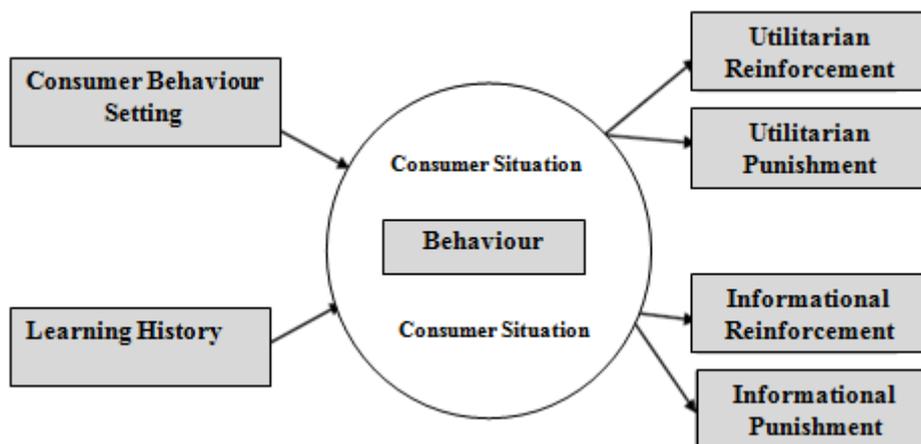


Figure 2.6: The Behavioural Perspective Model of Consumer Choice

Source: Foxall et al. (2011)

2.4.3.1.1 The Scope of the Setting and Consumer Learning History

The Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM) interprets consumer behaviour as occurring at the intersection of the individual's learning history and the consumer setting. In other words, consumer situation represents the intersection of the consumer behaviour setting and the consumer's learning history which locates consumer behaviour in space and time (Foxall & Greenley, 2000). Thus, consumer situation is formed by the presence of "synomorphic" [i.e. behaviour-milieu (environment) interface] (Foxall, 1998) as behaviour basically is happening in the milieu.

The consumer situation exerts a direct influence on the shaping and maintenance of consumer behaviour (Fagerstrom, 2005) by signalling utilitarian and informational consequences associated with consumption-related responses (Foxall et al., 2011).

A consumer behaviour setting scope comprises the current stimuli (S^D s) that make up the physical and social surroundings in which the consumer may act (Foxall, 1998). S^D

was viewed by behavioural psychologist as a stimulus that sets the occasion on which responses (verbal and nonverbal) have consequences (Catania 1998).

Setting the scope reflects the degree to which consumer behaviour patterns are determined by the setting. For example, the setting scope for adopting a particular telecommunications service is expected to be confined to visiting telecommunications stores or accessing the Internet, searching for the best offers regarding consumers' preferences (e.g. network coverage, expected consumption of minutes, messages, or data, handset specifications, budget, period of commitment) evaluating the offers, ordering, and then confirming the order. Hence, scope of the setting represents the extent to which consumers are encouraged to conform to a pattern of behaviour set by someone else (closed setting) or are comparatively free to behave in a variety of ways (open setting) (Foxall & Greenley, 2000, p. 43).

The consumer's learning history is a constant process that is being formed through consumer interaction with the different behavioural consequences. Learning history is the cumulative knowledge, skills, and information of past behaviour (Hwang, 2003) (rewarding or punishing outcomes) which determines through its interaction with setting what can act as a discriminative stimulus of current behaviour (i.e. what is a potential reinforcer or punisher) (Foxall, 1998). The interaction of consumer learning history with the consumer behaviour setting influences the probability of a behaviour taking place in similar situations on future occasions (Foxall et al., 2006) particularly in the repeat purchase situation (Verhoef et al., 2009). Accordingly, a learning history of a particular consumer reflects his personal influences that determine his choice, mood and ability to pay, influence momentary purchase and consumption, etc (Foxall, 1993).

2.4.3.1.2 The Consequences of Behaviour

In accordance with the three-term contingency paradigm, the consumer behaviour setting consists of stimuli (S^D s) signal reinforcement and punishment consequences with regard to consumption or purchase within social and physical environment-related factor settings. According to Foxall et al. (2011), these behavioural consequences are affected (increasing or declining) by a consumer's consideration of its importance and future occurrence probability. "Events in the situation would acquire discriminative (or inhibiting) functions by signalling the probability and magnitude of reinforcement that would be contingent upon the emission of a given response" (Foxall et al., 2011, p.4).

Regarding the emissions of consumption setting, these consequences have three different types: (i) utilitarian reinforcement, (ii) informational reinforcement, and (iii) aversive outcomes: utilitarian or informational punishment.

A. *Utilitarian Reinforcement* represents the functional benefits of consumption that comprise the tangible, functional and positive economic benefits, which stem from purchase, ownership and consumption (Foxall & Greenley, 2000). Hence, these benefits are functional, conferring material satisfactions; the same notion of ‘utility’ of orthodox microeconomic theory as Foxall (1998) stated.

Different behaviour research, e.g. social cognitive learning theory (Bandura, 1986), applied behaviour analysis (Cone & Hayes, 1982), and human operant behaviour (Wearden, 1988), concurs that utilitarian reinforcers have a unique role in the shaping and maintenance of human behaviour (Foxall & Greenley, 2000). According to Yan et al. (2010), the level of associated functional benefits with product/service represents an appropriate measurement for the utilitarian reinforcement where a higher level of utilitarian benefits implies that a product possesses additional attributes.

As mentioned above, the BPM framework assumes that, consumer behavior is shaped and maintained by three types of consequences: hedonic (utilitarian) reinforcement, informational reinforcement, and aversive consequences, which vary with regard to its importance and how the consumer perceives it. Consumer behaviour can be classified in terms of its high/low utilitarian and informational reinforcement into four patterns. (i) Maintenance includes consumer behaviour that is related to what is necessary for the consumer’s physical survival, (ii) accumulation refers to certain kinds of saving, and instalment buying, (iii) pleasure is related to activities such as the consumption of entertainment, and (iv) accomplishment indicates the social and economic aspects of consumption goods or services such as personal attainment (Foxdall, 1994).

It is worthy indicating that consumers differ in considering the priority of activities related to these patterns. For example, for initial adopters who need less time in order to make a purchase decision and perceive lower negative consequences than do later adopters, accomplishment is the associated description of the behaviour of this segment of the market (Rogers, 1983).

B. *Utilitarian Punishment* is an aversive consequence of consumer behaviour which reflects the effect of altering the value (Medina & Sandoval, 2011). Utilitarian

punishment is likely to reduce the probability of future repetition (Fagerstrom, 2005) as it is concerned with the cost of consuming, e.g. relinquishing money, time-consuming registration before payment when shopping on the Internet for instance, or forgoing alternative products (Fagerstrom et al., 2010).

C. Informational Reinforcement is a consequence of consumer behaviour that embodies the symbolic attributes of the product (Yan et al., 2010) such as social status that the consumer is reinforced through social attention or appreciation (Fagerstrom, 2005). For example, informational reinforcement of owning a luxury wristwatch may reflect the person's self-esteem or the social class he believes he belongs to. Contrary to utilitarian reinforcement, informational reinforcement is associated with verbal behaviour (Wearden, 1988) not the functional performance of the service or product.

Also, informational reinforcement is considered as performance feedback indicating how well the consumer is doing (Ibrahim et al., 2013; Foxall, 1998) which in turn may lead to changes in social status or reported feelings of self-esteem (Foxall & Greenley, 2000) taking into account that this feedback is being perceived at different levels (Yan et al., 2010) by different consumers.

While utilitarian reinforcements are measured by its functional benefits, informational reinforcements are measured by the associated symbolic attributes. For instance, purchasing a brand new *Lamborghini* embodies a higher level of self-esteem or personal attainment (informational reinforcement) than owning an old economy car.

D. Informational Punishment is an aversive consequence of consumer choice mediated by the social network (Fagerstrom et al., 2010), which occurs when people do not approve of what consumers purchased and consumed because they find it unpleasing (Oliveira-Castro et al., 2008). From the viewpoint of service providers, informational punishment is seen as indirect negative feedback that firms receive regarding their offerings of products/services.

To summarise, the BPM framework classifies consequences of behaviour as utilitarian reinforcement, informational reinforcement, and aversive consequences (i.e. utilitarian punishment and informational punishment). Although different products and services vary with regard to their consumer setting or consequences, however, all products or services —theoretically— contain an element of utilitarian, informational and aversive consequences (Yan et al., 2010; Foxall, 1990). Also, many forms of conditioned

consequences (reinforcements or punishments) are themselves conditional upon other stimulus conditions (Michael, 1993).

In conclusion, relevant literature approached customer retention (CR) from the behaviour perspective; meanwhile the BPM offers a useful analytical paradigm presenting consumer behaviour in terms of the scope of the setting in which it occurs. In the same line of argument, ‘customer retention behaviour’ is interpreted based on the (i) interaction of behaviour setting and learning history and (ii) the utilitarian and informational reinforcements (and punishments) generated by this interaction. While the reinforcing consequences are expected to increase the probability of customer retention and repeated purchase, conversely the punishing consequences have the contrary effect as shown in figure 2.7 below.

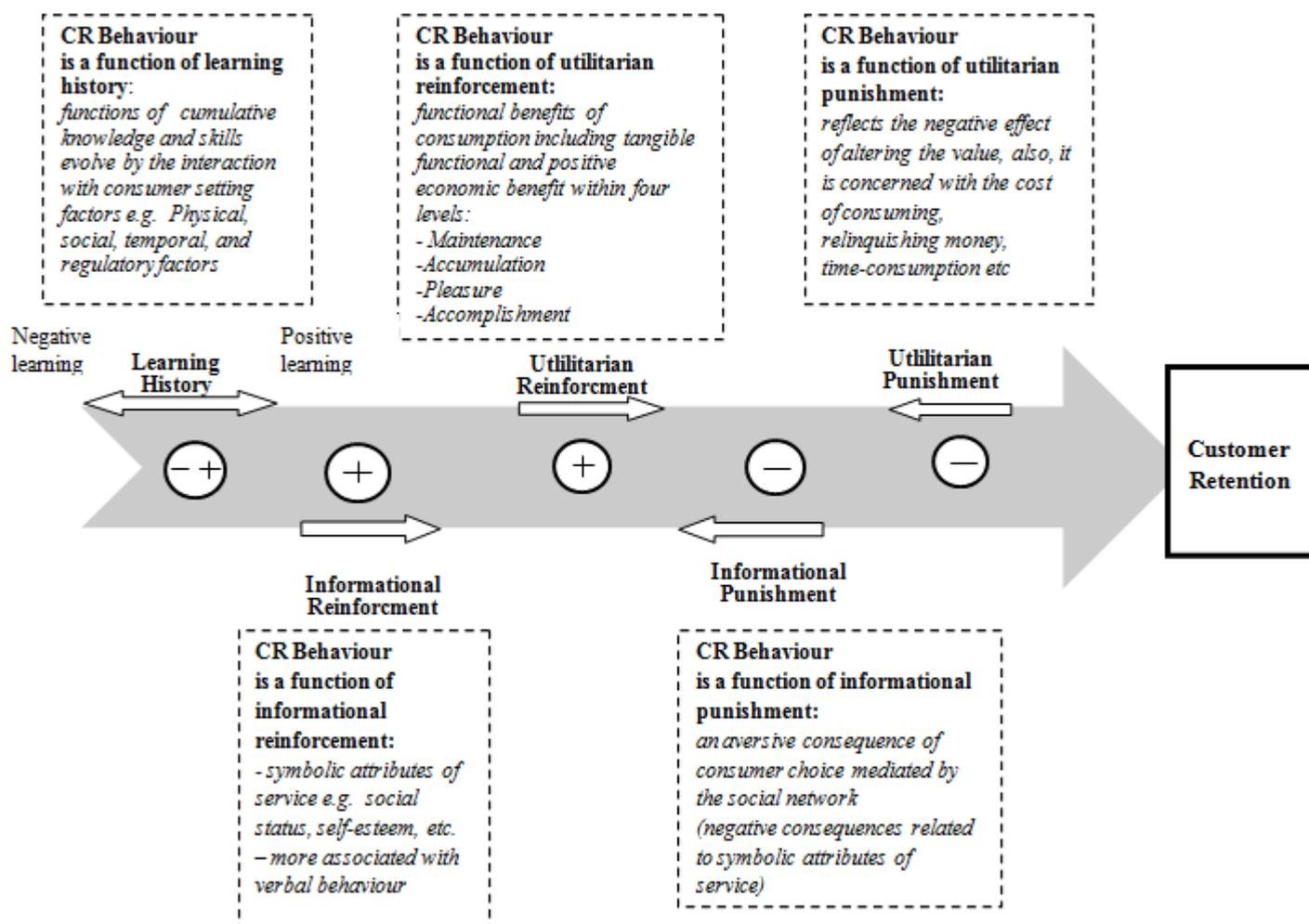


Figure 2.7: Customer Retention: Drivers and Mechanisms/The logic of the Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM)

Source: Adapted from Yani-De-Soriano et al. (2013), Foxall et al. (2011), Alshurideh (2010), and Foxall, G. (2007a), Foxall and Greenley (2000)

Consequently, based on a review of the literature on customer retention and the Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM), the following statements could be inferred which summarise the logic of BPM in managing customer retention behaviour.

- The more positive learning history, more utilitarian reinforcement, and more informational reinforcement perceived by customers, the more customer retention is achieved.
- The less negative learning history, less utilitarian punishment, and less informational punishment perceived by customers, the more customer retention is achieved too.

Theoretically, in order to increase the probability of customer retention, a firm should concentrate on enhancing the functions that support the positive learning history, utilitarian reinforcement, and informational reinforcement. Correspondingly, at the same time a firm needs to control functions of negative learning history, utilitarian punishment and informational punishment as figure 2.7 illustrates. Taking into account that, the ways by which a firm manages its different marketing resources and capabilities in order to enhance the rewarding reinforcements perceived by the customer or to minimise the aversive reinforcements is affected by firm's adopted level of marketing orientation as discussed earlier.

2.4.4 Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV)

(The third pillar of the research framework)

The dynamic capabilities view (DCV) is a logical extension of the Resource-based View (RBV) (Rolland et al., 2009) examines how firms integrate, build and reconfigure their internal resources and external competencies into new competencies that match market changes (Newbert, 2007; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Teece et al., 1997).

The DCV offers two theoretical underpinnings commensurate with the challenges emerging in telecommunications as a dynamic market. First, the word *dynamic* refers to a firm's performance in addressing rapidly changing environments (Teece et al., 1997). In such high-velocity markets boundaries are blurred and unclear, and many market factors are ambiguous and shifting. Hence, this uncertainty requires a greater reliance on rapidly creating situation-specific new knowledge and rapid learning through

experiential actions (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000) to adapt (Day, 2011) and to respond to rapid and unpredictable changes (Cepeda & Vera, 2007; Zahra et al., 2006 cited in Rolland et al., 2009). Second, the term *capability* implies a firm's ability to integrate, build and reconfigure the internal and external firm-specific competencies into new competencies that match the turbulent environment (Teece et al., 1997). Thus, dynamic capabilities are a firm's processes that use resources to match and even create market change (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000) and to address rapidly changing environments (Teece et al., 1997). In contrast to RBV assumptions, DCV is a change-oriented capabilities view (Zahra & George, 2002) in the pursuit of sustainable long-term competitive advantage (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000).

To conclude, dynamic capabilities reflect the firm's orientation in term of integration, innovation and reconfiguration its resources and capabilities to attain and sustain competitive advantage in the fast changing environment (Wang & Ahmed, 2007). Consequently, this research employs the Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV) as an analytical tool to evaluate the influence of telecommunications service providers' adopted levels of marketing orientation (MO) on firms' dynamicity while achieving its intended performance: specifically, to which extent TSPs are different in terms of *innovation, integration/coordination, and adaptation* while managing the different components of customer satisfaction and customer retention.

2.4.4.1 The Applications of the Dynamic Capability View (DCV)

2.4.4.1.1 Innovative Capability

Innovation which has its roots in the entrepreneurship literature (McKelvie & Davidsson, 2009) refers to a firm's ability to adopt or implement new ideas, processes or products successfully (Hurley & Hult, 1998). In the telecommunications industry in particular, innovation remains an important element affecting the satisfaction of customers (Nemati et al., 2010) and repeat purchase (Foxall, 1994).

From a strategic viewpoint, the dynamic capability view (DCV) focuses attention on the firm's ability to renew its resources as a main requirement to create and maintain competitive advantage in a changing environment. On the other hand, marketing literature has addressed innovativeness as a supportive environment and as an intermediate stage linking marketing orientation and the firm's marketing goals (McGuinness, 2008; Hurley & Hult, 1998). Organisations that operate in high-changing

and turbulent environments “must take responsibility for introducing greater levels of entrepreneurship into all aspects of the firms marketing efforts” where innovativeness represents a supportive corporate environment that promotes and supports novel ideas (Qureshi & Mian, 2010, p.39) in a way that enables a firm to recognise the value of new external information, assimilate it and apply it for commercial ends (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990).

On the other hand, consumer innovativeness refers to the tendency to willingly embrace change and try new things (Cotte & Wood, 2004) and the propensity to buy new products more often and more quickly than other people (Ho & Wu, 2011; Midgley & Dowling, 1978). Thus, to differentiate the early adopters from general consumers helps firms to enhance the chances of success of the new launched products or services and supports the effectiveness of their new product marketing efforts (Hirunyawipada & Paswan, 2006). Accordingly, while the behavioural aspects of consumer innovativeness includes implicit marketing opportunities, a firm has to develop its innovative dynamic capabilities based on the spirit of entrepreneurial orientation to enable it to identify market opportunities and develop the resource base needed to pursue these opportunities (Arthurs & Busenitz, 2006).

According to Neely and Hii (1998), innovativeness could be analysed at firm level, regional level or more extensive level. In today’s borderless telecommunications groups and because of globalisation consequences and international alliances, companies are moving from the value chain to the value network models (Peppard & Rylander, 2006), and the focus of innovation is moving outside the firm to networks of partners (Day, 2011). Hence, the dynamic innovation capability should be managed within a balanced view considering the requirements of both; the level of regional competition as well as the national level.

In a longitudinal study on dynamic capability development, McKelvie and Davidsson (2009, p. S 70) highlighted four different kinds of innovation. *Idea generation capability* is concerned with a firm’s ability to develop new products, new processes or new ideas for future entrepreneurial action. As idea generation capability was driven from entrepreneurship literature, *market disruptiveness capability* also has its roots in the entrepreneurship and innovation literature. Market disruptiveness capability focuses on a firm’s organisational behaviour in terms of the magnitude, aggressiveness and

persistence of releasing innovations to the market. Particularly, disruptiveness innovation refers to innovations that cause considerable improvements to tech-based products or services in ways that the market does not expect. *New product development capability* refers to a firm's practical performance concerning product/service innovation, and the quality and quantity of new products/services. Finally, *new process development capability* is concerned with a firm's innovation and adoption of new technology in the processes of the firm.

In particular, the manipulation of knowledge resources and learning resources are critical in dynamic markets (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). "It is not machines that do innovation, but rather people" Samson (2010, p.12) conceded in a similar study. Bruni and Verona (2009) highlighted the debate regarding the role of market-related capabilities in the face of technological dynamics. Bruni and Verona emphasised the importance of knowledge as a source of capability reconfiguration in the product development process.

2.4.4.1.2 Integrative/Coordinative Capability

Coordination (resources complementarity)/integration capability describes the firm's ability to assess the value of existing resources and integrate them to shape new competencies (Protogerou et al., 2008). The terms 'coordinate', 'integrate' and 'combine' are used in related literature (McKelvie & Davidsson, 2009; Song et al., 2005; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000) to describe the process by which the firm's capabilities as complex bundles of skills and collective learning (Day 1994) are developed in a way that ensures superior coordination of functional activities.

Literature differentiates a firm's dynamic capabilities from other basic functional capabilities. While functional basic (threshold) capabilities (Long & Vickers-Koch, 1995) help the firm to perform basic functional activities, dynamic capabilities refer to the firm's integration and reconfiguration of its internal and external competencies. Meanwhile, the implementation of new configurations of functional competencies lies in the effective coordination and the synchronisation of different sources and activities (Protogerou et al., 2008).

With regard to coordination capability and "problem-solving", Iansiti and Clark (1994, p.565) described two types of firms' reactions: internal integration and external

integration. While internal integration represents the capacity for extensive coordination between firms' different departments and subunits in managing internal resources, external integration refers to problem-solving-related activities "that span the boundary with its external environment and explore responses to its evolution".

With regard to problem-solving, whether the performance of internal integration or the performance of external integration, both rely on a firm's ability to tap into relevant sources of new information (Iansiti & Clark, 1994) and learning capability, and managing such processes efficiently. By the same token, data management and market intelligence activities represent prominent behavioural implementation of marketing orientation which reflects the firm's coordination capability in the dissemination of generated data' across departments, and responding (Kohli & Jaworski, 1993) to information and to develop a detailed problem-solving scenario.

2.4.4.1.3 Adaptive Capability

Teece et al. (1997, p.515) define dynamic capabilities as the firm's ability in "adapting, integrating, and reconfiguring internal and external organisational skills, resources, and functional competencies to match the requirements of a changing environment." Wang and Ahmed (2007) identified *adaptive* capability as one of three main component factors of the firm's dynamic capabilities (i.e. adaptive capability, absorptive capability and innovative capability).

Adaptive capability refers to the firm's abilities related to problem-solving and speed in identifying and capitalising on emerging market opportunities (Hooley et al., 1992; Chakrovarthy, 1982). Consequently, the key issue in the firm's adaptation is the ability to link external trends with the internal competence base and the speed to react to environmental changes (Biedenbach & Muller, 2012).

Achieving adaptive capability at the micro level is expensive (Frazier et al., 1988). As a requirement for flexibility and adaptability, firms need to be engaged with continuous scanning of the market, monitoring customers and competitors, and allocating resources to marketing activities to enable efficient response to changing market conditions (Oktemgil & Gordon, 1997).

On the other hand, Gibson and Brikshaw (2004) pointed out the importance of knowledge management and learning ability in reaction to the dynamic environment for

the multinational organisations (MNOs) and to evolve rapidly in response to shifts in its business priorities.

Chakravarthy (1982) proposed three different states of adaptation which represent strategic alternatives orientations. The first is an *unstable* state, where the firm tries to buffer itself from its environment, as it is extremely susceptible to environmental changes. Also, the firm tries to control its reaction to market changes by narrowing their product-market scope and adaptive capability (Oktemgil & Gordon, 1997). Second, a *stable* state is where the firm is open to the environment and is reactive in keeping with every move of the environment by imitating the product and market opportunities developed by other firms. Finally, the *neutral* state is where firms possess high adaptive capability which enables them to withstand most environmental changes because they had been able to anticipate them before their occurrence and had invested in the requisite adaptive ability.

Previous literature has examined the association between the firm's "responsiveness orientation" (Wei & Ming Lau, 2010), the firm's flexibility and adaptability (Gibson & Brikshaw, 2004; Oktemgil & Greenley, 1996; Hooley et al., 1992) and the achievement of superior performance. In order to operationalise a firm's adaptation capability to external opportunities, Wang and Ahmed (2007) developed a scale that was based on Oktemgil and Gordon's (1997) work in which product-market response, market complexity, and marketing activities were considered as main components of the measurement tool.

*Literature Review: Part Three***2.5 Marketing of Services**

According to the Nordic School of Services (Gummesson & Gronroos, 2012; Gronroos, 1997; Gronroos & Gummesson, 1985) marketing is viewed as a cross-functional process that cannot be separated from overall management. Accordingly, marketing is “more a management issue than a function and it has to be built on relationships rather than transactions” Gronroos (1997, p.5).

In the context of services, different sorts of interactions are expected in practice, e.g. customer-employee, management-customer, and management-employee, or even interactions between the different departments in the same firm. Meanwhile, marketing of services is restricted by the challenges attributed to the inherent characteristics of services in addition to the difficulties associated with estimating demand, assessing satisfaction, and dealing with the intangible promises made to customers.

2.5.1 Service Marketing is Different

There is widespread belief that there are fundamental distinctions between marketing of goods and marketing of services. Consequently, a distinct body of service marketing literature has concentrated on the differences between goods and services. Zeithaml et al. (1985, p. 33) illustrated four central differences between services and goods, and pointed out the difficulties associated with service marketing: “unique characteristics—notably intangibility, inseparability of production and consumption, heterogeneity, and perishability— separate services from tangible goods.” Thus, these characteristics pose challenges for firms offering services which are not faced by other firms.

The original four unique characteristics were expanded by including four new aspects (Goncalves, 1998) in the main services’ attributes; sensitivity to time, high degree of risk and difficulty in experimentation, customisation of the offering and personalisation of buyer–provider relationship

To conclude, the unique characteristics of services pose considerable difficulties for marketers of services. Service providers need to manage the challenges that stem frequently from each of the eight service characteristics by developing appropriate strategies. Relevant literature (Tran, 2005; Zeithaml et al., 1985) suggests that each

unique characteristic of services requires a specific technique to enable overcome the inherent challenges.

2.5.2 Critical Aspects in Marketing of Services

2.5.2.1 Internal Marketing

While external marketing efforts are directed towards customers, internal marketing focuses on managing the management/employee relationship. Through the formal or informal communication means (e.g. newsletters, meetings or informal word of mouth communication) (Kurtz & Clow, 1998) internal marketing aims at building a coherent internal culture within the firm.

To establish a sophisticated internal marketing strategy is an important requirement for the achievement of the intended internal satisfaction (i.e. employee satisfaction) (George, 1990): meanwhile, to achieve a state of balance between a firm's organisational objectives and the employees' needs represents one important pillar of internal marketing strategy.

As internal marketing is concerned with enhancing the internal communication and consolidating the values of coordination and 'esprit de corps', hence, such strategies will be reflected in ensuring service providers' capabilities in circumventing the difficulties created by services' predominant characteristics and delivering consistent service quality as Rafiq and Ahmed (2000) argued.

2.5.2.2 Internal Customers (employees)

While a product is seen as an objective, a service in essence is a performance (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991). Services are activities (Regan, 1963) that could not be simplified in processing customers and their orders. Services are the behaviour of employees, and the impressions of customers made during the mutual interaction (Martin, 1999). The non-physical nature of services requires specialised and non-traditional marketing implementations taking into account the inseparability nature of both; production and consumption of services.

People represent the central ingredient of the extended services marketing mix. It comprises a firm's customers (external customers), a firm's staff (internal customers), and management. In line with service marketing triangle perception, different

interrelated relationships take place between these different actors as Zaithaml and Bitner (1996) suggested. According to this perception, the firm utilises its internal marketing capabilities to manage the firm-employee relationship, meanwhile ‘enabling the firm’s promise’ represents the intended objective in this ‘internal marketing’ relationship.

The performance of a firm’s employees has a crucial and direct impact on how services are perceived by customers. Staff performance and staff knowledge with relevant matters and clarity of information provided by staff are all vital factors that influence customer satisfaction in service markets. Hence, in order to maximise its employees’ productivity, the firm should develop an internal segmentation approach aimed at matching the employee’s needs to the job requirements (Kurtz & Clow, 1998). Also, the firm should invest in its internal customer (employees) within a strategic perspective through well-planned training and skills development programmes.

2.5.2.3 Communication System

Consistent with the spirit of marketing as an adopted philosophy, marketing principles emphasise satisfying the needs of customers efficiently. The firm applies different marketing and operational implementations in order to determine, then to fulfil, customer needs. In order to achieve this, the matching of the firm’s goals and customer interests requires the parties to communicate (Varey, 2002).

According to Mohr and Nevin (1990), the communication system contributes to enriching superiority by improving the performance of different channels of distribution of the firm, in which communication constitutes the glue that holds parties together. Following the service marketing triangle logic, communication aspects should be given central attention within an integrated communication system (Daly et al., 2004) as internal, external and interactive communications are managed cooperatively in order to set, enable and deliver the firm’s promise efficiently.

Moreover, a firm’s overall performance in terms of its marketing communication system is based on a synergistic combination of all marketing mix elements. Each sub-marketing strategy (e.g. employee, naming, pricing, promoting and physical evidence) represents a form of communication and all sub strategies must work together consistently with the firm’s marketing orientation vision.

2.6 Summary

According to Gatignon and Xuereb (1995), the firm that operates within a technology-based market has three strategic alternatives; customer, competitive, or technological orientation. In his 'Marketing Myopia', Levitt (1960) illustrated the potential lack of marketing spirit in technology-based markets. The author discussed firms' propensity toward the adoption of 'product orientation' as a common approach in such sectors where the prevailing policy is that a superior product will sell itself (Davies & Bursh, 1997).

On the other hand, proponents of the 'Value-driven Relational Marketing' view criticise the exaggerated tendency toward technology-based solutions and stress that, to rely on the technical aspects —mainly— of a product as a prefabricated package for introducing customer perceived value is insufficient (Gronroos, 1997).

Several studies were conducted in the context of evaluating the influence of marketing orientation on firms' performance; however, the mechanisms of this relationship represent a distinct gap in marketing orientation literature that has not been explored sufficiently. Moreover, the majority of related studies were undertaken within industrial contexts and there have, to date, been limited studies that focus on service providers, not manufacturers.

In order to investigate the mechanisms that underlie the relationship between marketing orientation and performance this chapter presents a theoretical framework aiming at breaking down customer satisfaction and customer retention into sub-dimensions and components to enable tracking the influence of marketing orientation on each particular component.

Customer satisfaction is viewed as a state of mind; meanwhile the Expectations Disconfirmation Model (EDM) represents a dominant framework appropriating the altitudinal nature of satisfaction/dissatisfaction. On the other hand, customer retention is considered from a behavioural perspective where the Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM) offers different analytical applications covering the setting, antecedents and consequences of consumer behaviour.

Taking into account the challenges in achieving complete objectivity in qualitative research, confirmability is concerned with the researcher's effort to show that they have

“not overtly allowed personal values or theoretical inclinations manifestly to sway the conduct of research and findings deriving from it” (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p.414). In order to ensure objectivity and avoid the potential bias in such kind of research, the developed framework of this study and its included variables and interrelationships are all based on the logic of two dominant paradigms covering both of the attitudinal and behavioural aspects of consumer purchasing and retention behaviour; the Expectation Disconfirmation Model (EDM) (Van Montfort et al., 2000; Oliver, 1993; Oliver & Desarbo 1988; Oliver, 1977) and the Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM).

In addition, the research followed triangulation approach in diversifying data resources (e.g. interview, document analysis such as firms’ advertisements, and firm-customer contract analysis), researchers and methods at the aim of ensuring the intended objectivity and avoiding bias in qualitative research.

Moreover, as an advanced level of analysis, the research framework adopts the applications of the Dynamic Capability View (DCV) to evaluate the effects of marketing orientation adoption on the firm’s value creation capability and adaptation within the dynamic and fast-changing environment. Hence, to which extent the management of each component of customer satisfaction and customer retention by each firm achieves the innovation, coordination, and adaptation (i.e. the main applications of the DCV) is considered in the research framework.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1 Overview

This chapter discusses the methodological philosophy, approach, strategy, instruments and techniques that have been adopted in this research as sequential processes of finding out and investigating the research problem.

Figure 3.1 below illustrates the main components of the research methodology diagram. Component D1 (Define it) highlights the formulation of the research problem and reviewing relevant literature which represents the base upon which the researcher relies to identify the gap(s), and then to develop the research theoretical framework. Also, identifying research purpose and aims, and formulating the appropriate outline plan for achieving these goals are essential issues at this phase of research. D1 represents an initial step of the research where its components have been discussed in chapter one (General Introduction) and chapter two (Literature Review).

Components D2 (Design it) and D3 (Do it) deal with identifying the research philosophy, approach, methods and data collection procedures in terms of determining which methods or instruments are more appropriate for the research, and detail *how*, *when* and *where* the data collection process has taken place.

Finally, D4 (Describe it) discusses the data analysis phase. Determining the research data analysis strategy is crucial at this point of research, which should be consistent with the adopted research philosophy and approach represented in D2.

Analysing qualitative and quantitative data, evaluating validity and reliability of used instruments in addition to interpreting results and writing up the report constitute the final stage of the research methodology diagram.

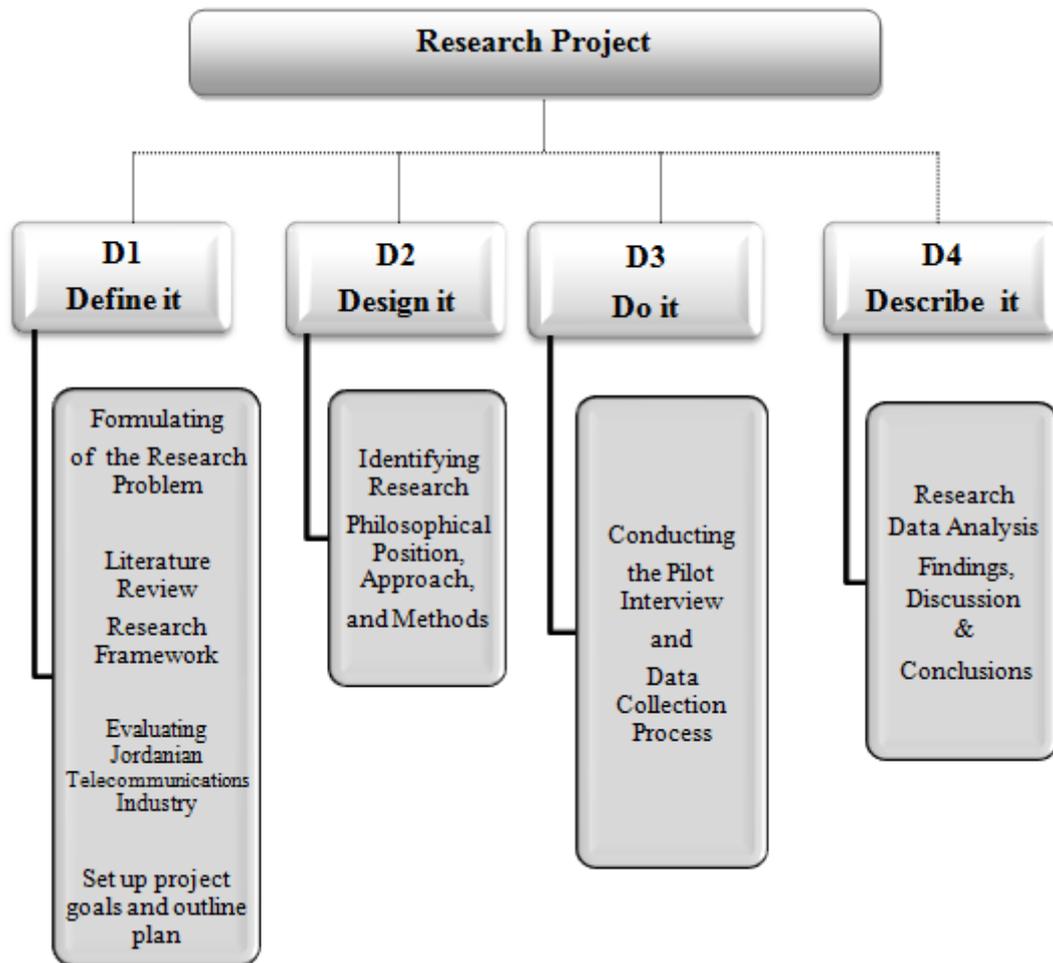


Figure 3.1: A Summary of the Research Methodology Diagram

Source: Adapted from Maylor and Blackman (2005)

3.2 Research Design

Methodology is a combination of techniques used to enquire into a specific situation (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). It is concerned with linking the theoretical aspects of research with the appropriate practical data collection instruments or techniques. Meanwhile, a choice of research design “reflects decisions about the priority being given to a range of dimensions of the research process” (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 40). Hence, research design provides overall guidance for the practical procedures of the research methodology, primary data collection methods and data analysis (Hussey & Hussey, 1997; Churchill, 1979), consistent with the research philosophy.

Several variables contributed to the formulation of the present research project. The nature of research purpose, study aims, and research domain are seen as key aspects determined the research design.

3.2.1 Research Philosophical Position

A research philosophy reflects the researcher's perspective in interpreting of phenomena, and depends on how he\she thinks about the development of knowledge. Consequently, it is a pattern of beliefs about the way in which the procedural steps of the research should be designed and how related data should be gathered and analysed (Levin, 1988). Hence, it represents the vision that controls and affects all other related strategies and techniques.

Saunders et al. (2007) have classified research steps into different layers and alternatives approaches which should be employed in conjunction with the nature of the research and the questions the researcher is seeking to answer. The Research Onion Model shown in figure 3.2 represents five levels comprising the different philosophical positions of research, alternative approaches, strategies, data collection instruments and analysis techniques.

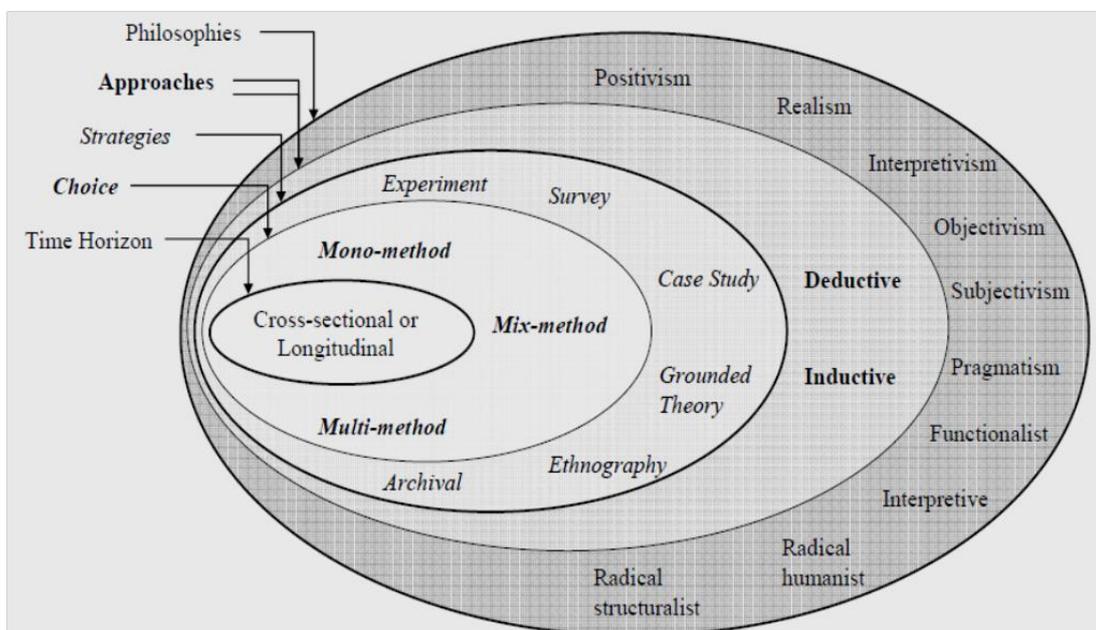


Figure 3.2: The Research Onion Model

Source: Saunders et al. (2007)

Although related literature classified research according to perception of the world into several different philosophies (e.g. realism, positivism, pragmatism, etc), positivism and phenomenology are seen as two major approaches in which research could be classified (Creswell 2003; Easterby-Smith et al., 2002).

Positivism is developed from existing theory within a logical manner through highly structured empirical testing of hypotheses (Winter, 1987). While positivism is more compatible with natural science and applied research, phenomenology represents another viewpoint. As a reaction to the positivism approach, phenomenology aims at illuminating the nature of a concerned phenomenon, and to understand it through how it is perceived by the actors in its context.

Positivism has been criticised as an inappropriate philosophy within marketing or management research because of its structural tendency. According to Saunders et al. (2007, p. 86), “the social world of business and management is far too complex to lend its self to theorizing by definite ‘laws’ in the same way as the physical sciences.”

On the other hand, phenomenological research considers humans as part of the phenomenon and focuses on understanding the mechanism in which meanings, beliefs, and realities of the social world are formulated by members of a social group (Acumen Insights, 2009). The research methods under the phenomenological perception give considerable attention to focusing on the meaning — within the qualitative approach — rather than the measurement of social phenomena (Husseny & Husseny, 1997). Thus, research undertaken using the phenomenological methodology aims to understand intentional phenomena by interpreting meaning (Fay, 1996).

To conclude, whether phenomenology or positivism is more suited to the planned study depends on the nature of the research, its aims, in addition to the question(s) the researcher is seeking to answer as Saunders et al. (2007) stated.

Focusing on each approach in terms of perception of the world, objectives, research methods, techniques of data collection and analysis, and the role of respondents, table 3.1 below highlights the key variations between Phenomenology and Positivism as discussed in relevant literature.

Table 3.1: Phenomenology and Positivism: Main Features

Area	Positivism	Phenomenology
Perception of the World	The social world is separated from human beings. Social reality can be investigated by the use of objective measures	Humans are part of the social world, which exists due to the interaction and actions of human beings
Objectives	Empirical testing of theories by process of verification or falsification for reaching a general principle	The understanding of how members of a social group by actions enact meanings, beliefs and realities of the social world
Research Methods	Hypothetical deductive approach	Process of understanding how practices and meanings are formed by humans as they work towards common goals
Methods of Data Collection	Sample surveys and questionnaires	Interviews, documents and Observations
Methods of Analysis	Statistical models	Interpretation, description and analysis of the social world from the viewpoints of the participants
Role of Respondents	Information based on frameworks prepared by researcher through questionnaires	Allow respondents to use their own ways of explaining their experiences and concepts of the social world

Source: Adapted from Acumen Insights (2009) and Easterby-Smith et al. (2002)

In order to gain insight into the ways by which experienced managers in Jordan's telecommunications market consider how to manage customer satisfaction and customer retention this research adopts the phenomenological approach, with the aim of establishing greater understanding of how different actors act in the environment and how practices are formulated.

To summarise, because of the need to concentrate on meanings, not facts, and the attention given to understanding what is happening, this research positions itself within the phenomenological perspective.

3.2.2 Research Approach

Qualitative research is an umbrella term covering an array of interpretative techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world (Van Manen, 1990 cited in Al-Busaidi, 2008, p.11).

The interpretive perspective offers service marketing research an appropriate approach in which intangible ‘people-related variables’ could be evaluated (Guest 1997; Bharadwaj et al., 1993) whereas such aspects represent the main influential factors that affects a firm’s image and perceived value in the context of services.

Moreover, the interpretive approach enables the researcher to focus on understanding what is happening in the context of a specific phenomenon and facilitates the interpretation of data (Carson et al., 2001). Similarly, it allows a clearer understanding of complex situations involving human and organisational behaviour (Remenyi et al., 1998). In this regard, evaluating the influence of marketing orientation and the ways firms manage customer satisfaction and customer retention in this research will be done not only *on* organisations but also *in* organisations as an in-depth evaluation (Rouse & Daellnbach, 1999).

The qualitative interpretive approach was chosen in this research as the most appropriate methodology to collect “detailed descriptions of events, situations and interactions between people and things providing depth and detail” (Patton, 1980 cited in Gilmore & Carson, 1996, p.22). In addition, the qualitative approach involves gathering a great deal of information about a small number of people or organisations which are generally not presentable in numerical form (Ticehurst & Veal, 2005), and which is considered more suited to this study.

It is suggested that any research carried out in the services context where people’s interactions and integration of acts should be undertaken from the interpretative perspective (Rouse & Daellnbach, 1999). Meanwhile, an interpretive methodology is important for gathering and explaining attitudes and opinions of people. It allows achieving a substantial meaning and understanding of the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions (Carson et al., 2001).

To summarise, the qualitative approach was adopted in this research as highly appropriate in marketing research, (Saunders et al., 2007) and because it is well suited to investigate the characteristics of services (Glimore & Carson, 1996), as in the case of the telecommunications service in Jordan.

3.3 Research Domain

There is broad academic consensus on the existence of substantial differences between marketing of goods and services (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 2006; Palmer, 2001;

Martin, 1999; Lovelock et al., 1999; Goncalves, 1998; Kurts & Clow, 1998). Zeithaml et al. (1985, p. 33) argued that there are fundamental differences between services and goods: “unique characteristics — notably intangibility, inseparability of production and consumption, heterogeneity, and perishability — separate services from tangible goods”. Simultaneously, these characteristics pose vexing problems for firms offering services particularly, and have a negative reflection on research carried out in such markets.

3.3.1 Potential Research Challenges within Services: *Aspects related to Telecommunications Service*

In line with the logic of the Services Marketing Triangle (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996), telecommunications represents an interrelated at different levels of relationship service domain. It reflects the complexity and dynamic roles of actors where various difficulties and constraints hindering evaluation within such environment are highly expected.

In addition to its dependency on the rapidly changing technology, there are many factors contributing to the complexity which characterises the telecommunications service. These include the high contact customer-service provider relationship, its unique short life cycle, and demand fluctuation difficulties. Moreover, relevant literature indicates the potential difficulties attributed to the predominant characteristics of services (e.g. intangibility, inseparability of production and consumption, heterogeneity, and perishability) as main reasons that complicate the evaluation of customer satisfaction with the offered services (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 2006; Zeithaml et al., 1985).

Thus, telecommunications complexities which stem from the traditional predominant characteristics of service are posing challenges for service providers while implementing their marketing strategies. In that vein, the same challenges are also expected to negatively affect research conducted within the same environment.

Table 3.2 below highlights different aspects of research challenges within telecommunications services which are attributed to the service marketing complexities in such a market; TSP-customer relationship, competition environmental factors and the nature of demand, delivery method and service package.

Table 3.2: Research Challenges and Complexities within Telecommunications Services

<u>Research Complexity of:</u> TSP-Customer Relationship & Nature of TSP	<u>Research complexity of:</u> Competition Environmental Factors & Nature of Demand	<u>Research complexity of:</u> Nature of Telecommunications Service	<u>Research complexity of:</u> Delivery Method & Service Package
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To evaluate the interaction between TSP and customer requires considering several complex <i>psychological, behavioural and attitudinal aspects</i> - The potential objectivism problematic: in the case that researcher's engagement influences the issues under study - Customer's judgment on the quality of provided services is influenced by many internal and external circumstances - Potential eclecticism: caused by the researcher-applied methods in choosing participants, data resources, or preferred answers - Difficulties in identifying customer satisfaction measurement criteria - Language inaccuracy and terminology-related to difficulties: <i>due to the common use of technical and telecom -related terms</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Threats related to weakness to generalise findings (<i>in case of non-cooperation to accept to participate in such research because of competition issues</i>) - Reticence and lack of disclosure related to sensitive information caused by competition, in addition to inaccuracy or lack of data because of awareness of competitors' intelligence activities - Difficulties in evaluating the effects of regional or international markets factors (<i>i.e. the role of parent companies and strategic partnership</i>) - Different theories and perceptions should be considered in evaluating demand of services: (<i>economic, marketing, and social aspects to be considered in evaluating process</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The difficulties associated with the rapidly evolving of customer preferences and needs attributed to the shortlife cycle of service - Constraints associated with the need to seek ethics approval for research on people - Difficulties in evaluating customer perceptions of risk and service quality related to inseparability nature of service - Reticence and lack of disclosure because of personal, financial, or social considerations - Difficulties related to the high costs and the large size of samples in such research (<i>Because of the nature of telecommunications service which is directed to almost all segments and people</i>) - Difficulties in assessing customer's purchasing motivations, key requirements, and related risk perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficulties in assessing customer satisfaction with specific pure service (<i>Main service could not to be isolated easily from complementary services</i>) - Ambiguity in identifying points of strength and points of weakness of the applied delivery methods because of the complexity and multiplicity of roles

Source: Adapted from Ashour (2011)

In addition to challenges created by the nature of the telecommunications service, TSPs' desired performance is directed at achieving the highest levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Hence, research on people encounters many difficulties, such as exploring attitudes, identifying behaviours motivators, and assessing the perceived satisfaction, in addition to the constraints associated with the ethics approval required for research related to people.

3.4 Triangulation as an Appropriate Research Technique

Initially, researchers who use two or more data sources will achieve more rational outcomes than those who use a single source. This is the basic notion of triangulation (Brannen, 2005).

In triangulation, different investigative methods are applied to the same phenomenon (Erzberger & Prein, 1997) in order to pinpoint the phenomenon, to improve the accuracy of the observations (Mason, 2006), and to facilitate validation of collected data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). Thus, triangulation aims to achieve two major objectives (Ammenwerth et al., 2003, p.3): “(i) validation: to support a finding with the help of the others, and (ii) completeness: to complement the data with new results, thus to find new information, to get additional pieces to the overall puzzle”.

Telecommunications as a tech-based services market is characterised by the mutual relationships, dynamicity, unique service characteristics and stiff competition in addition to the challenges posed by the consequences of the acceleration of technology. All mentioned aspects were reflected in the multiplicity of themes that have to be taken into account when evaluating a phenomenon in such a market. Correspondingly, triangulation advocates (e.g. Bryman et al., 2008; Mason, 2006; Denzin, 1978) argue that, through the combining of multiple methods, measures and theories, triangulation allows circumventing such constraints of research.

As this research focuses on the provision of telecommunication services in Jordan as a case study aiming at “capturing of reality and detail by studying a phenomenon in its natural context” (Cavaye, 1996, p.229), the case study approach also allows for the use of multiple methods (Yin, 1984) to establish different views of a phenomenon; i.e. the same notion of triangulation (Tellis, 1997). Mathison (1988, p. 17) emphasised that “practicing researchers and evaluators know that the image of data converging upon a single proposition about a social phenomenon is a phantom image”. By the same token, “[a] phenomenon is measured from two or more different vantage points, in order to pinpoint the phenomenon, or to improve, test or validate the accuracy of the observation” (Mason, 2006, p. 8) which will result in “different images of understanding”, thus increasing the potency of the research findings (Smith & Kleine 1986 cited in Mathison, 1988, p. 2).

Unambiguously, triangulation is more comprehensive and goes beyond the mixed qualitative-quantitative applications of research methods. It aims to achieve a “balanced

picture of the situation” (Altrichter et al., 2008) and a meaningful image, complete description and holistic understanding of the phenomenon.

3.4.1 Triangulation Techniques and Telecommunications Service Research Complexities

Due the increasing and fiercer competition, managers are more reticent about disclosing information which is considered sensitive or may constitute a potential threat from competitors (Wright, 1996). Meanwhile, triangulation offers a wide range of methodological strategies and techniques aimed at circumventing the inaccuracies and eliminating potential bias, which will enable the researcher to increase the validity, credibility, and generalisation of research results. Denzin (1978) suggested four different types of triangulation. (i) *Methodological* triangulation involves using more than one method for gathering data; (ii) *Data* triangulation involves time, space, and persons; (iii) *Investigator* triangulation involves multiple researchers in an investigation, and (iv) *Theory* triangulation involves using more than one theoretical position in the interpretation of the phenomenon.

From a more comprehensive stance, Mason (2006) suggested different methodological strategies that are based on linking the social research impediments with its appropriate multi-methods alternatives.

In line with Mason’s proposed strategies, the researcher may draw on ‘mixing methods’, ‘parallel logic approach’, ‘mixing methods within integrative logic’ or ‘multi-dimensional logic research approach as general proposed strategies that represent a source from which various strategies and techniques are drawn.

Particularly, in order to establish a rich picture of the patterns and mechanisms relevant to building customer satisfaction and customer retention by telecommunications service providers (TSPs), and then to evaluate the effect of marketing orientation on the formulation of these patterns, triangulation provides a more close-up view of the background of the phenomenon through combining different data research methods. On one hand, the adoption of the qualitative technique (e.g. semi-structured interview and document analysis such as firms’ advertisements analysis and firm-customer contract analysis) enables an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in its natural context (Cavaye, 1996). On the other hand, statistical or quantitative data complements and enriches the overall image of evaluation.

To conclude, research carried out in a fast-changing environment is faced by critical constraints which may negatively influence the acceptance of research results. In particular, the predominant characteristics of telecommunications services, the structure of the telecommunication industry, the volatile environment and the nature of demand all require an appropriate methodological perspective that can deal effectively with the anticipated challenges and difficulties of such research (Ashour, 2011). Meanwhile, this research adopts the triangulation strategy through matching the complexities of telecommunications services to the most appropriate research techniques, as proposed in figure 3.3.

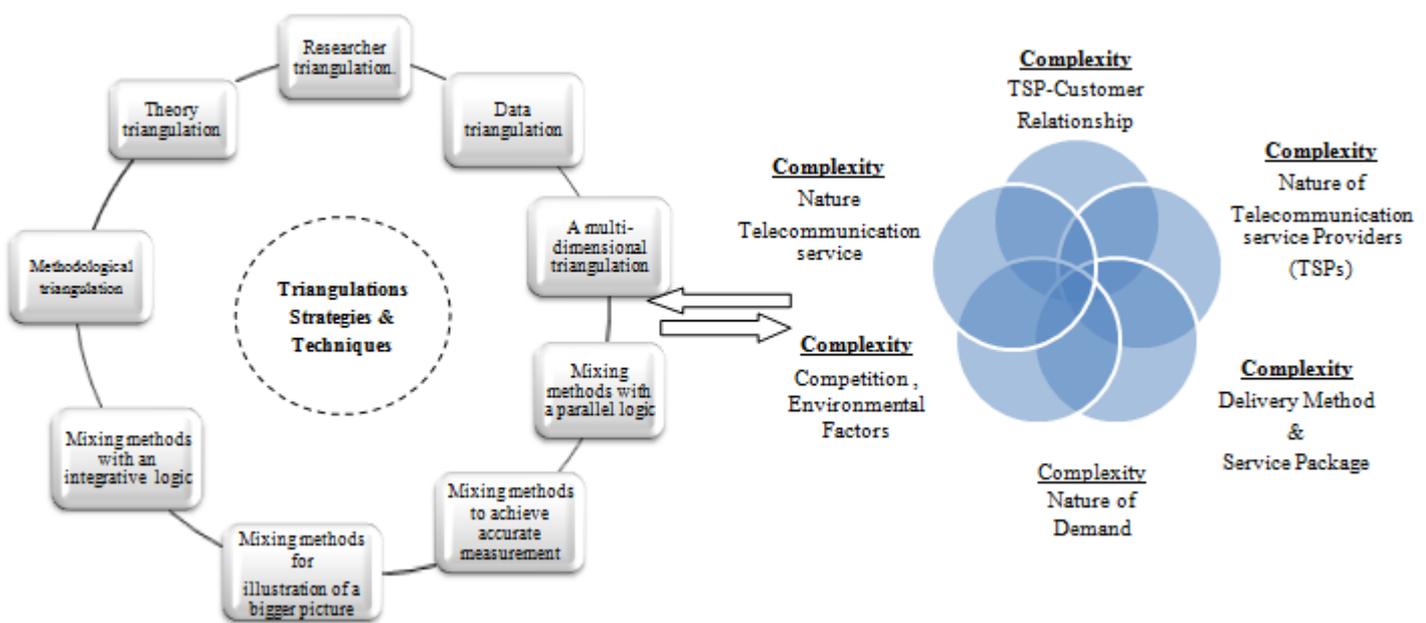


Figure 3.3: Matching of Research Complexities and Triangulation Strategies and Techniques

Source: Adapted from Ashour (2011)

Thus, triangulation is considered as an appropriate approach in such a scenario because of its appropriateness to probe an area of interest or particular problem in depth, or where one can identify cases rich in information (Patton, 1987 cited in Noor, 2008). In this research, triangulation enables the researcher to expand the methodological alternatives horizontally (e.g. diversity of theories and strategies; EDM, BPM, DCV) and vertically (e.g. diversity of data resources, instruments and techniques; semi-structured interview, document analysis and short questionnaire) to achieve a balanced evaluation of firms' managerial attitudes and behaviours towards marketing strategies and increasing the validity and credibility of evaluation findings.

3.5 Research Study Field

This research is primarily based on managers' perspective for gaining further insight into the relationship of marketing orientation and firms' performance (i.e. customer satisfaction and customer retention) in Jordan's telecommunication market. Thus, the target sample was planned to efficiently represent telecommunications service providers (TSPs) in the provision of telecommunications services in Jordan (PTSJ).

As a single industry, PTSJ constitutes a preferable situation in which firms share strategic market factors. In such homogeneous environment, firms' strategic decisions are affected equally by the same industry attribute effects (Miller et al., 1997; Mascarenhas & Aaker, 1989 cited in Rouse & Daellenbach, 1999) which allows for greater acceptance of research findings and avoids the problem of sampling (Helms et al., 1997) within heterogeneous sectors.

Table 3.3 below illustrates the main network operators in Jordan telecommunication market; companies' formal name, ownership and market.

Table 3.3: Key Players in Jordan's Telecommunications Market

<u>Company Name</u>	<u>Ownership</u>	<u>Market</u>
Zain Jordan Group	Zain Kuwait (97%)	Mobile, internet, fixed-line telephony (international)
Jordan Telecom Group / Orange	France Telecom (51%), Government (16%), others private shareholders (33%)	Mobile, fixed-line telephony (local and international), data and internet
Umniah Mobile Company	Batelco Bahrain (96%)	Mobile, data and internet services
New Generation Telecommunication Company LTD./ XPress	VTEL Holdings (28%), Aqqad Investment Co. (18.7%), National Advanced system (18.7%), others private shareholders (34.6 %)	Mobile (push-to-talk) calls services

Source: Adapted from Ericsson Region Middle East (2010)

In order to achieve satisfactory answers for the research questions, participants' different backgrounds were considered. Hence, varied managerial perspectives are taken into account through the data-collecting process; marketing, strategy and communication. Also, the interviewees were selected purposively (Tongco, 2007; Maxwell, 1997) from two managerial levels: senior managers and chief executives. Participants should be experienced and senior practicing managers in marketing or related positions and they must be closely involved in the activities related to the research themes (Alam, 2005).

The nature of the telecommunications industry represented in the limited number of players (chapter one, section 1.2.2) allowed the entire population to be represented in the study which theoretically means less bias and more acceptable for research outcomes (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Thus, in order to represent the different opinions and experiences and to achieve a considerable level of findings generalisation, the targeted interviewees should represent all network telecommunications operators in Jordan's market.

3.6 Practical Research Phases and Instruments

This research adopted a pluralistic approach with regard to using different theories, data sources, instruments and techniques in order to achieve the research objectives efficiently. Consequently, different instruments and data sources were used.

The semi-structured interview was chosen as a main qualitative data collection technique in this research. Also, short questionnaires within face-to-face structured interviews, in addition to other secondary data, constitute a rich and diverse source of data.

As illustrated in the below table, in addition to the methodological triangulation used in this research, it also followed theory triangulation (Bryman et al., 2008) as the research framework is based on the logic of three main theories: the Expectation Disconfirmation Model (EDM), the Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM), and the Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV).

Table 3.4 details the different practical research phases, its relevant objectives and its adopted instruments.

Table 3.4: Practical Research Phases and Data Collection Instruments

Research Phase	Phase Objective	Phase Adopted Instrument	Theoretical Base
Phase (I) Exploratory Stage <i>(preparatory stage)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To determine marketing orientation (MO) level for each TSP in the market <i>(this phase is requirement for the implementation of phase II)</i> - Identifying the 'key informant persons' who have professional background related to the aspects being evaluated in the next stage (i.e. semi-structured interview) 	<i>Manager's Perspective</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short questionnaire <i>(Within face-to-face structured and brief interview)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Behavioural aspects: MARKOR scale of Kohli and Jaworski (1993, 1990) - Attitudinal aspects: Avlonitis and Gounaris (1999, 1997), Narver and Slater (1990) and Hooly et al. (1990)
Phase (II) Identifying Stage <i>(main stage)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying the patterns and its related mechanisms by which each component and sub-diminution of customer satisfaction (CS) and customer retention (CR) are built by telecommunications operators <p><i>(taking into account their adopted level of marketing orientation)</i></p>	<i>Manager's Perspective</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>In-depth semi-structured interview</i> - <i>Secondary data</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expectation Disconfirmation Model (EDM) - Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM) - Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV)

3.6.1 Phase I: Exploratory Phase

The research first stage was designed mainly to investigate the variations between the main four telecommunications operators in the market with regard to the adoption of marketing orientation. Thus, it is planned to determine the adopted marketing orientation 'level' (Ruekert, 1992) or 'degree' (Tesar et al., 2000) for each firm in the market.

Figure 3.4 highlights the anticipated outcome of phase (I) represented in a classification of the telecommunications operators regarding their adopted level of marketing orientation.

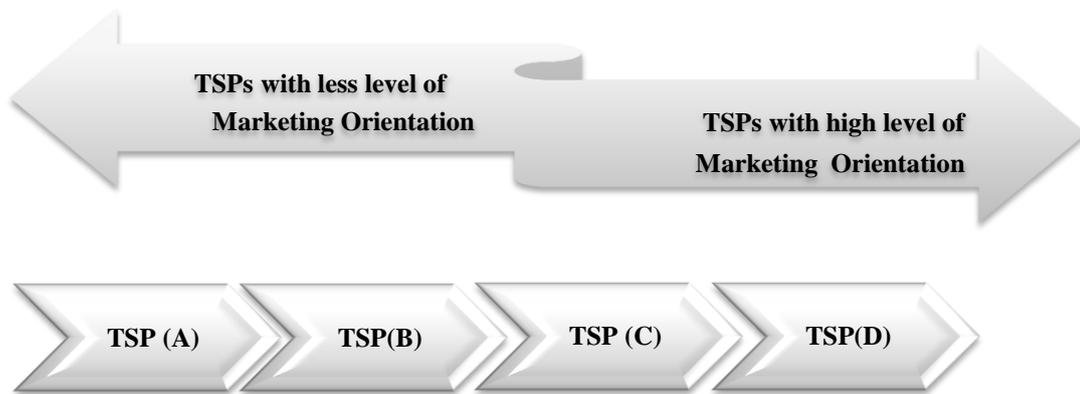


Figure 3.4: Classification of TSPs: the Adopted level of Marketing Orientation

As an initial and preparatory practical stage of research, investigating the key informant persons in each firm who have professional backgrounds related to the issues being evaluated is a considerable goal (Frechtling & Sharp, 1997) at this stage of the study.

Hence, the exploratory phase intended to achieve two main objectives: (i) a comprehensive image for the provision of telecommunications service in Jordan (PTSJ) with regard to the adoption of marketing orientation levels for the different telecommunications operators, and (ii) this phase was designed to enable the researcher to identify the key informants for the main phase of research, the managers' semi-structured interviews.

3.6.1.1 Applied Instrument/Phase I

Sampling

In marketing research, both qualitative and quantitative methods may choose their samples purposively. According to Maxwell (1997, p.87), purposive sampling is the most appropriate technique in cases where particular participants are selected deliberately because of the important information they can provide that cannot be gained so well from other choices. Such a technique may be a practical and an efficient tool when used properly, and can be just as effective as - and even more efficient than - random sampling (Tongco, 2007). Moreover, such a technique is preferred when the researcher has already decided what needs to be known and defined the qualities the informant(s) should or should not have, which is based on identifying people who can

and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience as Tongco (2007) argued.

Consequently, a judgmental (purposive) sample of 48 participants was planned to be selected from the main marketing departments from the main four operators in Jordan's telecommunications market. Although each telecommunications operator has many different branches and agents in the different provinces and regions in Jordan, marketing managers, supervisors and marketing staff from the central marketing departments in the capital, Amman, were targeted particularly. The justification of such a technique is that the issue being evaluated in phase (I) is managed mainly by firms' main departments not their branches. Thus, such participants seem to be more able to express issue related to the firm's vision or strategy as in the case of marketing orientation aspects.

Measurement Tool

In marketing orientation literature, there is no specific ideal measure construct. However, the adoption of the two dominant scales of Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Narver and Slater (1990) was the common approach that was used broadly in measuring marketing orientation. While Vorhies and Harker, (2000) used all 32 items of Kohli and Jaworski's (1990) construct for assessing marketing orientation within the Australian context, on the other hand, Avlonitis and Gounaris (1997) selected just 15 items from the same original scale as the researchers considered they are the most appropriate variables for their study in Greece's market. Similarly, Ngai and Ellis (1998) adopted 14 items from Narver and Slater's (1990) original measure.

Other scholars followed the adoption of those two popular scales in a single study (e.g. Mahmoud, 2011; Mokhtar et al., 2009; Hinson et al., 2008; Farrel & Oczkowski, 1997); the approach which was followed in this research. Hence, the researcher used a combination of selected items of both MKTOR (Narver & Slater, 1990) and MARKOR (Kohli et al., 1993) that are commensurate with the context of provision of telecommunications service marketing in Jordan (PTSJ) as a service market covering the four basic dimensions of marketing orientation (Zebal & Goodwin, 2011): *customer emphasising, information generation, information coordination and action initiation (responsiveness)*.

Many previous marketing orientation (MO) studies were dedicated to assessing different aspects of the causal relationship between marketing orientation and business performance. Such research used scales that in general comprise three sorts of items: marketing orientation, organisational performance, and moderating variables. The inclusion of marketing orientation and organisational performance variables in those scales was vital to measure this relationship (i.e. MO-organisational performance). On the other hand, the adoption of moderating variables (e.g. environmental turbulence and competitive intensity) was justified by the likelihood of moderating influence of these factors which affect the relationship between marketing orientation and business performance (Bunic, 2007). In such studies, the use of moderating variables was associated with assessing the causal relationship of marketing orientation and business performance. Thus, positive or negative relationships of moderators and marketing orientation were formulated as hypotheses to be examined within causal qualitative-style research (e.g. Kumar et al., 2011).

This research is based on a fundamental proposition in marketing strategy represented in the positive association between marketing orientation and firms' performance (McNaughton et al., 2002). This assumption has received widespread support in the literature for its reliability and validity in many different contexts which was confirmed by the extensive body of research conducted on marketing orientation (Mokhtar et al., 2009; Dikmen et al., 2005; Panayides, 2004; Vorhies & Harker, 2000; Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1999, 1997; Jaworski & Kohli 1993; Greenley, 1995). Consequently, this research was not designed to re-measure this relationship; on the contrary, the research framework assumes the presence of this association, and the main purpose of the research focused on investigating the mechanisms (*not on the causal link*) by which firms achieve customer satisfaction and customer retention, then to evaluate the variation of marketing orientation adoption on these processes.

Accordingly, the adopted questionnaire was developed with the aim of determining the adopted level of marketing orientation of the four telecommunications operators excluding the evaluation of the causal relationship between marketing orientation and organisational performance. Thus, the questionnaire excluded the causal relationship-related items - i.e. *organisational performance* and *moderators factors* - and focused on evaluating the *degree* (Bunic, 2007; Ngai & Ellis, 1998) or the *level* (Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1999,1997; Ruekert, 1992; Keith, 1960) of marketing orientation for each

firm comprising the main dimensions of this orientation; i.e. customer orientation, information generation, information coordination and responsiveness.

Respondents were asked to express their agreement or disagreement with the 28-item questionnaire (Appendix E); 15 items (A1, A2..., A15) measured the attitudinal aspects of marketing orientation and 13 items (B1, B..., B13) assessed the behavioural dimensions of marketing orientation, represented by a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7= strongly agree).

It is worth noting that, while the original scales developed by Jaworski and Kohli (1993) and Avlonitis and Gounaris (1997) used a five-point Likert-type scale, in this research the scale extent was increased to a seven-point scale in order to achieve a better presentation of the variations among the views of the respondents.

3.6.2 Phase II: Identifying Phase

This practical phase is concerned mainly with identifying telecommunications operators' patterns of managing customer satisfaction and customer retention as two main strategic goals for telecommunications operators in Jordan's market, and then to evaluate the effect of marketing orientation on these processes.

In detail, taking into account the adopted level of marketing orientation (*the outcome of research phase (I)*) for each telecommunications operator, this phase identifies the ways and mechanisms by which each component and sub-dimension of customer satisfaction is built based on the applications of the Expectation Disconfirmation Model (EDM) (i.e. customer expectations; the affective and the cognitive variables of customer judgment).

In addition, this phase identifies the ways in which each component and sub-dimension of customer retention is built by each operator (*taking into account their adopted level of marketing orientation*). The process is accomplished based on the applications of the Behavioural Perspective Model (PBM) (e.g. learning history, utilitarian reinforcement, utilitarian punishment, etc); meanwhile, the outcomes of this evaluation reflect the mechanisms of building customer retention within its behavioural understanding.

3.6.2.1 Applied Instrument/Phase II

Qualitative approach involves gathering a great deal of information about a small number of people or organisations which is generally not presentable in numerical form (Ticehurst & Veal, 2005). This approach is judged more suitable for this phase of the research. Consequently, the semi-structured audio-taped interview as a qualitative instrument was chosen in phase II. The in-depth, unstructured interview is the most appropriate instrument in this phase because of its capability to achieve the story behind a participant's experience through the detailed descriptions of events, situations and interactions between people and what is being investigated (Patton, 1980 cited in Gilmore & Carson, 1996).

Semi-structured interviews with directors and senior and executive managers within the main telecommunications operators (who represent higher involvement and participation in their organisations) allow a "greater degree of sense-making, and richer descriptive and analytical possibilities for the data" (Rouse & Daellenbach, 1999, p. 490). This non-standardised qualitative instrument is more appropriate for potential interviewees such as directors or senior managers, in that it encourages them to express their experiences, attitudes, needs and ideas relevant to their companies' marketing strategies (Wright, 1996). In addition, the semi-structured interview technique, unlike structured interview or group interview is more suitable for managers who are more likely to agree to be interviewed in an unstructured and individual fashion (Saunders et al., 2007; Seidman, 1991).

Moreover, the semi-structured interview was chosen in this research because it seeks to go beyond gathering information to provide an understanding of the experiences of respondents' attitudes and ideas (Hall & Rist, 1999) regarding the drivers and mechanisms of customer satisfaction and customer retention in Jordan's market. As the research purpose is concerned mainly with gaining further understanding (not causal relationship research) of the research statement, purposive sampling may be the most appropriate technique for the data collection process in such research (Saunders et al., 2007). Consequently, this phase of research also followed a judgmental (purposive) selection procedure in which 20 participants were targeted based on the recommendations of the previous stage regarding identifying the key informants persons from each firm. In addition, the sampling process has taken into account the

diversity of interviewees' backgrounds and experiences, such as marketing, strategy, and communication among others.

3.6.2.2 Data Collection Procedure/Phase II

3.6.2.2.1 Prior Interview

As mentioned above, managers in such a stiff competitive environment are expected to be reticent about disclosing information with regard to sensitive issues. Consequently, because of the potential challenges associated with getting the acceptance for participation, the researcher started communicating with the four telecommunication operators in Jordan at an early stage in the study. This initial preparatory stage was to introduce the research aims and coordinate with the potential participants who have excellent experience and background in the research area.

Formal letters (Appendix A) were sent to the general managers of the four telecommunication operators in coordination with the researcher supervisor and Head of Department of Marketing and Enterprise at the University of Hertfordshire. The letters introduced the researcher, and the study aims in addition to requesting permission to collect data and the offer to provide a summary of the research findings.

Finally, interview agendas - time, date and place- were arranged at this stage in coordination with the targeted interviewees' secretaries.

3.6.2.2.2 During Interview

Taking into account the expected reticence and limited time offered by senior or executive managers, a three-stage interview protocol (introduction, interviewing and wrapping-up) was developed in order to manage the planned interviews efficiently (Appendix B).

The first action taken before conducting the interview was reminding the participants of the purpose of the study and the research progress (Saunders et al., 2007). Re-permission was sought for recording the interviews and for taking hand-written notes. The researcher tried to manage each interview in a way that allows the participant to express their thoughts and ideas. It is worth noting that each participant was reminded of the right not to answer any question should they not wish to do so, and that the interview will be stopped if they so wish (Saunders et al., 2007).

The developed interview protocol and the adoption of specific interviewing skills helped the researcher to manage the interviews in a way that stimulated respondents to elaborate on critical points, and allowed participants to express their thoughts. An example of such techniques is ‘laddering’ (Veludo-de-Oliveira et al., 2006) which is viewed as an in-depth, one-on-one interviewing style in which the interviewer starts with questions about general or external objects, then proceeds to internal attitudes based on the participant’s answers.

The planned semi-structured audio-taped interview consists of 20 questions as shown in Appendix D, beginning with general and less sensitive issues, and then focusing on specific dimensions of issues being evaluated. Hence, interview questions were divided into three sections; (i) general background, and (ii) the attitudinal aspects of customer satisfaction, and (iii) the behavioural aspects of consumer retention.

Section one: consists of 2 initial and general questions (*factual rather than opinion questions*) intended to involve the respondent in the interview, and to be in the mode to express his thoughts and ideas with regard to subsequent research questions. Thus, the questions of this section address:

- The performance of the PTSJ compared to other region peer markets (e.g. ARPU, penetration rate, provided services, technology, etc).
- The general image of Jordan’s market with regard to TSPs’ strategic positions and roles: market leader, follower, or challenger (i.e. market dominance strategy for each TSP).

Section two: comprises 9 questions covering different areas of customer satisfaction. The questions aim at identifying the key factors in telecommunication operators’ value creation strategies from the view of

managers (i.e. customer satisfaction). Thus, the questions were developed to explore the ways in which each firm manages its marketing capabilities in order to manage customer expectations, and the different dimensions of perceived performance: the affective and cognitive variables (consistent with the EDM).

Section three: comprises 9 questions aimed at identifying firms’ patterns in building customer retention. Hence, it is focused on the behavioural aspects of customer

retention, its stimulus and consequences [reinforcements and punishments] (consistent with the BPM).

It is worth noting that interview questions were formulated in English then were translated into Arabic before conducting the practical data collecting process. Back translation was used in translating the final draft of the interview questions; this technique is the primary method used to check translation accuracy (Douglas & Craig, 2007) in marketing research. According to the back translation approach, the questions were translated to Arabic then translated back into English without reference to the original text by an independent translator in order to ensure accuracy and to solve any contradiction between both translations.

3.6.2.2.3 Post Interview

The validity of the recorded data was confirmed by replaying the audio-recorded material after every interview. Initial evaluation of the interview, regarding the need for a subsequent further interview, is an important process before sending the participant a letter (email) of thanks for his agreement to the meeting; the procedure which was followed after each interview.

3.7 Validity and Reliability in Qualitative Research

The terms ‘validity’ and ‘reliability’ are concepts used broadly for testing and evaluating quantitative research. However, these concepts are not only confined to quantitative research (Sarantakos, 1994) and the idea is most often used in all kinds of research (Golafshani, 2003).

For a quantitative researcher, reliability and validity are important criteria in assessing the quality of research. While reliability indicates the “agreement between two efforts to measure the same thing with the same methods,” validity is “an agreement between two efforts to measure the same thing with different methods” (Campbell & Fisk, 1967, cited in Hammersley, 1987, p.73). In other words, reliability indicates the extent to which results are consistent over time and validity refers to construct validity (Wainer & Braun, 1998) which represents the degree to which a measurement appears to measure what it is supposed to (McDaniel & Gates, 1999).

Some scholars (e.g. Smith, 1984) argued that both reliability and validity are more relevant to quantitative than to qualitative research. Others, however, advocate the adoption of reliability and validity in qualitative studies through developing alternative standards for assessing the quality of qualitative research (e.g. Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Sarantakos, 1994; Wolcott, 1994; Patton, 1990; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In line with this viewpoint, the ‘quality’ of qualitative research should be evaluated based on different criteria from quantitative studies. Thus, qualitative studies should be judged using criteria that are developed for and fit the nature of qualitative paradigm.

Consequently, alternative criteria were proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) focusing on four aspects for establishing and assessing the quality of qualitative research provided as an alternative to the traditional applications of reliability and validity, as displayed in table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Standards for Qualitative Research

Traditional Criteria for Evaluating Quantitative Research	Alternative Criteria for Evaluating Qualitative Research
Internal Validity	Credibility
External Validity	Transferability
Reliability	Dependability
Objectivity	Confirmability

Source: Guba and Lincoln (1994)

While *external validity* represents the validity of generalisibility of the research outcomes to other people and other situations, *internal validity* in causal relationship research refers specifically to the validity of causal inferences (Mitchell & Jolley, 2001). Thus, internal validity refers to the extent to which we can accurately state that the effect on dependant variable(s) is only caused by the influence of the independent variable(s). On the other hand, *credibility* refers to the adequacy of data from the field, which should involve drawing on different data types, gathered in different ways from different participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Transferability in qualitative research reflects the richness of description and interpretation offered (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and indicates the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalised or transferred to other cases. In other

words, transferability parallels *external validity*, while credibility parallels *internal validity* as Bryman and Bell (2007) expounded.

Dependability parallels reliability in quantitative studies. Reliability in quantitative research is defined by the consistency of a measure, which means similar findings will be achieved if the same phenomenon was evaluated by another researcher in a similar context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For qualitative researchers, this kind of replicability is impossible to realise because researcher's involvement in the fieldwork and his interaction with participants would have a particular influence on findings which differs from one to another researcher.

Confirmability pertains to which extent the findings of research could be confirmed or corroborated by others. Taking into account the challenges in recognising the complete objectivity in marketing research, confirmability is concerned with the researcher's effort to show that they have "not overtly allowed personal values or theoretical inclinations manifestly to sway the conduct of research and findings deriving from it" (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p.414).

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), to establish *dependability* (i.e. maximising the possibility for the consistency of the measure) requires adopting an auditing approach. In order to achieve that, the research plan has to be formulated within the framework of a detailed explanation of each phase. All research steps and procedures - problem formulation, adopted instruments, interview-related details (e.g. participants' details and managerial positions, targeted number, time and place of interview etc.), data collection procedures, data analysis strategies and pre-testing process - need to be described in a way that enables other evaluators to follow the research procedures and to then assess the degree to which theoretical inferences can be justified (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Moreover, the same technique was used for ensuring *transferability* which refers to whether the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other situations. The adoption of 'auditing' allows providing details of methodological description, ensuring that all related procedures were central to the research.

Patton (1990) referred to informant bias as a major criticism of qualitative research. However, it can be arguable that triangulation as a pluralistic approach allows the researcher to circumvent the threat of bias by increasing the credibility and the

trustworthiness of an investigation (Alam, 2005) and helps in overcoming the problematic of potential bias. Thus, the adoption of triangulation techniques in this research was intended to establish the needed credibility for the qualitative evaluations. Following the same lines, Guion (2002) highlighted the importance of triangulation in qualitative research for checking and establishing validity regarding research findings.

It is worth noting that, in order to achieve a balanced evaluation for firms' managerial attitudes and behaviours towards marketing strategies and firms' patterns in managing the different aspects of customer satisfaction and customer retention, the researcher—in addition to the use of the semi-structured interview as a main qualitative tool—also adopted other qualitative techniques in this regard such as observations undertaken during the researcher frequent visits to these firms which enabled the researcher to learn about the day-to-day and routine activities of participants in the research setting, and also helped him to develop a sampling and interviewing guide.

Additionally, the interview findings of the research were validated by using other tools. The same results are achieved through analysing many relevant documents such as firms' advertisements, and firms-customer contract.

Although this research is considered as qualitative and interpretive, both qualitative and quantitative methods are used as a mutually reinforcing and synergistic combination in line with the triangulation strategy, with the aim to increase the 'potency' of evaluation findings.

According to the sequential stages of this study, different types of triangulation and techniques were employed by the researcher in order to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the research outcomes.

- *Theory triangulation*: one of the main characteristics of this research is the adoption of different theories in order to evaluate the influence of marketing orientation on the patterns and mechanisms by which organisational performance is managed. Thus, different theoretical viewpoints were included; the behavioural aspect of consumer behaviour, the attitudinal dimension of satisfaction, and the dynamic capabilities were discussed from the viewpoint of strategic management. Hence, the research framework was developed based on a combination of three main paradigms;

the Expectation Disconfirmation Model (EDM), the Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM), and the Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV).

- *Methodological and data triangulation*: taking into account the complexities of service marketing and the associated research challenges, this research through the adoption of a mixed (qualitative and quantitative) approach benefiting from the synergistic combination of this integration. According to Bryman (2006, p.101), “quantitative and qualitative research can be combined at different stages of the research process, formulation of research questions, sampling, data collection, and data analysis.” Also, this combination could be exploited to “enrich understanding of an experience or issue through confirmation of conclusions, extension of knowledge or by initiating new ways of thinking about the subject of the research” (Bazeley, 2004, p. 9).

- Moreover, *investigator triangulation* was also considered in order to increase the trustworthiness of investigations. Different implementations were applied regarding the coordination of other evaluators and experiences in the context of the research. The researcher was keen to involve research assistants or experts at specific stages of the study. This technique contributed positively in refining the final drafts of the semi-structured interview and in ensuring the accuracy of quantitative analysis of MO questionnaire. Moreover, research questions and audio-taped interviews transcriptions’ back translation approach enabled an independent translator to contribute in ensuring the translation equivalence and allowing for circumventing potential bias.

3.8 Pre-testing Data Collection Tools

Pre-testing is an important research process that aims to identify and correct flaws in instruments under development. Pre-testing, which often occurs before researcher conducts the practical data collection process, tests the adopted measuring tools to ensure that meet their purpose (Collins, 2003). In order to establish trustworthiness of the research results, the researcher should consider validity through assessing how instruments work and whether changes are necessary before the start of the actual data collection step. Table 3.6 below highlights different types of instrument validity and explains the intended purpose for the researcher in case the event is achieved.

Table 3.6: Methods of Instrument Validation

Type	Description	Purpose
Face	Evaluation of an instrument's appearance by a group of experts and/or potential participants	Establishing an instrument's ease of use, clarity, and readability
Content	Evaluation of an instrument's representativeness of the topic to be studied by a group of experts	Establishing an instrument's credibility, accuracy, relevance, and breadth of knowledge regarding the domain.
Criterion	Evaluation of an instrument's correlation to another that is deemed unquestionable or identified as the gold standard	Establishing an instrument's selection over another or establishing the predictability of the measure for a future criterion.
Construct	Evaluation of an instrument's ability to relate to other variables or the degree to which it follows a pattern predicted by a theory	Establishing an instrument's ability to evaluate the construct it was developed to measure.

Source: Burton and Mazerolle (2011)

In this study, the researcher followed the procedures suggested by Burton and Mazerolle (2011) and Davis (1992) in pre-testing the adopted research instruments:

- Conducting an in-depth and focused reviewing on related literature (e.g. marketing orientation, value-driven relationship marketing, service marketing, customer satisfaction, customer retention, Dynamic Capability View, and models of customer satisfaction and customer retention). Defining constructs begins with a thorough exploration of relevant literature in the domain, as Burton and Mazerolle (2011) suggested.
- Consulting colleagues and experts is a recommended procedure for pre-testing data collection tools as this maximises the likelihood of content validity (Davis, 1992). Hence, an academic member from the University of Jordan was consulted with regard to the formulation of a marketing orientation measurement tool based on the intended aims for this instrument and its compatibility with the statistical analysis software.
- The pilot study can be based on quantitative and qualitative methods (Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). Thus, a pilot study was undertaken to assess the clarity and validity of the research instrument, and to discover any possible problematic related to the design of in-depth interview questions.

It is worth noting that the role of the pilot study is critical in some cases where the potential difficulties in re-interviewing respondents (as the case of PTSJ) may restrict

the data collection process. Thus, it provides ample opportunity for diagnosing any weaknesses in the designed interview questions before the actual process commences.

Focusing on testing the questions of managers' semi-structured interviews, a pilot study was carried out as an online interview (Yahoo Messenger) in January 2010 with a manager at Motorola Jordan who has a good background in the aspects being evaluated. Such kind of interview helps in diagnosing any contradiction or ambiguities in the questions and allows the researcher an opportunity to review and revise a research instrument (Alam, 2005). The 50 minutes pilot interview outcomes generated considerable notes relevant to confidentiality issues and managers' tendency toward reticence if they were asked directly about specific issues they believe are related to their future plans or tactics. Also, this pilot interview has indicated how important the role of the researcher is in managing the time; otherwise the manager may go on to talk in general and about less important aspects. As a result, many improvements regarding the format of the questions were made.

3.9 Reliability and Validity Analysis/Quantitative Tool

As noted earlier, although the qualitative interpretative approach is mainly applied in this research, quantitative instruments are used too. Thus, reliability analysis which is concerned with assessing the consistency of the measuring instruments is justified.

The research has used Cronbach's alpha (α), a common reliability coefficient which is widely used in the social sciences to assess the average inter-item correlation of the measurement components of the applied instrument (Cortina, 1993, cited in Spiliotopoulou, 2009). The values of Cronbach's alpha range from zero to one. Hinton (2004) argued that if a measuring instrument's items are measuring the same thing, Cronbach's alpha value will be equal to one. On the contrary, Cronbach's alpha zero value reflects a lack of internal consistency regarding the reliability of instrument items. Although the commonly accepted lower limit for Cronbach's alpha values is 0.70 (George & Mallery, 2003; Clark & Watson, 1995; Nunally, 1978), Robinson et al. (1991) argued that the region of 0.60 is the required value for Cronbach's alpha to be considered reliable.

Table 3.7 indicates the results of the reliability analysis using the approach of Cronbach's alpha for marketing attitudes and marketing orientation domains. The approach focuses on the ratio of dimension item variances to the dimension total taking

into account the number of items in the dimension itself. The value reflects the magnitude of consistency in the respondent's answers.

Table 3.7: Reliability Analysis using the Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficient / Marketing Orientation Measurement Tool

Sub Domains	No. of items	alpha (α) value
Intelligence Generation	4	0.695
Disseminations	5	0.864
Responsiveness	4	0.646
Marketing orientation/ Behaviour	13	0.819
Marketing philosophy	3	0.862
Market Analysis and Adaptation	3	0.849
Sales support	2	0.768
Departmental Marketers	3	0.806
Overlapping	4	0.731

With regard to Cronbach's alpha values related to the behavioural sub-dimensions of marketing orientation, although values ranged from 0.646 to 0.864, the value of total behavioural dimension was high 0.813 which reflected a good degree of consistency among the respondents' answers. On the other hand, the values relevant to each sub-dimension of marketing orientation attitudes ranged from 0.731 to 0.862. Thus, Cronbach's alpha values indicate an obvious consistency among the respondents' answers suggesting a good degree for overall reliability of the tool.

Furthermore, *construct validity* refers to the validity of inferences that observations or measurement tools actually represent or measure the construct being investigated (Pilot & Beck, 2012). According to Brown (2000), correlation coefficients represent an appropriate technique for measuring construct validity.

Table 3.8 below indicates the values of *Pearson correlation* between the degree of each item and the total degree of the dimension it belongs to. This procedure was used to check for construct validity.

Table 3.8: Construct Validity Analysis: Marketing Orientation Measurement Tool

Behavioural aspects				Attitudinal aspects			
Sub Domains	Item	Correlation	Prob.	Sub Domains	Item	Correlation	Prob.
Intelligence generation	B1	0.841	0.000	Marketing	A3	0.441	0.004
	B2	0.444	0.004	Philosophy	A7	0.829	0.000
	B3	0.755	0.000		A8	0.887	0.000
	B4	0.812	0.000	Market	A5	0.856	0.000
Disseminations	B5	0.754	0.000	Analysis and Adaptation	A12	0.903	0.000
	B6	0.795	0.000		A13	0.871	0.000
	B7	0.829	0.000	Sales support	A1	0.949	0.000
	B8	0.858	0.000		A2	0.877	0.000
	B9	0.790	0.000		Departmental Marketers	A4	0.695
Responsiveness	B10	0.581	0.000	A11	A11	0.816	0.000
	B11	0.781	0.000		A14	0.734	0.000
	B12	0.535	0.000	Overlapping and misconception	A6	0.839	0.000
	B13	0.875	0.000		A9	0.572	0.000
					A10	0.752	0.000
			A15	0.826	0.000		

As illustrated in table 3.8, the related probability values were less than 0.05, indicating significant correlation values and concluding good construct validity for each item in each dimension. Also, the values of correlation for the majority of items indicate high correlations; however, values related to B6, B10, B12, A3 and A9 respectively indicate moderate degree of correlation

It is worth noting that the marketing orientation measurement tool used in this research is based mainly on the popular scale (MARKOR) of Kohli and Jaworski (1993, 1990); thus, the reliability and validity of this instrument particularly were confirmed previously through its extensive adoption by many researchers from different cultures and within different contexts.

3.10 Data Analysis

According to Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) there is no single or best way for data analysis; to adopt a particular approach depends on three aspects: (i) the questions the researcher wants to answer, (ii) the needs of those who will use the information, and (iii) data resources. Although both qualitative and quantitative data analysis approaches are used in this research, the highly qualitative nature of this research calls for interpretation and qualitative techniques which constitute the bulk of the data analysis and evaluation of this research.

3.10.1 Qualitative Data Analysis (Phase II/ Semi-Structured Interview)

The data analysis process is concerned with adopting an analysis strategy which appropriates the achievement of research objectives. Meanwhile, this research relies particularly on the qualitative semi-structured interview technique for gathering data, while other used instruments were employed either to assist in achieving the objectives of the main instrument, or to support research findings as a recommended implementation of triangulation.

Qualitative data consist of word of mouth and observation, not numbers. To achieve an in-depth understanding for the phenomenon being evaluated that may include dealing with a large volume of data requires creativity, discipline, and systematic approach (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003).

Generally, relevant literature has focused on three main steps in qualitative data analysis as shown in figure 3.5: noticing and coding, collecting and sorting instances of things, and thinking about interesting things (examining the pieces of a puzzle) as Seidel (1998) suggested.

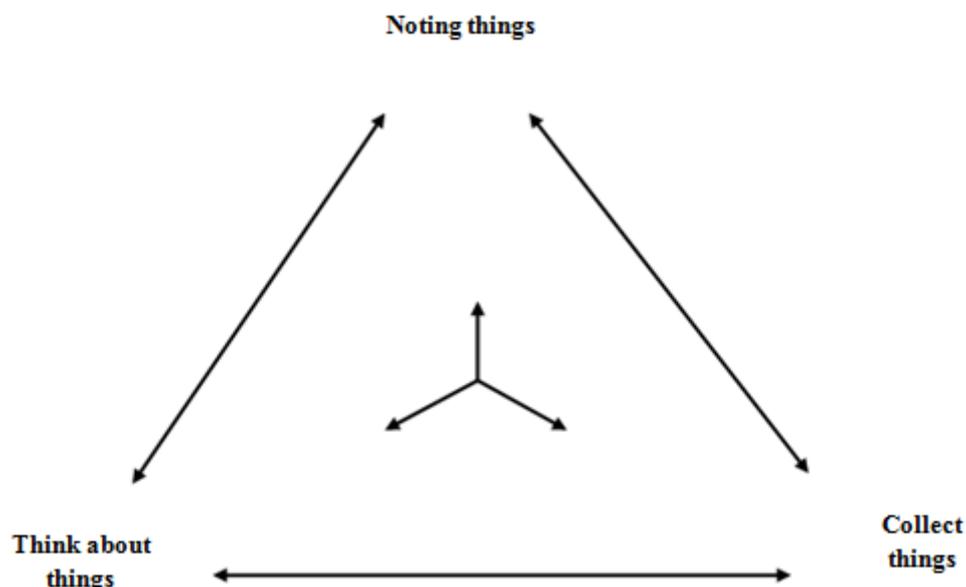


Figure 3.5: The Data Analysis Process

Source: Seidel (1998)

In this research, Miles and Huberman's (1994) systematic qualitative analysis approach is used as a general guide for analysing collected data. The process in which "raw form" collected data were converted into a form that allows exploring, presenting and describing the content of primary qualitative data undergoes the following three phases: (1) preparing and checking data, (2) classifying and coding data interpreting, and (3) exploring and presenting data.

1- Preparing and Checking Data

In addition to checking secondary data, each audio-taped interview was evaluated—as an initial step—in order to determine in general the high related sections that represent a source of important data.

The Interview Data Transcription process was initiated at the same day upon completion of the interview. Transcribing audio-taped interviews consumed a great deal of effort and time; the process required an average of six times the time each recorded interview took to do. By listening frequently to the recorded audio-tape interview, the researcher ensured he was familiar with the content. Transcribed audio interviews and recorded notes were checked, re-read and revised by the researcher many times in order to verify the authenticity of the interview transcripts' translation. The researcher's spouse who is currently a researcher at the University of Leicester, and who speaks both Arabic and English fluently, assisted in checking the translation for more confirmation.

Qualitative analysis of audio interviews required the researcher to focus on all participants' answers, expressions and tones (Saunders et al., 2007) not only what is said or recorded. Hence, the researcher focused his attention on ensuring that the audio-taped interview transcripts represent the interview content as accurately as possible.

To prepare for the interpretation process, each transcribed interview was uploaded to a computer and identified based on the following information:

- Interview date and place
- The firm
- The reference of the interviewee

2. Classifying and Coding Data

Coding data refers to the systematic way in which data are condensed into smaller analysable units or names that emerge from gathered data. According to Strauss (1987) the excellence of qualitative research rests to a large extent on the quality of coding, the process which involves the discovery and naming of categories. Classifying and coding data facilitates the organisation, retrieval and interpretation of data. It is accomplished through the creation of categories and concepts derived from the collected data themselves, inductively preparing data for further in-depth analysis.

Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) suggested two steps for categorising and coding data: first, to identify themes or patterns (e.g. ideas, concepts, behaviours, interactions, incidents or phrases), and second, to organise patterns into coherent categories that summarise and bring meaning to the text. This process could be accomplished within different steps according to Strauss and Corbin (1990) who indicated three levels of coding; open, axial, and selective.

Open coding is the initial stage in data acquisition which refers to breaking down the data into separate units of meaning. It is unrestricted, unfocused and ‘open’ coding (Goulding, 1999) which is done by scrutinising the ‘fieldnote’, interview, or other document very closely; line by line or even word by word (Strauss 1987, p.28). According to Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.60) the first step in the coding process is (*what does the word seem to mean or what could it mean?*). Hence, the researcher can start with some questions that need to be continually addressed, which helps in open coding;

- What is this? What does it represent? (Goulding, 1999).
- What is happening in these data?
- What is the basic socio-psychological problem?
- What accounts for it?
- What patterns are occurring here?” (O’Callaghan, 1996 cited in Goulding, 1999, p.12).

Thus, the result of open coding is a developed list of meaningful categories (e.g. conditions, actions, interactions or consequences) including all emerging codes.

Axial coding: is the next step after open coding which focuses on making connections between developed categories.

Selective coding: refers to “the process of selecting the central or core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.116). Compared to axial coding, selective coding is a higher level of abstraction that includes selecting the core category, relating it to other categories and confirming and explaining those relationships. Thus, it is viewed as an advanced stage of research analysis in which categories are related to the core category ultimately becoming the basis for the grounded theory (Babchuk, 1997).

Different factors are used for choosing core coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998):

- It must be central and appear frequently in the data.
- The explanation that evolves by relating the categories is logical and consistent.
- The name or phrase used to describe the central category should be sufficiently abstract.
- The concept is able to explain variation as well as the main point made by the data.

The role of the researcher in determining the core category is crucial as an “author of a theoretical reconstruction” (Mills et al., 2006) who develops the matrix that stimulates analysts’ thinking about the relationships between emerged categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A process helps to frame a ‘story’ which is a key aspect in formulating the grounded theory (Moghaddam, 2006). “The story line is the final conceptualization of the core category, and as such, this “conceptual label” must fit the stories/data it represents (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 121).

To conclude, selective coding is of critical importance to the research analysis process by which the specific core category is determined and positioned at the centre of the evaluation being explored (Moghaddam, 2006).

3. Interpreting, Exploring and Presenting Data

At this step of the data analysis, the researcher draws his attention towards making sense of the collected data. The key areas of focus in this stage are explaining patterns and examining relationships within a collection, and also across collections, and making general discoveries about the phenomenon that is being evaluated (Seidel, 1998).

Hence, in practice, the researcher scrutinises the potential connections between the categories and also will develop a descriptive framework of the participants' attitudes regarding research phenomenon. Conclusion-drawing and verification of findings form the final phase of the analysis process.

3.10.2 Quantitative Data Analysis (Phase I, Short Questionnaires)

Quantitative data analysis aims at making sense of the collected quantitative data (numbers) to permit meaningful interpretation. The quantitative data analysis process is concerned with adopting appropriate analysis techniques with regard to the nature of collected data, instruments used and intended research objectives.

As a preparatory step, all collected questionnaires were reviewed for completeness and accuracy and incomplete questionnaires were identified for exclusion from analysis. Also, valid questionnaires were numbered (identified) for computer statistical processing purposes.

Determining the appropriate kinds of statistical measurements or comparisons to be used is based on '*what*' aspects (variables) should be measured, and '*how*' to measure these aspects (variables)? In this research, mean (M) and standard deviation (SD), One-Way Anova and Scheffe Post Hoc as applications of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16.0, were conducted in order to determine telecommunications operators' adopted level of marketing orientation.

3.11 Research Ethics

Research procedures have been established in accordance with the UH Research Ethics Committees (REC) relating to all research stages. The avoidance of harm (non-maleficence) was considered in the way researcher obtains consent, preserves confidentiality and collects data and in the way in which he used, analysed and reported the outcomes (Saunders et al., 2007).

During data collection, the researcher was keen to respect the participants' privacy, who were informed that they have the right to withdraw from the meeting (Saunders et al., 2007). In cases where competition is high the researcher should give more attention to confidentiality (Ticehurst & Veal, 2000). Consequently, participants were assured that all collected data would be strictly confidential and information collected would be used

exclusively for the researcher's academic studies. In addition, firms' and participants' identities were coded in the final draft of thesis.

Researcher safety and data protection were taken into account. The researcher's supervisors were informed of all interviews and schedules, potential interviewees and time tables. For data protection, audio-taped interviews were saved in two WinWord password-protected files, which were kept in a locked desk.

3.12 Summary

This chapter presents a detailed discussion and justification for the research philosophy, methodological approach, and instruments undertaken for achieving the research objectives which were summarised in the research methodology diagram (figure 3.1). While section 3.3 highlights the potential research challenges within the telecommunications field, section 3.4 focuses on the appropriateness of triangulation techniques in overcoming such constraints which are expected to face researchers within such tech-based service markets.

In addition, this chapter has discussed different methodological considerations relevant to the practical phases of the research, the methodology employed, instruments, reliability and validity analysis, and pre-testing of data collection tools (sections 3.5-3.9). In detail, the quantitative data analysis approach was used with the aim of determining the variations between the main telecommunications operators regarding their adopted levels of marketing orientation.

On the other hand, the qualitative technique - namely the semi-structured interview - represents the main instrument the study utilises to gain in-depth insight into the relationship between marketing orientation and organisational performance. Thus, this tool was chosen because it seeks to achieve an understanding of the experiences of respondents' attitudes and ideas (Hall & Rist, 1999) regarding the drivers and mechanisms of customer satisfaction and customer retention in the PTSJ.

While section 3.10 justified the adoption of the research strategy of data analysis, and discussed its relevant techniques for both quantitative and qualitative data analysis, section 3.11 confirmed the procedures the researcher followed with regard to research ethics which have been accomplished in accordance with the UH Research Ethics Committees (REC) relating to all research stages.

Chapter Four

An Evaluation of the Provision of Telecommunications Service in Jordan (PTSJ)

4.1 Overview

This chapter carries out an overall evaluation of the telecommunications market in Jordan. The main telecommunications network operators, market indicators, provided services, technology and infrastructures are focused on as basic ingredients of Jordan's telecommunications industry.

Jordan has emerged as one of the standout nations in the region for its burgeoning technology start up, advanced infrastructures, and business-friendly policies. Driven by the rapid evolution of technology and the global privatisation wave, Jordan responded to changes swiftly. Particularly, Jordan's telecommunications industry has witnessed core and distinct developments regarding the related legislation of privatisation and market liberalisation. In 2005, Jordan's telecommunications market was the first fully open market in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. As a result, the provision of telecommunications services in Jordan (PTSJ) is seen as an overcrowded and highly competitive market, with four mobile network operators (MNOs) — as the highest number of MNOs in one market in the MENA — struggling in a single and limited market.

4.2 Overview of Jordan's Telecommunications

4.2.1 Country Summary

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a small limited-resources Arab country, which covers 92000 square kilometres with a population 2014 census of 6.58 million (Department of Statistics-Jordan, 2014). However, a combination of different factors contributed in supporting the economy in achieving a good standard of living for Jordanian citizens. The strategic location linking Asia with Africa, the stability of the political system, the high-skilled labour, and the good level of education all contributed in supporting the performance of the services-oriented economy.



Figure 4.1: Map of Jordan

Source: Jordan-Aic-background (2011)

In the era of the ‘new information society’ where services constitute a vital, integral and growing part of world trade, one of the main challenges is to promote a growth of skilled jobs and a well-trained, educated and flexible workforce (Akehurst, 2008).

“Skilled Human Resources” are considered as one of the most vital economic resources by policymakers in Jordan. Consequently, the tendency towards greater reliance on qualified labour is increasing steadily. Jordanian labour managed to achieve a distinguished reputation in all economic activities at the national as well as the regional market. This formed the basis for building a wide services sector in Jordan.

It is worth noting that Jordan’s economy is overwhelmingly services-oriented with a contribution of 68.3% to the GDP (Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2010). In addition, the services sector employs two-thirds of the labour force while the industrial sector occupies 20% and less than 2% in agriculture (Shahin & Al Nugrush, 2012).

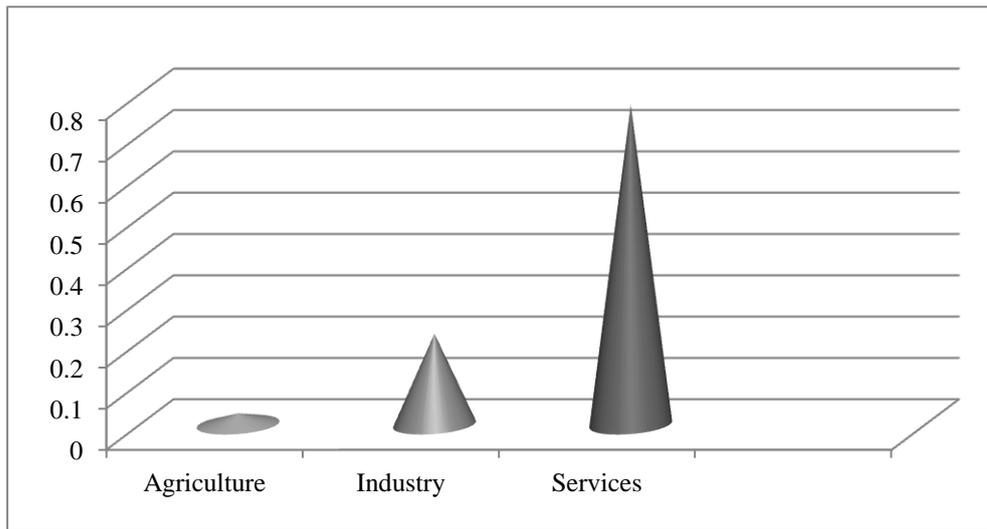


Figure 4.2: Jordan Labour Force by Sectors

Source: Adapted from Shahin and Al Nugrush (2012)

4.2.2 Evolution of the Telecommunications Provision in Jordan

As one of the MENA telecommunications markets, Jordan has witnessed fundamental changes within the last two decades. The telecommunications market in Jordan like other region peer markets started providing the basic telecommunications services monopolistically by government entities. In October 1994, 'Fast link' was licenced as the first Mobile Network Operator (MNO) in the country. Today, Jordan's market has four mobile operators as the highest number of operators in one country in the MENA region. Three companies operate based on GSM telecommunications technology, while the fourth adopts (iDEN) the Radio Trunking telecommunications technology.

Traditional voice call services no longer satisfy customers' needs in today's contemporary market. Consequently, a range of contemporary telecommunications services, e.g. data services, entertainment, GPS, IPTV, WiMAX, roaming, and video calls, is provided by the four main telecommunications network operators and other virtual operators too. In addition to the basic [voice call] services, many other innovative services are being offered; meanwhile the content and other added value services (VAS) platforms seem to be the latest competitive weapons of players in the market.

4.2.2.1 A Chronology of the Telecommunications Sector Development in Jordan

Distinct developments have included all aspects of the telecommunications sector in Jordan. This evolution has undergone two stages that complement one another: (i) the

development in the quality and variety of provided services, and the related infrastructure, and (ii) the evolution of telecommunications regulations and legislations. In 1993, new legislations were enacted with the aim of keeping pace with the emerging trends of international telecommunications markets. As an important milestone in the march of Jordan's telecommunications industry, the year 1995 witnessed the establishment of the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC).

Illuminations on the most important developments in the Jordanian telecommunications sector are shown in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: A chronology of the telecommunications sector development in Jordan

Year	Development Aspects
1921	The Department of Post and Telegraph (DPT) was set up. It provided telegraph and post services to Trans Jordan Emirate.
1930	Cable and Wireless, the British Telecommunications Company assisted the DPT in developing telecom services and international links. The association with Cable and Wireless lasted for almost four decades.
1951	The Ministry of Post, Telegraph and Telephony (MoPTT) was established as the successor of the DPT. It was responsible for providing, improve and expand the coverage of post and national telephone services across the Kingdom.
1961	The first automatic telephone service was introduced, with approximately 5,000 lines.
1973-1985	Jordan's telecom network expanded significantly; with the boom in oil prices and the expatriates' remittances, the economy thrived and so did public spending by the government on networks.
1988	A license was granted to Jordan Paging Company to provide paging services.
1993	The private sector was allowed to invest in telecommunications projects.
1994	Fastlink was granted the first mobile cellular license in Jordan.
2000	Jordan became a full member of the WTO. Therefore Jordan has provided its obligations regarding the telecommunications sector within the presentations made to join the organization, which included fully liberalizing the telecommunications sector by the end of 2004.
2005	The monopoly of Jordan Telecom Company in providing fixed telecom services was ended; and the fixed market was fully opened.
2008	The Government completed the sale of its Jordan Telecom shares. Such that 51% of company shares became owned by France Telecom, and the rest of the shares are distributed between other private investors.

Source: Telecommunications Regulatory Commission-TRC (2013)

Recent research on market performance pointed out that customer satisfaction has achieved satisfactory levels as a result of the intense competition and high penetration rate that exceeded the number of the population since 2009 (TRC, 2013).

Today, Jordan's telecommunications market is seen as a highly competitive market with four operators in a country with a population of only six million. Zain, Orange, and Umniah offer cellular phone services in addition to a variety of other telecommunications services that are based on GSM technology, while XPress relies on iDEN technology in providing push-to-talk (PTT) radio telecommunications services

4.3 Diversity of Provided Services

Compared to other peer markets, Jordan's telecommunications market is considered as an advanced one regarding the diversity of provided services. Approximately 20 different telecommunications services; e.g. land and mobile voice call, Internet services, GPS and tracking related services, data services, text and multimedia messaging services and WiMAX among others are offered in addition to many other services are provided in Jordan market.

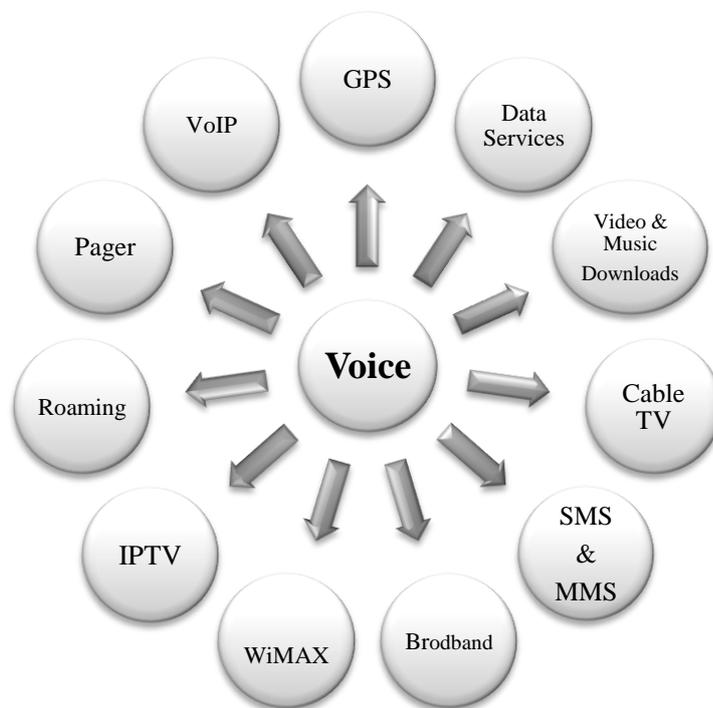


Figure 4.3: Main and Supplementary Telecommunications Services

Source: Adapted from TRC (2012 b), Rasmala (2011a) and Ericsson Region Middle East (2010)

It can be argued that the telecommunications operators in Jordan have effectively managed their relationships or affiliations with other regional or international partners which enabled enhancing their capabilities in keeping pace with the new technology and innovations. For example, Orange Jordan is a strategic partner for 'France Telecom Group' which has approximately 166 international branches all over the world (Orange, 2010), with more than USD 2.4 billion dedicated for product/service development and market research.

In 2010, a new generation of telecommunications service (3G) was introduced to the market. Recently, in July 2013 the fourth generation (4G) of telecommunications technology was offered by Zain Jordan. The new service represents an advanced generation of telecommunications service.

Despite the diversity of provided services and offerings, the telecommunications market in Jordan could be categorised into three main segments where the mobile market represents the largest and most promising one with 64% of the total subscribers and penetration rate exceeding 120% by the end of 2011, as shown in figure 4.4.

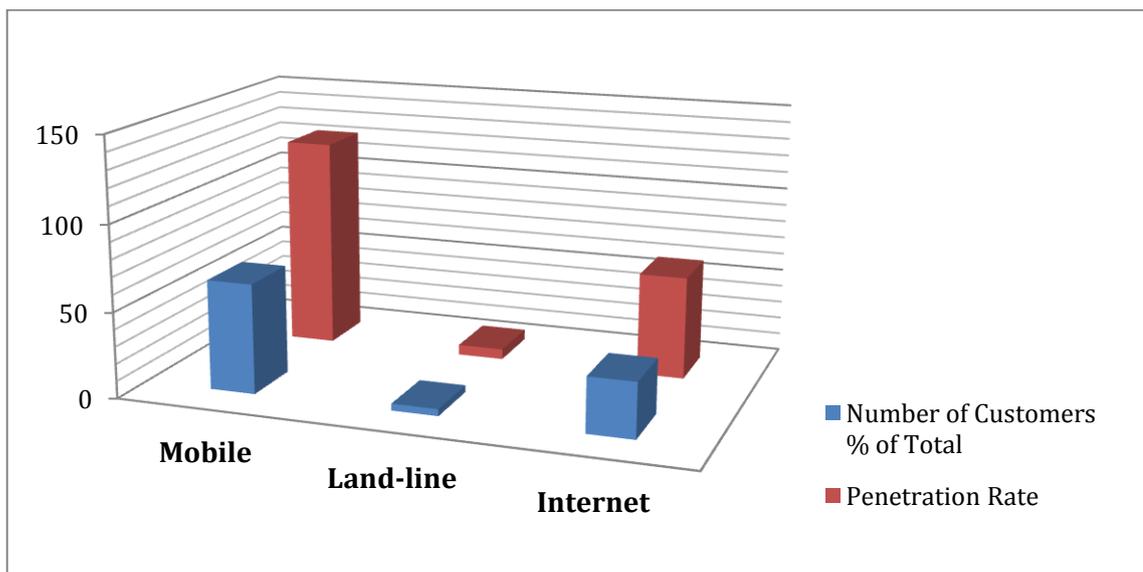


Figure 4.4: Jordan's Telecommunications Market Segments/ Main Services (2011)

Source: Adapted from TRC (2013)

4.4 Telecommunications Service Providers (TSPs)

Consistent with globalisation, market deregulation and the privatisation wave, policymakers in Jordan encourage private sector participation in the telecommunications market. Starting from 1993, the private sector was allowed to

invest in, operate and provide telecommunication services. In 1994 Zain (previously known as Fastlink) was granted the first mobile cellular licence in the country.

4.4.1 Zain Group/Jordan

The year 1994 witnessed a revolution with respect to provided services in Jordan; a new type of telecommunications service was introduced for the first time in the market. As the first GSM mobile network operator in Jordan, Zain offered a new generation of telecommunications service to the market, and cellular communications became available for Jordanian customers.

Table 4.2: Company Profile/Zain Group-Jordan

Company Profile	
Formal Name	Zain Jordan Group
Zain Logo	
Market	Mobile, Fixed-line telephony (International), and data
Founded	1994
Ownership	Zain Group-Kuwait (96.52%)
Parent company	Zain Group (formerly known as the Mobile Telecommunications Company (MTC))
Technology	GSM
Employees	1100
Website	http:// www.jo.zain.com

Source: Adapted from Zain official website

Despite the high penetration rate and the fierce competition in the telecommunications market, Zain Jordan has succeeded in maintaining its position as a market leader with nearly half of the whole telecommunications market share. Considering its large market share with 38% of the whole market by the end of 2012 (TRC, 2013), as well as its dominant marketing strategies, Zain is seen as a market leader in Jordan's telecommunications industry. Zain's offerings, promotion and communication programmes, and pricing policies affect all other competitors' marketing strategies and tactics.

In spite of the intense competition, Zain showed superiority by maintaining its solid post-paid market which constitutes 61% of the total contractual-based market in Jordan market (TRC, 2013).

Table 4.3: Zain Performance Indicators

Indicator	Value (2013)						
Market position	1						
Customer market share	38%						
ARPU (USD)	12						
Customers (000s)	3,896						
Y-O-Y market growth analysis		2007-2013					
Y-O-Y Growth	26%	6.3%	0%	10.6%	22.6%	15.4%	
Subscribers (000s)	1,858	2,345	2,493	2,488	2,751	3,374	3,896
Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013

Source: TRC (2013); Zain Jordan (2013)

Zain Jordan is a part of Zain Group, the pioneer of mobile telecommunications in the Middle East and North Africa region. “It was the first Middle Eastern operator to launch MMS and mobile data services and infotainment solutions, the first to introduce WAP connectivity in Jordan, and the first to form mobile banking partnerships with leading banks in Jordan” (Zain Jordan, 2011).

4.4.2 Jordan Telecom Group/Orange Jordan

Orange Jordan (formerly known as Mobilecom) is a part of the Jordan Telecommunications Group (JTG) which was established in 1971 as a government-regulatory body offering basic telecommunications services such as telephone, telegraph and telex in the Jordanian market. Since 2000, Orange Jordan started providing a full mobile telecommunication services as the second GSM mobile operator in Jordan. Despite the strong competitive position for the pioneer mobile operator, Zain, which benefited from the protection period granted by TRC that extended for six years as an exclusive mobile operator in Jordan market, Orange managed to build a considerable market share with 34% of the whole mobile market.

Table 4.4: Company Profile/Orange Jordan

Company Profile	
Formal Name	Jordan Telecom/ Orange
Firm Logo	
Market	Fixed-line telephony (local, domestic long distance, international, data, internet and mobile)
Founded	1999
Ownership	France Telecom (51%), Government (15.65%)
Parent company	France Telecom
Technology	GSM
Employees	2400
Website	http://www.orange.jo

Source: Adapted from Orange Annual Report (2012)

Orange Jordan is part of the international telecommunication giant, ‘France Telecom Group’ which is present in many different countries with more than 200 million subscribers around the world. It is argued that Orange Jordan is the market leader in Jordan in terms of its advanced infrastructure and networks that cover the majority of populated areas in Jordan, and the diversity of provided services. In 2010, Orange launched the third generation of telecommunications service (3G) as the first operator in Jordan to be granted the licence for such an advanced service

The ‘biggest integrated operator’ was the pillar that Orange image firm was built based on (Global Research, 2006). Thus, Orange Jordan differentiated itself from competitors by promoting its capability in providing a wide range of telecommunications service packages, such as fixed telephone call service, mobile service, data services, broadband, and EDGE service (i.e. a high-speed, mobile data and internet access technology that allows customers access TV and radio through mobile phones).

While Zain leads the mobile telecommunication market, Orange Jordan is expected to continue to dominate the fixed lines segment with 98% market share, taking advantage of possessing the needed infrastructure as the historical inheritor of Jordan Telecom, the first government entity that provided a traditional telecommunications service in Jordan.

Table 4.5: Orange Jordan/Performance Indicators

Indicator	Value (2013)							
Customer market share	34%							
Customers (000s)	3,488							
Y-O-Y market growth analysis 2007-2013								
YOY Growth	2.6%	12%	4%	23.9%	25%	9.5%		
Subscribers (000s)	1711	1755	1964	2052	2544	3185	3488	
Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	

Source: TRC (2013); Orange Jordan, Annual Reports 2007-2011

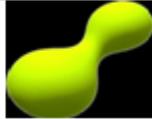
The strategic partnership between Orange Jordan and France Telecom enabled the company to develop and extend its infrastructure. Orange has the biggest telecom network in the country. In particular, based on its sophisticated infrastructure and the strategic technical and managerial support of France Telecom, Orange succeeded in developing its competitive advantage based on the firm's image as the "biggest integrated operator", through providing an integrated solutions and wide range of telecommunications services.

4.4.3 Umniah Mobile Company

In August 2004, Umniah Company was granted a licence by the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) to operate and provide GSM mobile phone services. In 2005, Umniah launched its official operations as the third mobile network operator in the market; however, within three years the company was able to establish a considerable market base. Today, Umniah is a main supplier for mobile communications services in Jordan market.

Through the focus on youth customers, Umniah concentrates its marketing efforts on young customers who constitute more than 50% of the population in Jordan (Department of Statistics - Jordan, 2012). Umniah has targeted youth as a strategic market segment and developed an appropriate marketing mix based on the needs and desires of this segment of the market particularly.

Table 4.6: Company Profile/Umniah

Company Profile	
Formal Name	Umniah Mobile Company
Umniah Logo	
Market	Mobile and Broadband Services and data services
Founded	2005
Ownership	Batelco Bahrain (96%)
Parent company	Batelco Bahrain
Technology	GSM
Type	Private shareholding company
Website	http://www.umniah.com

Source: Adapted from Umniah official website and Global Investment House (2010)

In June 2006, the company was acquired by Batelco Bahrain which owns 96% of Umniah's assets. Subsequently, Umniah concentrated on increasing investments in networks and infrastructure in order to expand and improve the quality of provided services.

As one of the 'Batelco Bahrain' companies, Umniah continued strengthening its competitive position in the market as the fastest growing telecommunications operator in Jordan's market with more than 3.4 million subscribers by the end of 2013.

Moreover, Umniah succeeded in dealing with the fierce competition it faced by offering an integrated package of telecommunication services. In addition to mobile telecommunication services, wire internet service (UDSL) and wireless internet service (UMAX) along with other different telecommunications services business solutions are provided by Umniah which managed to penetrate and establish its market share. Today, Umniah has 27% of the whole mobile market in Jordan (TRC, 2013) which is viewed as a distinct success for the third operator in the stiff competitive market.

Table 4.7: Umniah Performance Indicators

Indicator	Value (2013)							
Customer market share	27%							
Customers (000s)	3,374							
Y-O-Y market growth analysis		2006-2013						
	YOY Analysis							
YOY Growth	99%	39%	17.2%	10.4%	16.2%	13.1%	16.5%	
Subscribers (000s)	502	1000	1390	1630	1800 (27% of total)	2092	2362	2752
Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013

Source: Adapted from TRC (2013), Batelco (2010, 2009), Global Investment House (2010)

4.4.4 XPress Telecommunications

New Generation Telecommunication Company LTD (XPress) was established in 2002. The company was granted the first licence to provide push-to-talk style mobile services in 2003. In 2004, XPress started its operations based on iDEN telecommunication technology (Radio Trunking Network) as a kind of mobile telecommunications technology developed by Motorola, which is compatible with trunked radio and mobile telephone calls.

Table 4.8: Company Profile/XPress

Company Profile	
Formal Name	New Generation Telecommunication Company LTD. (XPress)
XPress Logo	
Market	PTT call services (Radio Trunking services)
Founded	2002
Ownership	VTEL Holdings (28%), Aqqad Investment Co. (18.7%), National Advanced system (18.7%), others private shareholders (34.6 %)
Type	Private shareholding company
Technology	iDEN Technology
Website	http://www.xpress.jo

Source: Ericsson Region Middle East (2010)

Xpress marketing strategy was focused mainly on the corporate business segment (e.g. security agents, constructions and cargo shipping) which is interested in ‘push-to-talk’ telecommunications service, which enables one to one or one to many, immediate, and high-quality communication. XPress’ strategic approach relies on providing a particular telecommunications services with special specifications. While other operators use GSM⁽¹⁾ technology, XPress adopts iDEN⁽²⁾ technology to provide push-to-talk (PTT) telecommunication services. Thus, XPress targeted market was niche and limited in a specific segment.

Table 4.9: XPress Performance Indicators

Y-O-Y market growth analysis		2006-2012					
YOY Growth	NA	-2%	-52%	0	NA	NA	
Subscribers (000s)	NA	143	140	67	66.2	NA	NA
		3% of total market			1% of total market		
Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012

Source: TRC (2013); Rsmala (2011a); Ericsson Region Middle East (2010)

XPress attempted to differentiate by adopting ‘iDEN technology’ as wireless mobile network, which is somewhat fast and high quality service. However, the concentration on specific sector particularly within corporate market has hindered firm capability with regard to establishing the intended market share.

Recently, the company has faced considerable challenges affected negatively firm’s marketing and financial performance. Since 2008, XPress started recording unsatisfactory performance. Marketing indicators showed a substantial shortcoming where firm market share declined to less than 2% of the total telecommunications market in Jordan by the end of 2009.

-
- 1- **GSM:** Global System for Mobile Communications is the world's most popular standard for describing the related technology of second generation for digital mobile telephones systems (2G) which serves approximately 80% of the global mobile market users.
 - 2- **iDEN:** Integrated Digital Enhanced Network technology: is a mobile telecommunications technology, developed by Motorola, which is compatible with trunked radio and mobile telephone calls.

It is worth mentioning that, recently, XPress announced a comprehensive restructuring aimed at redressing the imbalance in firm operations.

4.5 Market Indicators

4.5.1 Number of Telecommunications Service Providers (TSPs)

The telecommunications market in Jordan has witnessed a rapid development as other regional markets fuelled by the high competition and the high penetration rates. Compared to many other Middle Eastern markets, telecommunications market in Jordan is a highly competitive one. Particularly, in terms of penetration rate and number of operators, telecommunications market in Jordan is one of the highest competition markets in the region. In addition to XPress which operates based on iDEN technology, there are also three major GSM operators: Zain, Orange, and Umniah (figure 4.5) with almost equal market shares. Consequently, with four operators, the Jordan and Saudi Arabia markets are ranked first regarding number of operators in the MENA region as shown in figure 4.5 below.

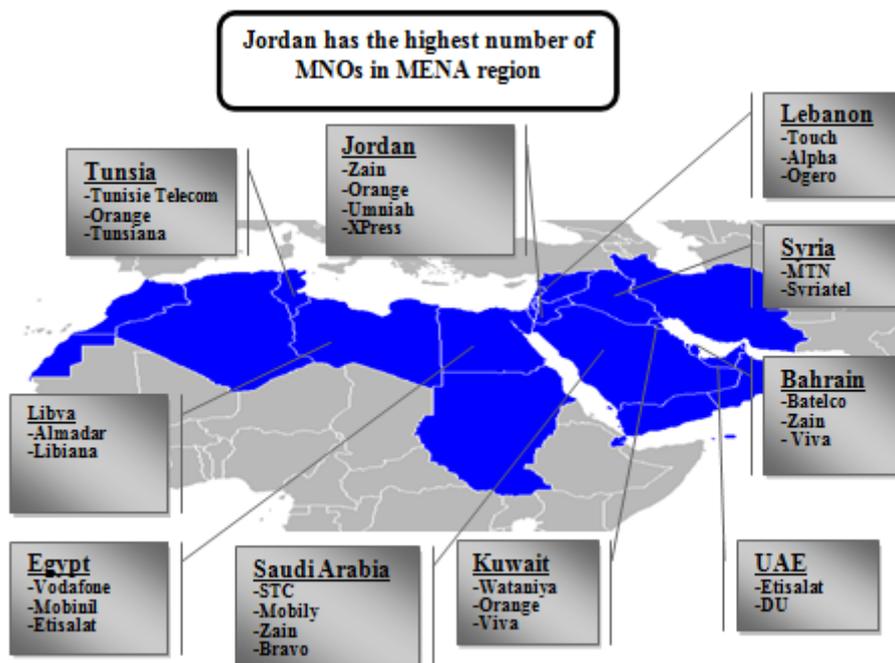


Figure 4.5: Number of Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) in MENA Region

Source: Adapted from PointShift (2014), Rasmala (2011b), TRC (2010) and Ericsson Region Middle East (2010)

4.5.2 Penetration Rate

Since 1994, which witnessed the beginning of the mobile telecommunications service, Jordan's telecommunications market has accomplished a distinct evolution with regard to mobile penetration rate (i.e. the number of active mobile phones within a specific population) as shown in table 4.10 below.

Table 4.10: Mobile Phone Subscribers and Penetration Rate (2005-2011)

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Subscribers (000)	3138	4343	4772	5314	6014	6620	7.48
Penetration Rate (%)	57	78	83	91	101	108	120

Source: TRC (2013)

During the period 2005-2011, mobile phone subscribers doubled, reaching 7.48 million subscribers by the end of 2011. It is worth noting that, since 2010, mobile penetration rate exceeded the number of the population of Jordan to stand at 120% by the fourth quarter of 2011 as shown in table 4.10 and figure 4.6.

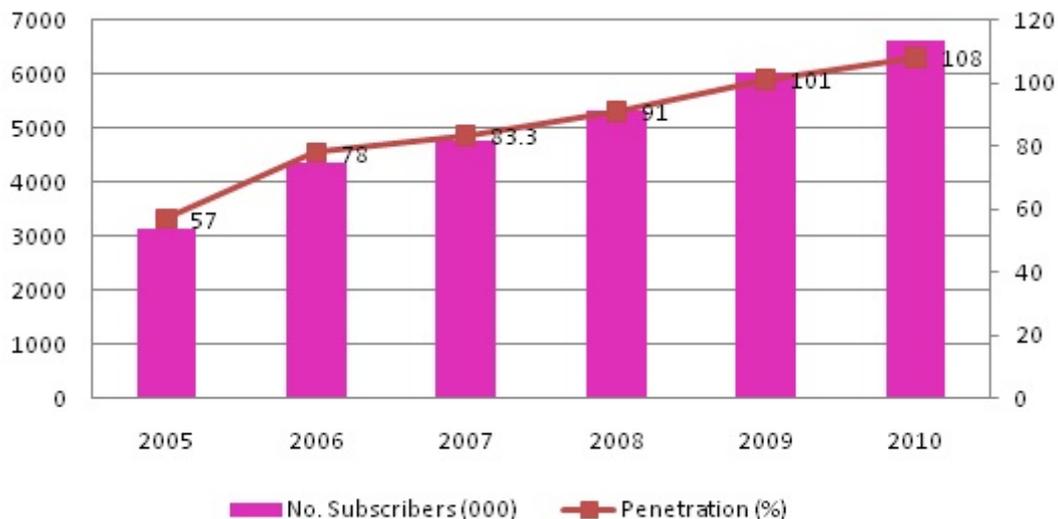


Figure 4.6: Mobile Phone Subscribers and Penetration Rate (2005-2010)

Source: TRC (2010)

Simultaneously, fixed line telecommunications market faced a considerable decline in the number of subscribers as shown in table 4.11 and figure 4.7.

Table 4.11: Fixed Phone Subscribers and Penetration Rate (2005-2011)

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Subscribers (000)	628	614	559	519	501	485	424
Penetration Rate (%)	11.6	11	10	8.9	8.4	8	6.8

Source: TRC (2013)

The sharp decline in the fixed line penetration rate in Jordan was expected as it represents an international phenomenon which witnessed the new emerge of mobile services.

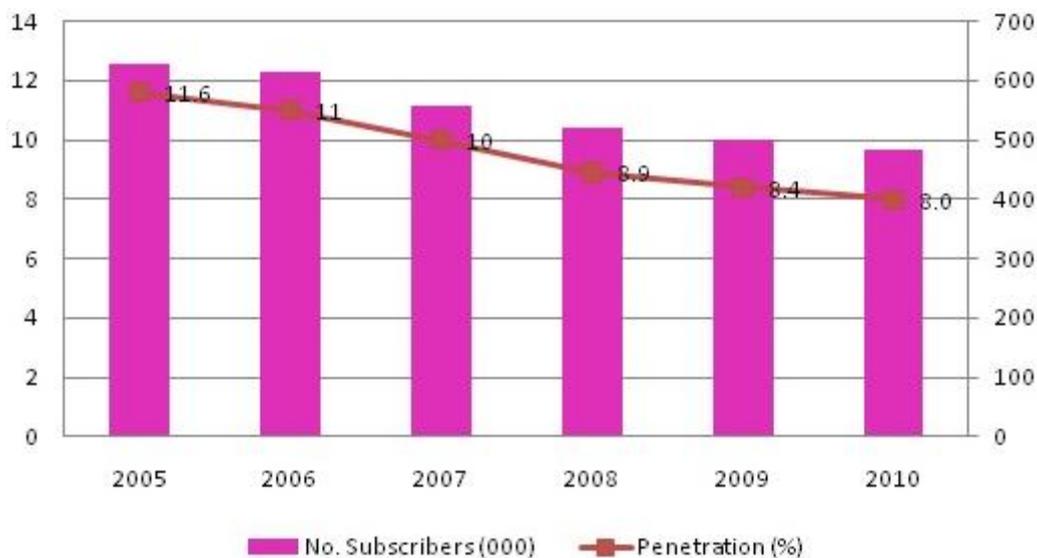


Figure 4.7: Fixed Phone Subscribers and Penetration Rate (2005-2010)

Source: TRC (2010)

As shown in tables 4.10 and 4.11, by the end of 2011, the mobile penetration rate surpassed fixed line penetration rate by a ratio of 17:1. Also, the number of mobile subscribers was exceeded the total number of Jordan's population since 2009.

The overall number of telecommunications subscribers grew from 2.4 million in 2004 to around 6.8 million in 2009 as shown in figure 4.8, to then reach 11.66 million in 2011 (TRC, 2013). This accelerated growth was driven by the rapid increase in mobile subscribers, which constituted about 89% of total subscribers in 2009 compared to 68% in 2004.

The decline in fixed-line subscribers may illustrate the growing global trend of customers in today's information era towards mobile communications services and the associated contemporary services, with far less attention being given to the traditional landline call phone services.

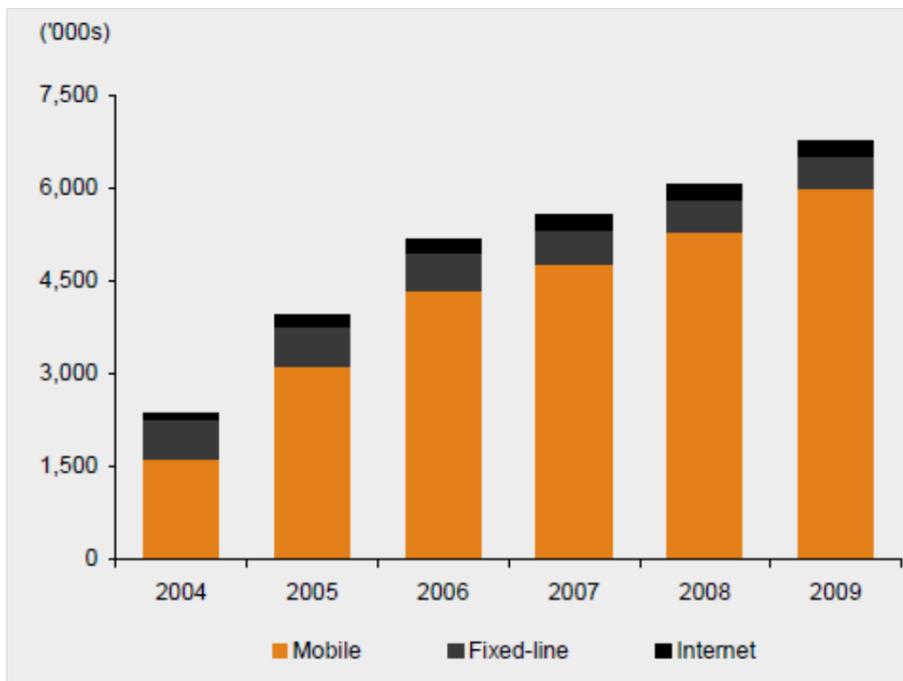


Figure 4.8: Breakdown of Jordan Subscribers to Telecoms Services (2004-2009)

Source: Rasmala (2011a)

Compared to other MENA markets, Jordan has achieved a remarkable increase in the mobile penetration rate. During the last five years mobile penetration rate doubled. Although mobile penetration rate is less than in some Arab Gulf states' markets, it does remain higher than the rates of many peer markets. While MENA's average mobile penetration rate was estimated at 92% of populations in 2009 as shown in table 4.12, Jordan's mobile penetration rate was close to 100% of Jordan's population, exceeding Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and other markets in the MENA region (Rasmala, 2011 a).

Table 4.12: MENA Penetration Rate (2009-2011)

MENA Mobile Penetration Rates			
Country	2009	2010	2011
Jordan	98%	107%	111%
Average MENA	92%	103%	110%

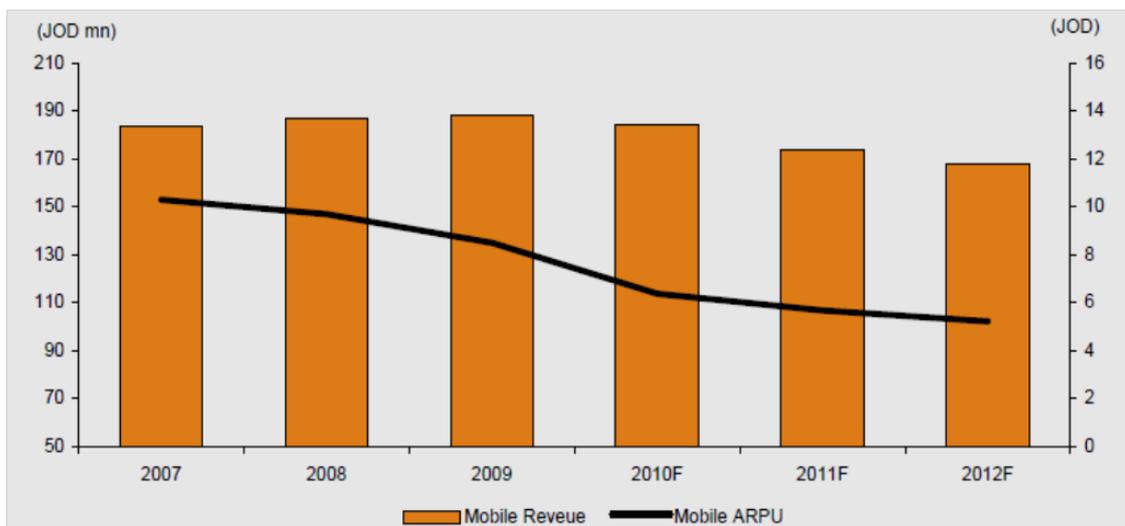
Source: Rasmala (2011a)

The high penetration rate in regional markets and in Jordan's market particularly was reflected positively in improving customer satisfaction because of the high competition.

4.5.3 ARPU

Average Revenue per User (ARPU) is a financial market indicator most often used by telecommunications companies to determine the overall value of an application. ARPU explains how much money the company makes from the average user.

Starting from 2007, the growth rate in Jordan's telecommunications market began declining and the market shifted to the stage of maturity. *"The operation has witnessed a slow down in customer growth, mainly due to the market entering the maturity phase"* (Zain, 2008).

**Figure 4.9: Mobile Revenue and Mobile ARPU - Jordan**

Source: Rasmala (2011a)

As a market matures, competition becomes stiffer and acquiring new customer becomes more challenging for telecommunications service providers. Thus, the main operators have to fight to maintain their market share. Consequently, the monthly ARPU stood at USD 12 (i.e. JOD 8.4) by the end of 2009 and was expected to decline as shown in figure 4.9 above.

4.6 Infrastructure and Technology

In Jordan, telecommunications service infrastructure is characterised as an advanced technology-based one. Jordan has a world-class infrastructure with top notch technologies available within easy reach with great quality, which might explain the ability of the telecommunications sector in Jordan to achieve distinct levels of marketing performance compared to other neighbouring peer markets.

4.6.1 Infrastructure

In 1993, the Jordanian government embarked on an ambitious programme aimed at developing the telecommunications infrastructure in the country. The National Telecommunication Programme (NTP) was planned particularly for developing the telephone services infrastructure (Dehousse et al., 2002). NTP was placed to achieve the objectives of the programme via several stages, and to raise the capacity of Jordan's telecom network. The developed fixed-line telecommunications services infrastructure in Jordan depends on the 'digital main exchanging' technology which guarantees high levels of quality and covering most parts of the country.

Regarding the general infrastructure of the country, recently, Jordan was ranked forty-first in term of the quality of the overall infrastructure (World Economic Forum, 2013). The growing attention given to the information and communication technology (ICT) was a vital basis for the accelerating evolution of the telecommunications industry in Jordan; in addition Jordan is at an advanced level in terms of spending on ICT research and development. Starting from 1993 when the private sector was allowed to invest in telecommunications projects, Jordan implemented a long-term strategy to establish a solid base for this vital industry, and to develop its infrastructures. Increasing the spending on ICT was an option of such a strategic view. In 2003, Jordan was ranked among the top ten in the world in ICT spending as a percentage of the GDP (Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, 2005) which reflects policymakers'

consideration of ITC in improving the performance of the telecommunications and other related sectors in the country.

Table 4.13 highlights the spending on ICT for Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries in the period from 1996-2005 measured as a percentage of GDP. It was obvious that, Jordan comes first with expenditure on ICT stands at 8.5% of GDP.

Table 4.13: ICT Expenditure (% of GDP)

Rank	Country	1996-2000	2000-2005	Average
1	Jordan	8.8	8.4	8.5
2	Israel	8.2	7.7	7.8
3	Turkey	7.9	7.3	7.4
4	Morocco	5.4	5.4	5.4
5	Tunisia	4.8	5.1	5
6	Saudi Arabia	2.4	2.5	2.5
7	Iran	1.5	2.1	2
8	Kuwait	1.7	1.8	1.7
9	Egypt	1	1.2	1.2

Source: Adapted from Heshmati and Mohammed (2009)

4.6.2 Telecommunications Technology

In addition to the importance of attractive, fully open market and business-friendly policies, and the advanced infrastructure in telecommunications, telecommunication operators' capability in managing the telecommunications technology may constitute a main strength in such industry.

The different operators in Jordan market have adopted different types of telecommunications technology. The use of different networks by the various operators enabled them to keep pace with the evolution of customers' preferences through diversifying their offerings. Particularly, Jordan telecommunications operators have adopted three main types of technology:

- Global System for Mobile Communications Technology (GSM) is an open, digital cellular technology used for transmitting mobile voice and data services. GSM is the most popular technology for mobile telecommunications in the world which represents the second generation of mobile telecommunications service. GSM was

launched in the first time in Finland; then further developments were made by launching the third then the fourth generations of communications technology.

In Jordan's market, three operators have developed their networks based on GSM technology: Zain, Orange, and Umniah Company.

- Integrated Digital Enhanced Network (iDEN) was developed by Motorola which is based on specific technology to provide mainly radio trunking services as well as mobile telecommunications services.
- With regard to broadband services, Jordan's networks rely on FLAG technology (Fiber Optic Link Around the Globe) (Tarawneh, 2003) that links Jordan with other countries' networks in the region and the world. The FLAG network forms part of a global network stretching from Japan to the United States of America and represents the main body for the World Wide Web (World Internet Network).

The last few years witnessed remarkable developments in the data communication market in Jordan. Driven by the phenomenal increase in the adoption of Smartphone applications (e.g. social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube), internet penetration rate increased significantly to reach 60.5 % by the end of 2011. Currently, services providers offer a broad range of data services; ADSL services (with speed up to 24 Mbps and available for 95% of the population), GPS and tracking services, WiMAX, leased lines, and virtual private network-(IP VPN) related services which offer international business connecting services at competitive costs.

Although the acceleration and rapid development of telecommunications technology constitutes a challenge for TSPs, but on the other hand it included many opportunities for creativity and innovation:

...while some segments retreat or even die-away, the adoption of new technology will allow Jordan Telecommunications to find new segments to build its future growth on (Al Arabi Investment Group, 2010).

4.7 Summary

Significant developments that Jordan's telecommunication industry has witnessed within the last two decades have occurred in all areas relating to legislations, number of telecommunications service providers, diversity of offerings, and the quality of provided services.

Jordan's telecommunications market was the first fully liberalised telecommunications Arab market in the MENA region. From 1993, the telecommunications legal environment has witnessed many important developments. As requirement for the compatibility with the globalisation wave, many relevant laws were legitimated which allow foreign telecom groups in addition to local private conglomerates to invest and operate in the market.

Compared to the situation in the 1990s, the remarkable developments that Jordan's telecommunications market has witnessed are clear in many aspects: growing penetration rate, diversity of provided services, market liberalisation and legislation in addition to telecommunication infrastructures' developments.

The Al Arabi Investment Group (2010) described the PTSJ as that: more competition and rapid changes in technology lowered barriers to entry. As a result, gaining subscribers became harder." Today, the Jordanian telecommunications market is considered highly competitive in which four telecommunication services providers are fighting for the greatest share of the six-million-population market.

Chapter Five

Data Analysis

5.1 Overview

This chapter outlines the results of the analysis process regarding data collected in the preceding phases of research with the aim of achieving satisfactory answers for the research questions.

First, the research data analysis techniques are described (section 5.2).

The structure of this chapter is broken down into two main sections; 5.3 and 5.4. Section 5.3 refers to the quantitative data analysis part of the research which is concerned mainly with establishing an overall picture regarding the levels of marketing orientation (Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1999, 1997; Ruekert, 1992) adopted by the telecommunications operators in the market. Also, a marketing typology (Hooley et al., 1990; Keith, 1960) which intends to highlight the variations between firms' perceptions of marketing is provided in this section.

Section 5.4 represents the main analytical part of this chapter. This section is concerned with analysing data relevant to the conducted semi-structured interviews. It presents the analysis of data pertaining to the identification of telecommunications operators' key factors in managing the different dimensions of customer satisfaction and customer retention. Then, to evaluate the influence of marketing orientation on the ways by which both dimensions were managed is evaluated.

5.2 Data Analysis Techniques

Which data analysis technique is adopted for a research project depends on the purpose and goals of the study, and should be consistent with the questions the research is dedicated to answer. Since the purpose of the study is to gain further insight into the relationship between marketing orientation and the achievement of sustainable competitive advantage based on the Value-driven Relationship Marketing (V-dRM) view; thus the nature of the study mainly supports the adoption of the interpretative qualitative approach. However, in this research quantitative data analysis is used partially within the descriptive approach regarding the determining of the different levels of marketing orientation for each telecommunications service provider (TSP).

Consistent with the research theoretical framework, the process of data analysis was accomplished within two parallel lines: (i) qualitative data analysis represents the main body of analysis. It aims to identify the key factors and themes of the three attitudinal dimensions of customer satisfaction — based on the research framework — (i.e. *expectations*, and *cognitive and affective dimensions of perceived performance*), and the five behavioural dimensions of customer retention (i.e. *utilitarian reinforcement*, *informational reinforcement*, *utilitarian punishment*, *informational punishment*, and *learning history*). Then, these key factors are linked to the adopted levels of marketing orientation in the next phase of analysis. In addition, (ii) quantitative data analysis is concerned with determining the variation between the four telecommunications operators with regard to their adopted levels of marketing orientation.

5.3 Quantitative Data Analysis

Within the descriptive approach, this part of the data analysis intends to achieve an overall picture for (i) the adopted levels of marketing orientation for each telecommunications operator in the Jordanian market, and (ii) to evaluate how these firms perceive marketing through developing a marketing typology, e.g. marketing philosophers, sales supporters, departmental marketers, market analysis and adaptation, among other aspects (Hooley et al., 1990). Such an intended ‘big picture’ regarding TSPs’ adopted levels of marketing orientation and their attitudes toward marketing is an essential requirement to enable investigate the mechanisms that underlie the relationship between marketing orientation and organisational performance represented in customer satisfaction and customer retention.

5.3.1 Measuring Marketing Orientation

As explained above (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.1), a short questionnaire within a brief structured face-to-face interview was the data collection technique employed in this phase. The target sample was intended to represent the four main network telecommunications operators in Jordan’s market: Zain Jordan Group, Jordan Telecom Group/Orange Jordan, Umniah Mobile Company, and the New Generation Telecommunication Company LTD.

(Note: in accordance with UH Research Ethics Committees (REC) requirements and in order to protect the confidentiality of participants henceforth, all telecommunications operators and participants names are coded).

A purposive sample of 48 participants was selected from the main marketing departments from the four telecommunications operators (12 participants from each firm). Such a technique which could be used by both qualitative and quantitative researchers (Maxwell, 1997) represents the most appropriate sampling method in “cases where particular participants are selected deliberately because of the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices” (Tongco, 2007, p.155).

In addition, the researcher was keen that interviewees should be involved in the issue being evaluated; thus marketing managers, executives, supervisors and marketing staff at the central marketing departments (not the branches) of the main telecommunications operators were targeted particularly. Such respondents seem to be more able to express their firms’ attitudes toward marketing, and they also seem better able to explain the behavioural practices of marketing orientation within their firms which conclude the two main facets of marketing orientation: the attitudinal and the behavioural.

To a large extent, the 48 targeted participants constitute the most representative sample with regard to the evaluation of telecommunications services providers’ (TSPs’) adopted levels of marketing orientation in Jordan’s market as they are the actual decision makers, planners and controllers of marketing policies within the main players in this market.

5.3.1.1 Measurement Tool

Marketing orientation is measured using a tool that comprises the general areas of similarities in the general perspectives of marketing orientation (see chapter two section 2.2.4.1). The instrument utilised in this study was developed mainly based on Jaworski and Kohli’s (1993) MARKOR scale which was widely adopted by many scholars in different contexts. The measurement considered the behavioural facets of marketing orientation by including the three sub-dimensions of the behavioural market orientation construct (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993); information generation (market intelligence), coordination and dissemination of market intelligence information across departments, and responsiveness to generated information. Also, the tool used for this research included the attitudinal aspect relevant to the marketing philosophy of customer orientation (Narver & Slater, 1990). Furthermore, telecommunications operators’ considerations towards marketing (as an attitudinal aspect) were measured based on the

scale developed by Avlonitis and Gounaris (1999, 1997) taking into account Hooly et al.'s (1990) proposed marketing typology.

Forty eight respondents were asked to express their agreement or disagreement with each of the 28 questionnaire items; 15 items (A1,A2.....,A15) measured the attitudinal aspects of marketing orientation and the remaining 13 items (B1,B2,...B13) assessed the behavioural dimensions of marketing orientation, represented in a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7= strongly agree).

Forty valid questionnaires were completed and ready for analysis from the targeted participants who had been communicated with, or interviewed, for this stage of the data collection process (*noting that the representation ratio for the four companies were convergent and ranged from 22.5% for MNO-Z to 30% for MNO-O*).

It is worth noting that during the preparation and the execution of the data collection process in this phase, the researcher was given the opportunity to develop a list of 'key informant persons' from each firm as potential and highly targeted participants for the main data collection step, the semi-structured interview.

5.3.2 Telecommunications Service Providers' (TSPs') Adopted Levels of Marketing Orientation (MO)

In data analysis, descriptive statistics are used to present quantitative data in a manageable form. Probably the most often used descriptive statistic is the 'mean' or average score in a set of data (Nacson, 2007) which is seen as one of the most important central tendency measures (Ley, 1972). While the mean is a particularly descriptive informative measure of the "central tendency" of the variable (Nacson, 2007, p.3) standard deviation is used to indicate the 'average' degree to which scores deviate from the mean (Boeree, 2005).

In this research, mean (M) and standard deviation (SD), as applications of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16.0, were conducted in order to determine the variation between telecommunications operators' adopted levels of marketing orientation and marketing typology.

Table 5.1 below displays the overall values of means (M) and standard deviation (SD) regarding each firm's adoption of marketing orientation within its integrated perception, comprising both the behavioural and attitudinal facets of marketing orientation. Consequently, based on the integrated perception of the marketing orientation

measurement, the telecommunication operator MNO-U is ranked first with a mean of 5.35 (out of a maximum rating value of 7 indicating the maximum response rating on the Likert-type scale, 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). MNO-Z ranked second with a mean of 5.13, MNO-O ranked third with a mean of 4.81, while MNO-X ranked last with a mean of 4.65.

Table 5.1: Means and SD/Marketing Orientation (Integrated Perspective)

Marketing Orientation (Sub-Dimension)	MNO-U		MNO-O		MNO-Z		MNO-X		Total	
	M	SD								
Information Generation	4.50	0.92	2.31	0.63	4.78	0.75	4.20	0.64	3.85	1.24
Information Coordination (Dissemination)	5.38	0.91	3.03	0.77	5.31	0.58	4.86	0.96	4.55	1.28
Action Initiation (Responsiveness)	5.80	0.40	5.52	0.46	5.14	0.79	4.83	0.99	5.34	0.76
MO\ Behaviour (Total)	5.23	0.50	3.62	0.31	5.08	0.49	4.63	0.67	4.58	0.82
MO\ Attitude A3	6.50	0.53	6.00	0.74	6.33	0.71	5.40	1.78	6.05	1.09
MO\ Attitude A7	5.60	0.84	6.25	0.75	5.44	0.73	4.00	1.76	5.36	1.36
MO\ Attitude A8	6.50	0.71	5.92	0.79	5.56	0.73	4.20	1.23	5.56	1.21
MO\ Attitude (Total)	6.20	0.53	6.06	0.51	5.78	0.58	4.53	0.83	5.66	0.89
MO Integrated Total	(1)		(3)		(2)		(4)			
	5.35	0.43	4.81	0.26	5.13	0.42	4.65	0.51	4.97	0.48

Table 5.1 also indicates the results of means and standard deviations of telecommunications service providers' attitudes toward marketing as a philosophy. Compared to other operators, MNO-U is seen as a marketing-oriented firm with a mean of 6.2. MNO-O ranked second with a mean of 6.06, then MNO-Z ranked third with a mean of 5.78 and MNO-X ranked last with a mean of 4.53.

Marketing attitudinal aspects were presented in three subscales (A3, A7 and A8) measuring different facets of marketing philosophy and customer-emphasising attitude. In addition, regarding the total values of MO behavioural aspects - information and intelligence generation, information coordination and responsiveness - MNO-U also

ranked first with a mean of 5.23, MNO-Z ranked second with a mean of 5.08, then, MNO-X ranked third with a mean of 4.63, and MNO-O ranked the with by a mean of 3.62.

To conclude, the total values of marketing orientation measurement positioning MNO-U first by a mean of 5.35, MNO-Z second with a mean of 5.13, MNO-O third with a mean of 4.81, and MNO-X ranked last with a mean of 4.65.

Although mean values clearly show the variation between firms with regard to the adopted level of MO, to which extent this variation exists is statistical meaningful needs more evaluation. Consequently, the qualitative statistical applications One-Way ANOVA was used particularly to assess this aspect as illustrated in table 5.2.

Table 5.2: One-Way ANOVA/Comparison for Means Values

Telecommunications Operator	Mean	SD	F	df	prob.
MNO-U	5.35	0.43	6.05	(3 , 37)	0.002*
MNO-O	4.81	0.26			
MNO-Z	5.13	0.42			
MNO-X	4.65	0.51			

Consequently, the above values suggest that the means of the four operators differ significantly from each other as the probability value was $(0.0002) < 0.05$ which confirms this difference between firms.

It is worth noting that the total average of means values for marketing orientation for all firms (table 5.1) was 4.97. While two telecommunications operators' (MNO-U and MNO-Z) mean values surpassed this level (5.35, 5.13), on the other hand, the mean values of MNO-O and MNO-X (4.81, 4.65) were less than this value. In other words, data analysis indicated two groups of telecommunications operators with regard to their adopted level of marketing orientation - high marketing-orientation firms (MNO-U and MNO-Z) and low marketing-orientation firms (MNO-O and MNO-X). However, to which extent mean values variation between both groups is statistically meaningful may need also to be evaluated. Meanwhile, the Scheffe post-hoc test represents an appropriate technique for the comparison of mean values within 'group pairs' (Klockars

& Hancock, 2000). Consequently, in order to detect the meaningful differences locations Scheffe post-hoc test was performed and the results are shown in table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3: Probabilities of Mean Differences / Scheffe post-hoc test

Telecommunications Operator	MNO-O	MNO-Z	MNO-X
	prob.	prob.	prob.
MNO-U	0.033*	0.712	0.006*
MNO-O		0.370	0.848
MNO-Z			0.106

As displayed in the table above, only the differences between (MNO-U and MNO-O) and between (MNO-U and MNO-X) indicate significantly differences as the probability values were (0.006 and $0.03 < 0.05$) while the other group's differences are not significant.

To summarise, the descriptive analysis based on mean values revealed MNO-U and MNO-Z as high marketing-orientation firms as differences were in favour of both firms (table 5.1) meanwhile, the Scheffe post-hoc test shows that both firms did not differ significantly, which confirms ranking of both as high marketing-orientation firms. On the other hand, the same techniques (descriptive analysis and Scheffe post-hoc test) confirmed ranking of both MNO-X and MNO-O as low marketing-orientation firms.

5.3.3 Marketing Typology

Table 5.4 indicates the results of means and standard deviations for the four telecommunications operators' different attitudes toward marketing. It represents a marketing typology in relation to firms' considerations about marketing (Hooley et al., 1990). Consequently, according to their attitudes, the firms were classified as marketing philosophers, market analysts, sales supporters, departmental marketers, or regarding to which degree the TSP has a misconception about marketing.

It is worth mentioning that, the same components of marketing orientation/attitudinal aspect (i.e. A3, A7 and A8) are also used also here as an essential dimension of marketing typology focusing on customer emphasising and marketing philosophy attitudes.

As detailed in table 5.4, regarding marketing philosophy criteria, MNO-U ranked first with a mean of 6.20. MNO-O ranked second with a mean of 6.06, then MNO-Z third with a mean of 5.78, and MNO-X last with a mean of 4.53.

Table 5.4: Means and SD for Telecommunications Operators / Marketing Typology

Marketing Orientation Attitudes	MNO (Z)		MNO (O)		MNO (U)		MNO (X)		Total	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Marketing Philosopher	(3) 5.78	0.58	(2) 6.06	0.51	(1) 6.20	0.53	(4) 4.53	0.83	5.66	0.89
Market Analysis and Adaptation	(4) 5.52	0.80	(2) 5.94	0.42	(1) 6.43	0.69	(3) 5.63	1.04	5.89	0.80
Sales Supporter	(4) 4.33	0.79	(2) 5.67	0.44	(3) 4.50	1.83	(1) 6.35	0.94	5.26	1.35
Departmental Marketers	(3) 4.30	0.54	(1) 5.83	0.30	(4) 4.27	1.47	(2) 5.47	0.69	5.02	1.09
Misconception (Un sures)	(3) 3.39	0.44	(1) 5.96	0.50	(4) 3.23	1.08	(2) 4.35	0.64	4.34	1.33

Furthermore, MNO-U was ranked first also according to market analysis and adaptation criteria with a mean of 6.43 followed by MNO-O and MNO-X, while MNO-Z ranked last with a mean of 5.52. With regard to considering marketing as a sales support function, MNO-X ranked first by a mean of 6.35, followed by MNO-O and then MNO-U, while MNO-Z was ranked last with a mean of 4.33.

Moreover, MNO-O ranked first regarding departmental marketers' attitude with a mean of 5.83 followed by MNO-X and MNO-Z with means of 5.47 and 4.30 respectively, while MNO-U ranked last with a mean of 4.27.

The last criterion evaluates telecommunications operators' overlapping perceptions or misconceptions about marketing. MNO-U was ranked last by a mean of 3.23 which indicates its high awareness of and inclination toward marketing orientation. While MNO-O ranked first with a mean of 5.96, MNO-X ranked second with a mean of 4.35 and MNO-Z ranked third with a mean of 3.39.

The above results are summarised in figure 5.1 displaying telecommunications operators' different attitudes toward marketing. Marketing philosophy, market analysis and adaptation, sales support, departmental marketers and misconceptions about marketing were displayed and linked to the four operators according to their attitudes.

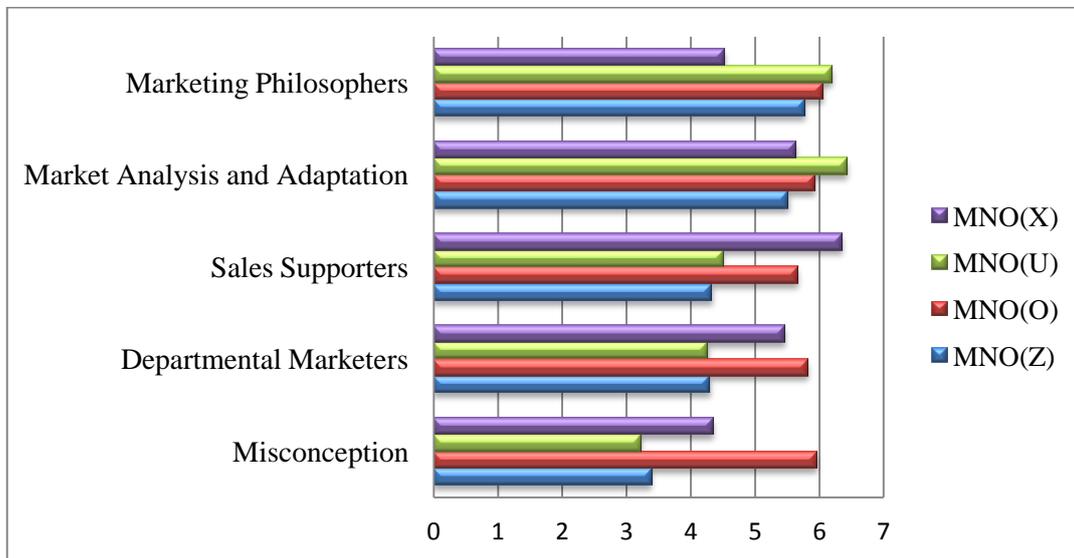


Figure 5.1: Marketing Typology/ Telecommunications Service Providers (TSPs)

5.3.4 Marketing Orientation/Overall Picture

Figure 5.2 below summarises the overall picture of the four telecommunications service providers' (TSPs') marketing orientation levels and marketing typology in relation to their considerations about marketing.

A brief view of the details in the figure shows that MNO-U and MNO-Z are ranked first and second respectively regarding marketing orientation within its integrated perceptions (as show in tables 5.1 and 5.3). Moreover, MNO-U is also ranked first according to two related dimensions of marketing typology: marketing philosophy and market analysis an adaptation.

It is worth noting the mutually reinforcing nature and consistency of the results for both TSPs' marketing orientation levels and marketing typology as shown in the figure below. For instance, MNO-U ranked first regarding marketing philosophy and market analysis and adaption, a result which seems logical as both dimensions are related and the adoption of both reflects the firm's attention to understanding customer needs through managing and analysing relevant market information, and then responding appropriately to these needs and desires. Simultaneously, MNO-U as a marketing-

oriented firm ranked last regarding to the ‘misconception’ criterion. On the other hand, MNO-X which ranked last according to marketing philosophy attitude has ranked first and second according to sales support and misconception criteria.

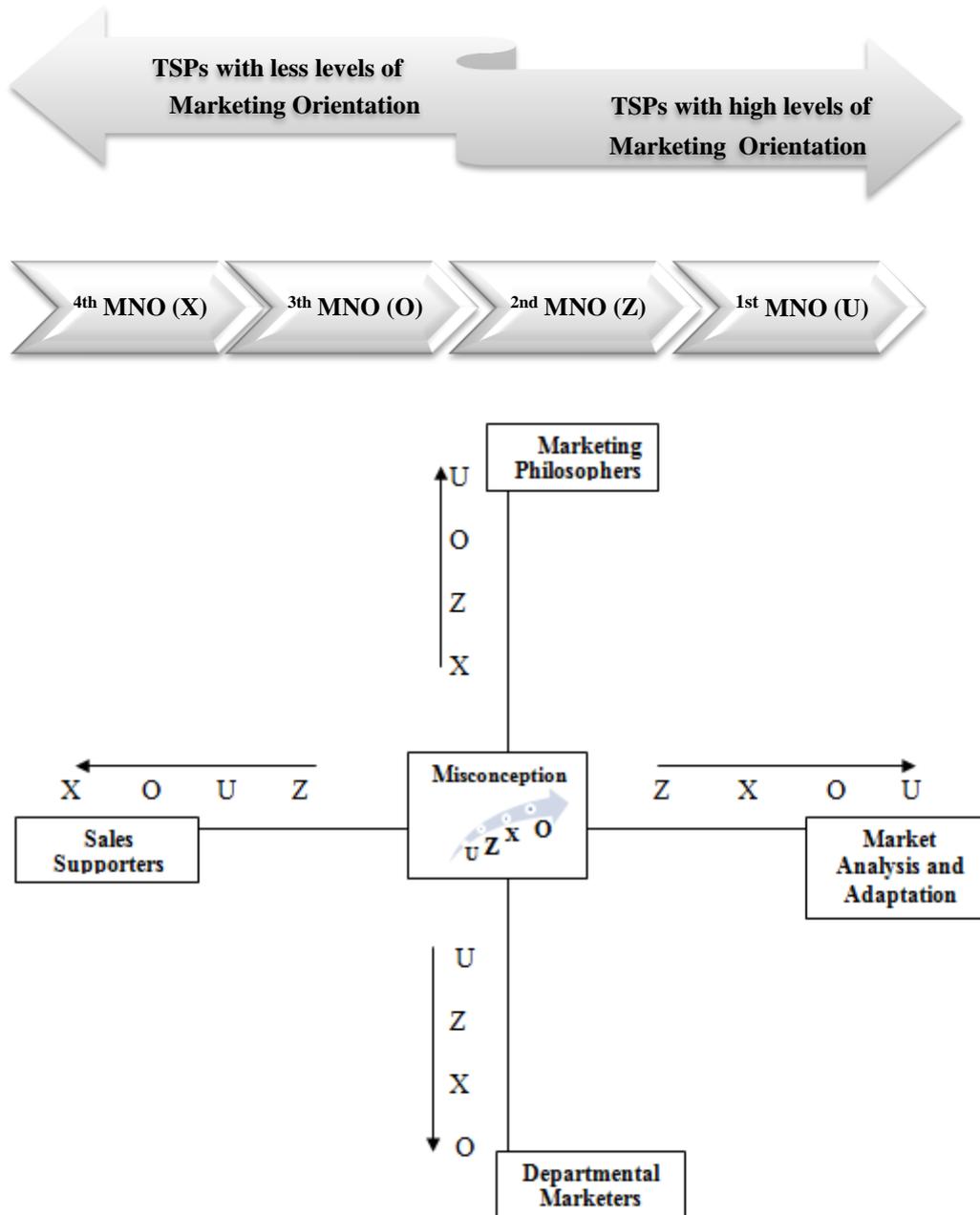


Figure 5.2: Telecommunications Service Providers’ (TSPs) Marketing Orientation and Marketing Typology - an Overall Picture

The figure also may show some kind of oddity in results or contradictory with regard to MNO-O attitudes. The firm was ranked second according to marketing philosophy, market analysis and adaption and sales support criteria. Also, it was ranked first regarding the departmental marketers’ scale. A plausible explanation for this apparent

inconsistency is that MNO-O's counterproductive attitudes could be attributed to its misconception and overlapping attitudes toward marketing as it was ranked first regarding this criterion with a mean of 5.96.

5.4 Qualitative Data Analysis (Semi-Structured Interview)

5.4.1 Participants' Characteristics

In order to achieve a satisfactory answer for the main research inquiry, the researcher conducted 18 semi-structured and face-to-face tape-recorded interviews focusing on the two main pillars of the research framework: *customer satisfaction* and *customer retention*.

The same sampling method that was used in phase (I) (i.e. purposive sampling) is also used in this phase of data collection. Selection of participants was based on the recommendations of the previous stage in the data collection process. As mentioned above, a list of key informant participants was an important outcome of data collection phase (I).

Selection of participants was confined to the main telecommunications network operators while virtual network operators (VNOs) or other telecommunications agents were excluded. A justification of this technique is that quality of service which represents a main determinant of both of research framework dimensions - customer satisfaction and customer retention - is managed only by telecommunications network operators who possess the required networks and infrastructures. In addition, the process took into account the diversity in term of backgrounds, experiences and managerial level of interviewees from the four telecommunications operators.

As the research purpose is to investigate the mechanisms underlying the relationship between marketing orientation and organisational performance, consequently, selection process was keen that, interviewees should be senior managers, executive directors, supervisors or experts from the four main telecommunications services providers; these groups represent the higher involvement and participation in their organisations. Thus, participants were chosen from firms' central departments not branches as such managers are more aware of firms' strategic orientations, where their expressions and opinions reflect their firms' adopted orientations.

A detailed description of participants, e.g. names, managerial positions, date and place of interview, is shown in Appendix C in which a variety backgrounds were represented by participants; these comprised Marketing, Strategic Marketing, International Carrier Services & Sales, Pricing & Planning, Operations, Communications, Mass Segmentation, and Market Research.

Finally, for analysis purposes, each participant's answer was given a unique ID indicating the firm, the participant and the number of the related question. For example, the ID O4.1 indicates MNO-O, participant No.4 and his answer to question No. 1 as shown in figure 5.3 for instance.

5.4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis Techniques

The systematic qualitative analysis approach proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) that comprises preparing, classifying and interpreting data was adopted in this research as a general qualitative data analysis strategy. Moreover, a detailed checklist based on the work of McNamara (1998) and Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) was followed for interpreting the collected qualitative data which includes five sequential steps, described below.

(i) *Get to know the data* is a preparatory step that is concerned with listening to the recorded interviews several times, then reading and rereading the transcribed text in order to familiarise oneself with the related information. At this step, the researcher had the opportunity to write down his impressions and considered the integrity and quality of data.

(ii) *Focus the analysis* includes reviewing the purpose of the evaluation and what researcher wants to find, then to deciding how to focus the analysis (*by question or by group*) based on the purpose of research.

(iii) *Categorise the information* refers to identifying the themes or patterns used, e.g. ideas, concepts, behaviours, interactions, or phrases and organising data into these emergent categories.

(iv) *Identifying patterns and connections between categories step* is accomplished within three levels: (a) combining similar categories into larger categories, (b) considering the relative importance level of each category, and (c) identifying any connections or relationships between categories.

(v) *Interpret the data* represents the final step of qualitative data analysis that includes in-depth description of the results (i.e. what new things we learned, what has been learned and what is applicable (generalisable) to other settings, programmes or studies). In addition, writing the final report and including descriptive examples, e.g. quotes or diagrams to illustrate points and bring the data to life are an expected outcome in this stage of the analysis.

In line with the checklist based on McNamara's (1998) and Taylor-Powell and Renner's (2003) work, the researcher was keen that transcription of each recorded interview should be carried out on the same day the interview was held in order to remain familiar with the context of the interview and not to miss any notes, comments or impressions related to participants' answers.

It is worth mentioning that each interview took between 45 and 80 minutes to carry out and record. However, the total actual time taken in many cases was about two times the recorded interview time as the researcher had to hold the recording device during the interviews because of important international phone calls, or interruptions because of some cases that needed urgent decisions by managers or directors. The researcher was informed prior to conducting this phase of data collection that, in some cases, participants may ask to pause the recording for urgent or unexpected circumstances. The researcher had taken the likelihood of this happening into account, due to the dynamic nature of these firms and the organisational positions of participants.

All interviews were recorded in Arabic, the native language of participants, in order to allow a comfortable environment and to motivate them to express their attitudes and opinions, and also to avoid the formal structured answers; i.e. the main theme characterising the in-depth interview. The same technique that was used to ensure the validity of the translation of interview questions is also adopted in the translation of interview transcriptions (i.e. the back translation) (Douglas & Craig, 2007) where English translation was translated back into Arabic by an independent assistant in order to ensure the accuracy of the final draft of translation. Figures 5.3 and 5.4 below highlight the practical steps followed by the researcher in analysing the conducted interviews.

In order to break down the collected data into separate units of meaning, the researcher started with *open coding* (figure 5.3) using specific questions as recommended by

customer retention-related one? To which of the eight dimensions is it most relevant? What its importance to this dimension from the viewpoint of participant? Does it include behavioural or attitudinal facets? In addition to the context of the participant's answer as each question was designed to assess a specific component of the research framework dimensions.

Axial coding represents a subsequent step for the development of open coding and the spreadsheet. As shown in figure 5.4, axial coding is concerned with making connections between developed codes through combining similar categories into larger categories. In practice, after all codes have been distributed to their appropriate sections on the spreadsheet, axial coding was undertaken to integrate and organise the possible linkages between the various sub-categories (codes) belonging to a central themes (i.e. nodes or families).

The outcome of this step represented in a list of themes constitutes the key factors for managing each sub-dimension of the eight components of research framework from the view point of each telecommunications operator which reflects his adopted level of marketing orientation.

Figure 5.4 describes the steps followed by the researcher in coding the qualitative data collected, starting from the interview transcription and ending with selective coding. The figure, for instance, highlights a selected part of an interview transcript related to a participant from MNO-O (Mr Saeed Tareefi\Marketing Manager) regarding the utilitarian reinforcement (UR) aspect of customer retention (CR).

Steps 1 and 2 represent the processes relevant to open coding in which the researcher started with the interview transcript (step 1) with the aim of breaking down its included data into separate units of meaning (step 2). While step 3 refers to the process by which all codes were distributed in the spreadsheet, step 4 represents the axial coding process where the researcher identified the linkages between different codes under each dimension for each telecommunications operator in the spreadsheet, and integrated these into central themes (families).

shown in the above figure (5.4), the axial coding enabled the derivation of specific themes (*e.g. customer orientation, technology & infrastructures, product development*) which reflect each firm's particular key factors in managing the utilitarian

reinforcements (UR) dimension of customer retention from the viewpoint of each firms' participants.

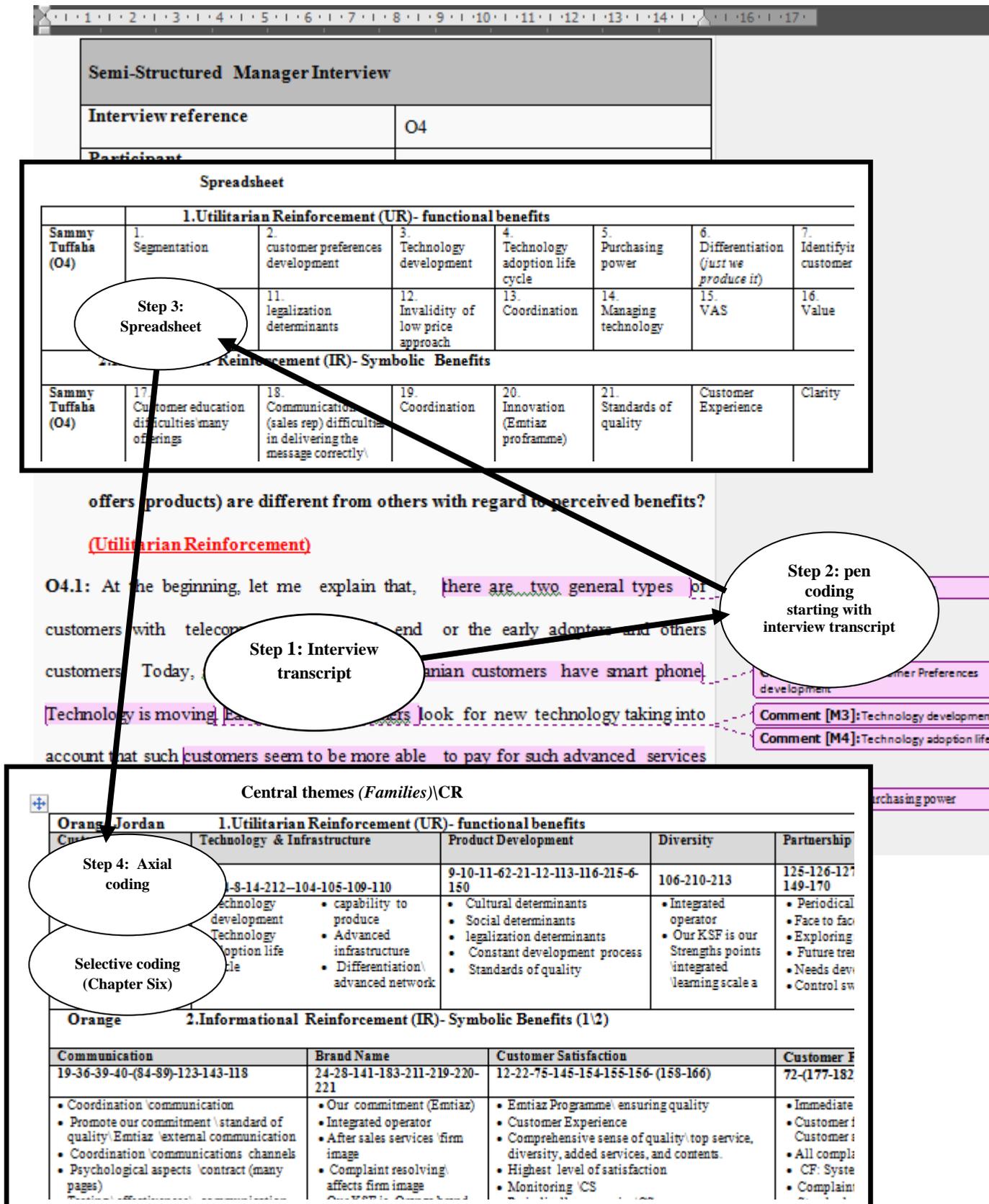


Figure 5.4: A Sample of Qualitative Data Analysis/Axial Coding

Selective coding: is viewed as an advanced stage of research analysis which refers to selecting the core category, relating it to other categories and confirming and explaining those relationships.

5.4.3 Qualitative Data Analysis

5.4.3.1 Background and Market Context (*interview questions: 1 and 2*)

According to methodology literature, starting an interview with general and less sensitive questions will help encourage the participant to feel comfortable and to interact with subsequent and more focused questions. By the same token, interview questions 1 and 2 are initial questions aimed at providing a general perception of the provision of telecommunications services in Jordan (PTSJ) regarding competition, general market indicators and firms' market dominance strategies.

The majority of participants' answers described Jordan as one of the most competitive markets in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The fierce competition between the four operators contributed positively in improving the quality of the provided services. On the other hand, the intense competition and the high penetration rate which exceeded 147 % by the first quarter of 2013 (TRC, 2013) pushed towards low prices, the matter that caused a year on year decline in the ARPU (average return per user) as participants argued.

Telecommunications operators in the PTSJ who have strategic partnerships with regional and international telecommunications groups (e.g. France telecom\France, Batelco\Bahrain, Motorola\USA) utilise these relationships in several different areas; product development and technology centres, employee training and exchange of experiences, and in monitoring international market trends and evolution of customer preferences. Moreover, participants - based on their experiences in this market - pointed out two main aspects pertaining to Jordanian consumer behaviour, which should be taken into account by firms: (i) loyalty is volatile and changeable in Jordan's market and (ii) Jordanian customer behaviour seems to be drawing comparisons between the different offerings and also on evaluating the expectations of and price paid for the service.

Interview question 2 intended to achieve a general understanding of the competitive landscape and strategic competitive positions for the players in the arena. Determining

the market dominance strategy for each telecommunications operator; market leader, challenger or follower will help in objectively understanding and interpreting participants' viewpoints, ideas and impressions in the subsequent interview questions.

Most participants were in agreement that MNO-Z, which started in 1995 as the first operator of mobile telecommunications services is the leader of the telecommunications market in Jordan. In terms of its implemented marketing strategies, its ability to control the market and its considerable market share, which constitutes half the total telecommunications market; MNO-Z is leading the PTSJ as participants stated. Participants' answers indicated both MNO-O and MNO-U as challengers while MNO-X was viewed as a follower in the marketplace regarding its implemented strategies, market share, policies and reactions.

An overall picture of TSPs' market dominance strategies is shown in figure 5.5 which summarises participants' opinions regarding each TSP's strategic position.

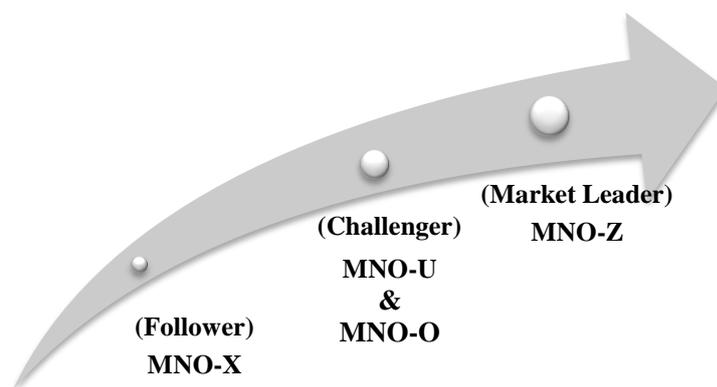


Figure 5.5: Telecommunications Operators' Market Dominance Strategy

5.4.3.2 Dimensions of Customer Satisfaction

(Attitudinal Perspective)

While the quantitative part of data analysis determined the adopted level of marketing orientation for each telecommunications operator in the market, this part is aimed at identifying the key factors and related mechanisms that form the patterns by which each component or sub-dimension of customer satisfaction is managed, which represents a reflection of firms' adopted marketing orientation. Consequently, this phase of data analysis was intended to identify the key factors for each telecommunications operator while managing each component of customer satisfaction.

Figure 5.6 below highlights the technique adopted by the researcher to find out firms' customer satisfaction and customer retention key factors. It presents a sample of firms' derived key factors (*themes*) and its related references (*codes*) in managing the external variables of customer expectations (*promotion, word of mouth, and personnel contact*).

**External Factors of Customer Expectations/
promotion, word of mouth, and personnel contact**

Firm	MNO (O)	MNO (Z)	MNO (U)	MNO (X)
References	885-886-1015- 1016-39-205- 43-77-207-208- 888-18	615-784-785-799- 800-801-638-644- 734-615-642-643- 644- 730-737- 735-738	1043-1049-1084-1061- 1085-1090-1095-1096- 1097-1098-1099-1100- 1101-1102-1103-1104- 1105-1106-1107-1108- 1109-1110-1111-1112- 1113-1114-1115-1116- 1117-1118-1119-1120- 1121-1122-1123-1124- 1125-1126-1127-1128- 1129-1130-1131-1132- 1133-1134-1135-1136- 1137-1338-1339- 1340-1341-1342-1343- 1344-1345-1346-1347- 1348-1349-1350-1351- 1352-1353-1354-1355- 1356-1357-1358-1359- 1360-1361-1362-1363- 1364-1365-1366-1367- 1368-1369-1370-1371- 1372-1373-1374-1375- 1376-1377-1378-1379- 1380-1381-1382-1383- 1384-1385-1386-1387- 1388-1389-1390-1391- 1392-1393-1394-1395- 1396-1397-1398-1399- 1400-1401-1402-1403- 1404-1405-1406-1407- 1408-1409-1410-1411- 1412-1413-1414-1415- 1416-1417-1418-1419- 1420-1421-1422-1423- 1424-1425-1426-1427- 1428-1429-1430-1431- 1432-1433-1434-1435- 1436-1437-1438-1439- 1440-1441-1442-1443- 1444-1445-1446-1447- 1448-1449-1450-1451- 1452-1453-1454-1455- 1456-1457-1458-1459- 1460-1461-1462-1463- 1464-1465-1466-1467- 1468-1469-1470-1471- 1472-1473-1474-1475- 1476-1477-1478-1479- 1480-1481-1482-1483- 1484-1485-1486-1487- 1488-1489-1490-1491- 1492-1493-1494-1495- 1496-1497-1498-1499- 1500-1501-1502-1503- 1504-1505-1506-1507- 1508-1509-1510-1511- 1512-1513-1514-1515- 1516-1517-1518-1519- 1520-1521-1522-1523- 1524-1525-1526-1527- 1528-1529-1530-1531- 1532-1533-1534-1535- 1536-1537-1538-1539- 1540-1541-1542-1543- 1544-1545-1546-1547- 1548-1549-1550-1551- 1552-1553-1554-1555- 1556-1557-1558-1559- 1560-1561-1562-1563- 1564-1565-1566-1567- 1568-1569-1570-1571- 1572-1573-1574-1575- 1576-1577-1578-1579- 1580-1581-1582-1583- 1584-1585-1586-1587- 1588-1589-1590-1591- 1592-1593-1594-1595- 1596-1597-1598-1599- 1600-1601-1602-1603- 1604-1605-1606-1607- 1608-1609-1610-1611- 1612-1613-1614-1615- 1616-1617-1618-1619- 1620-1621-1622-1623- 1624-1625-1626-1627- 1628-1629-1630-1631- 1632-1633-1634-1635- 1636-1637-1638-1639- 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2204-2205-2206-2207- 2208-2209-2210-2211- 2212-2213-2214-2215- 2216-2217-2218-2219- 2220-2221-2222-2223- 2224-2225-2226-2227- 2228-2229-2230-2231- 2232-2233-2234-2235- 2236-2237-2238-2239- 2240-2241-2242-2243- 2244-2245-2246-2247- 2248-2249-2250-2251- 2252-2253-2254-2255- 2256-2257-2258-2259- 2260-2261-2262-2263- 2264-2265-2266-2267- 2268-2269-2270-2271- 2272-2273-2274-2275- 2276-2277-2278-2279- 2280-2281-2282-2283- 2284-2285-2286-2287- 2288-2289-2290-2291- 2292-2293-2294-2295- 2296-2297-2298-2299- 2300-2301-2302-2303- 2304-2305-2306-2307- 2308-2309-2310-2311- 2312-2313-2314-2315- 2316-2317-2318-2319- 2320-2321-2322-2323- 2324-2325-2326-2327- 2328-2329-2330-2331- 2332-2333-2334-2335- 2336-2337-2338-2339- 2340-2341-2342-2343- 2344-2345-2346-2347- 2348-2349-2350-2351- 2352-2353-2354-2355- 2356-2357-2358-2359- 2360-2361-2362-2363- 2364-2365-2366-2367- 2368-2369-2370-2371- 2372-2373-2374-2375- 2376-2377-2378-2379- 2380-2381-2382-2383- 2384-2385-2386-2387- 2388-2389-2390-2391- 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2580-2581-2582-2583- 2584-2585-2586-2587- 2588-2589-2590-2591- 2592-2593-2594-2595- 2596-2597-2598-2599- 2600-2601-2602-2603- 2604-2605-2606-2607- 2608-2609-2610-2611- 2612-2613-2614-2615- 2616-2617-2618-2619- 2620-2621-2622-2623- 2624-2625-2626-2627- 2628-2629-2630-2631- 2632-2633-2634-2635- 2636-2637-2638-2639- 2640-2641-2642-2643- 2644-2645-2646-2647- 2648-2649-2650-2651- 2652-2653-2654-2655- 2656-2657-2658-2659- 2660-2661-2662-2663- 2664-2665-2666-2667- 2668-2669-2670-2671- 2672-2673-2674-2675- 2676-2677-2678-2679- 2680-2681-2682-2683- 2684-2685-2686-2687- 2688-2689-2690-2691- 2692-2693-2694-2695- 2696-2697-2698-2699- 2700-2701-2702-2703- 2704-2705-2706-2707- 2708-2709-2710-2711- 2712-2713-2714-2715- 2716-2717-2718-2719- 2720-2721-2722-2723- 2724-2725-2726-2727- 2728-2729-2730-2731- 2732-2733-2734-2735- 2736-2737-2738-2739- 2740-2741-2742-2743- 2744-2745-2746-2747- 2748-2749-2750-2751- 2752-2753-2754-2755- 2756-2757-2758-2759- 2760-2761-2762-2763- 2764-2765-2766-2767- 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3144-3145-3146-3147- 3148-3149-3150-3151- 3152-3153-3154-3155- 3156-3157-3158-3159- 3160-3161-3162-3163- 3164-3165-3166-3167- 3168-3169-3170-3171- 3172-3173-3174-3175- 3176-3177-3178-3179- 3180-3181-3182-3183- 3184-3185-3186-3187- 3188-3189-3190-3191- 3192-3193-3194-3195- 3196-3197-3198-3199- 3200-3201-3202-3203- 3204-3205-3206-3207- 3208-3209-3210-3211- 3212-3213-3214-3215- 3216-3217-3218-3219- 3220-3221-3222-3223- 3224-3225-3226-3227- 3228-3229-3230-3231- 3232-3233-3234-3235- 3236-3237-3238-3239- 3240-3241-3242-3243- 3244-3245-3246-3247- 3248-3249-3250-3251- 3252-3253-3254-3255- 3256-3257-3258-3259- 3260-3261-3262-3263- 3264-3265-3266-3267- 3268-3269-3270-3271- 3272-3273-3274-3275- 3276-3277-3278-3279- 3280-3281-3282-3283- 3284-3285-3286-3287- 3288-3289-3290-3291- 3292-3293-3294-3295- 3296-3297-3298-3299- 3300-3301-3302-3303- 3304-3305-3306-3307- 3308-3309-3310-3311- 3312-3313-3314-3315- 3316-3317-3318-3319-	

managing customer expectations, the first component of customer satisfaction. By the same token, the overall key factors of all dimensions of the research framework and its related references for each firm constitute the pattern of building customer satisfaction and customer retention for each telecommunications operator.

Based on the research framework, telecommunications operators manage customer satisfaction through three main dimensions: (1) customer expectations which include external and internal factors, (2) the cognitive aspects of customer satisfaction, and (3) the affective components of customer satisfaction.

1. Customer Expectations

Table 5.5 below summarises firms' key factors of customer expectations (the external and internal variables) linked to firms' adopted levels of marketing orientation.

As shown in the table, the key factors driving firms' customer expectations are categorised into two groups based on firms' adopted levels of marketing orientation: high (MNO-Z and MNO-U) and low (MNO-O and MNO-X).

Table 5.5: A summary of TSPs' Customer Expectations Key Factors and adopted level of Marketing Orientation (MO)

<i>Telecommunications Operators' KFs/ Customer Expectations</i>				
Dimension of Customer Expectations	MNO (O)	MNO (Z)	MNO (U)	MNO (X)
<u>(External factors)</u> Promotion, Word of mouth, and Personnel contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International aspects of brand name - Technological capabilities - Tangibility - Coordination - Influential people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Value of brand name and firm image regional aspect - Balanced system - Clarity & Simplicity - Advertising - Appropriate tools - Interaction communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenge of high expectation - Value: U pricing system - Diversity of channels - Customer feedback - Customer awareness - Market research - Transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education/ technical issues - Excessive expectation - Firm-customer relationship - Sub-dealers
<u>(Internal factors)</u> Customer experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsiveness - Standards and commitment <i>(Emtiaz Programme)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer loyalty - Customer involvement - Sub-dealers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long-term relationship - Customer involvement - Commitment - Customer feedback - Credibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring customers - Technology aspects

TSP with high level of MO → 

TSP with low level of MO → 

Customer Expectations/External Factors

With regard to the telecommunications operator MNO-O, the international aspect of the firm's brand name and its strategic partnership with France Telecom Group represents the focal point that all relevant communication activities are based on with the aim of managing customer expectations.

In addition, technological capabilities, tangibility, and coordination between the different communication channels in formulating customer expectations also were seen as key issues for MNO-O. Meanwhile influential people (e.g. sport stars, artists, actors and public opinion leaders) was indicated as important factor by MNO-O participants because of their role in establishing public opinion about the firm which indirectly influence positively/negatively the expected level of provided offerings.

Value of brand name is key issue for MNO-Z who was the first mobile telecommunications operator in Jordan market. Thus, MNO-Z firm image represents prominent pillar in managing customer expectations in the market.

In addition, MNO-Z Jordan is a partner for the regional operator 'Zain Group' who operates also in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, and Bahrain. Thus, the external communication programme of MNO-Z Jordan was managed focusing on two facets: (i) considering the real needs and preferences of Jordan market and (ii) to be consistent with other regional branches communication strategies. Consequently, audiences (all MNO-Z potential customers) in the region receive the same message (using advertising mainly) whether in Jordan or other region market aiming at enriching the solid and strong image of MNO-Z as entrepreneur-operator at the regional level.

In addition, clarity and simplicity of communication programme, the appropriate communication tools, interaction communication means, and balanced communication system are other key factors enable managing customer expectations as inferred from MNO-Z participants' answers.

As a third operator in Jordan's market, MNO-U adopted the penetration strategy to establish its market share in the highly competitive and mature market. Consequently, MNO-U has adopted the high expectations approach using diversity of communication channels to promote its main provided benefit; the value-based pricing system (Per Second Billing System). Also, MNO-U depends on market research, customer feedback, customer awareness, and transparency in managing its promise regarding the expectations of services performance.

On the other hand, the operator MNO-X provides PTT mobile telecommunications services based on iDEN technology. Thus, MNO-X approached customer expectations based on excessive expectations (inflated expectations) in order to penetrate the market and to compete with other GSM technology-based operators.

Regarding MNO-X, customer education activities of technical issues relevant to the new service that has been introduced in the market (the PTT service) are important issues in formulating customer expectations.

Moreover, the role of sub-dealers is critical in constructing customer expectations for MNO-X; as such agents are intermediate distributors who are involved in direct interaction with customer. Also, firm-customer relationship is an important aspect of external communication factors while building customer expectations from the viewpoint of MNO-X.

Customer Expectations/Internal Factors

With regard to MNO-O internal factors that affect the formulation of customer expectations, responsiveness to customer feedback and commitment to firm's promises constitute key issues in managing customer experience.

On the other hand, MNO-U views engaging customer within long-term relationship with the firm (customer involvement) as the key factor in managing the internal aspects of expectations. Also, firm's commitment and the effective customer feedback system and credibility are important variables from the viewpoint of MNO-U.

Similarly, MNO-Z considers that the achievement of customer loyalty through involving customer in the firm's communication programme will have a positive effect on customer experience. Furthermore, telecommunications operators should control the influence of agents and sub-dealers on customer experience because of their direct interaction with customers as an essential distribution channel in the telecommunications industry in the PTSJ.

With regard to MNO-X, monitoring customer consumption and technology aspects constituted two key factors in managing customer experience.

2. Cognitive Aspects of Customer Satisfaction

Different key factors relevant to the cognitive aspects of customer satisfaction were driven in this part of analysis. These key factors which represent the quality of *what* and

how relevant to firms' provided services have been collated into main categories based on the research framework, e.g. *Quality, Technology, Employees etc* and linked according to the level of marketing orientation of each telecommunications operator.

Table 5.6 below summarises the firms' key factors relevant to the cognitive aspects of customer satisfaction linked to firms' adopted levels of marketing orientation, focusing specifically on the key themes related to Quality, Technology, Employees, Processes and Distribution, Complaint handling and Customer service.

Table 5.6: A summary of TSPs' Key Factors of the Cognitive Aspects of Customer Satisfaction and the adopted level of Marketing Orientation (MO)

Dimensions of Cognitive Aspect of CS	MNO (O)	MNO (Z)	MNO (U)	MNO (X)
Quality of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performance - Partnership - Int. standards - Product development - Responsiveness - Integrated solutions - Diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Launching new services - Stability of performance - Empathy - Dependability - Reliability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performance - Creativity & Innovation - Empathy - Pleasure - Assurance - Market Research - Dependability - Customer orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality of core - Product orientation - Introducing new technology - Responsiveness - Focused market
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technology centres - Partnership benefits - Innovation - Keeping up with new technologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to manage technology - Technology settlement - Time issues - Integration (operation and marketing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suitability of technology - Scalability and flexibility - Cultural issue - New technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New technology (iDEN) - Investment in technology - GSM vs iDEN - Keep up with new technologies - Communication and education
Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partnership aspect - Employee satisfaction - Efficient deployment - Selection and training - Technical experience - Strategic source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal communication - Training - Strategic view - Employee awareness - Coordination - Selection and qualification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal culture (spirit of Challenge) - Internal satisfaction - Internal retention - Productivity - Selection and attraction system - Investing in people - Managing operation-marketing relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training (external & internal) - Strategic management - Technical skills - Marketing skills - Experience <p style="text-align: right;">Cont'd</p>

TSP with high level of MO → 

TSP with low level of MO → 

Dimensions of Cognitive Aspect of CS	MNO (O)	MNO (Z)	MNO (U)	MNO (X)
Processes & Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination\ integration - Time criteria - Customer journey - Technology aspect - Constant development - role of agent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Devolution of power - 'Firm-customer touch point' analysis (Customer journey) - Dissemination of feedback - Constant reviewing - Coordination - Timing issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Firm-customer touch points - Marketing-operation - Sub dealers satisfaction - Tech-based system - Orientation to e-marketing - Creativity\ E-marketing - Time criteria (KPIs) - Physical evidence role - Launching new service (marketing role) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Value chain\ interrelated processes - Organisational structure - Productivity - Delivery channels and agents
Complaint handling & Customer service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic view - Reviewing KPIs - Int. Standards - Documentation - Criteria of action - Criteria of needed time - Monitoring CS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Value through customer service - KPIs - Market information - Criteria of time - Monitoring CS - Quality of action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service orientation - Customer advocacy - Dynamic system - Top management - Monitoring - Data base - All cases - Responsiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Top management attention - Documentation - Classifying and follow up - Computerised automated system - Monitoring customer consumption level

TSP with high level of MO → 

TSP with low level of MO → 

Perceived Service/Quality of What /Core Service

TSPs' key factors relevant to quality of service, performance of core service and reliability represented common themes that have been indicated by all operators in the market. Data analysis showed that MNO-O emphasised the adoption of international standards of quality based on the firm's strategic partnership with France Telecom. Also, it pointed out other different key factors, e.g. product development, integrated solutions, diversity and responsiveness.

MNO-Z argues that the features and specifications of the provided service should be managed based on customer needs. Thus, the firm approaches service quality from the customer orientation view. In addition to empathy and dependability as other quality key themes for MNO-Z, data analysis also showed that the firm relies on maintaining on its capability to launch new services, and maintain the stability of performance for the provided services in order to ensure the quality of service in the long run.

According to the views of MNO-U participants, Jordan's telecommunications in general is a pre-paid market; thus the firm established its market share targeting youth customers as a considerable and promising telecommunications market in Jordan. Consequently, creativity and innovation, empathy and pleasure constitute the main

factors stemming from the firm's understanding of the nature of its market, its needs and preferences (i.e. customer orientation), which is based on periodically conducted market research. Moreover, performance of service and dependability are also key issues in managing service quality from the viewpoint of MNO-U.

MNO-X differentiates itself through providing a push-to-talk (PTT) telecommunications service. The firm presents the PTT as an unique, fast and high-quality service; the firm views that the quality of core service that relies on the advanced and new technology is a key issue and the technical features of such products sell itself (product orientation). In addition, MNO-X participants' answers indicated focused market and responsiveness as key factors in managing customers' perceptions of quality, with the aim of achieving customer satisfaction.

Perceived Service/Quality of what/ Technology

According to participants' answers, a firm's capability in keeping up with new technology and investing in technology seems to be a common theme for all telecommunications service providers (TSPs) in the market. While MNO-O gives more attention to its strategic partnership with other international telecommunication groups in this regard, MNO-Z and MNO-U view how they manage technology (firm's ability to match between technology features and customer needs and desires) and the suitability of technology for a particular market as key success factors ensuring the perceived quality by customers. On the other hand, MNO-X considers the introducing and keeping up with new technology (e.g. iDEN) is the most influential factor in managing this aspect of intended satisfaction.

Perceived Service/Quality of how/Employee

With regard to telecommunications operators' key employee factors in ensuring the functional aspects of perceived quality of service, participants agreed that each of the selection standards, training programmes, and strategic view are important factors in managing quality of service in this advanced and tech-based market. However, internal culture (spirit of challenge) and productivity through the firm's internal satisfaction and employee retention programmes were given more attention by MNO-U.

On the other hand, MNO-O participants consider that, in addition to the importance of employee satisfaction, a firm's strategic alliance(s) (international partnership) allows for the improvement of staff technical experiences and also helps the firm to benefit from the international training programmes to improve employees' skills and capabilities.

While MNO-Z depends mainly on firm internal communication system, employee awareness, and coordination in managing employee strategy, MNO-X views that the role of strategic management with regard to determining the needed external or internal training programmes to support both technical and marketing skills are key issues.

Perceived Service/Quality of how/Process & Distribution

A firm's capability relevant to the combination/integration of its different resources and capabilities, and also its capability in managing the 'customer journey' based on planned time criteria represent important processes and distribution key factors for MNO-O. In addition, the role of agents and dealers, the technology aspects, and the constant development of adopted processes and delivery methods were indicated by MNO-O as key factors in this regard.

According to MNO-Z, devolution of power (decentralisation), the constant reviewing and analysing of firm-customer touch points and customer journey steps, then disseminating customer feedback efficiently through related departments represent prominent factors in managing processes and distribution activities.

MNO-U considers each of the firm-customer touch points management, marketing-operation (technology) interaction, orientation to e-marketing and creativity, key performance indicators (KPIs) and sub-dealers' satisfaction as key factors that enable it to manage this aspect of satisfaction efficiently.

On the other hand, MNO-X participants indicated productivity, value chain-interrelated processes and performance of firm's agents and delivery channels members as the most important factors in managing the firm's processes and delivery activities.

Perceived Service/Quality of how/ Complaints & Customer Service

Participants' answers to this dimension pointed out each of key performance indicators (KPIs), the role of top management and the strategic view, and monitoring customer satisfaction as general themes that different TSPs agreed as important in managing complaints and customer service.

MNO-O indicated high standards, documentation, criterion of time and monitoring customer satisfaction as key issues in managing customer service and complaint handling.

According to MNO-Z, this dimension of satisfaction should be managed within the added value approach. Moreover, market information management, the constant evaluating of adopted KPIs, and the quality of action constitute prominent factors for MNO-Z in managing complaints and customer service.

While MNO-U participants pointed out service orientation, customer advocacy, responsiveness, and the dynamicity of customer services and complaints systems as main factors affecting customers' perceived quality, MNO-X participants highlighted the importance of firm-customer relationship, top management role, and the computerised (automated) system in managing customer complaints and customer service.

3. Affective Aspects of Customer Satisfaction

From the viewpoint of social psychology literature, customer satisfaction with a particular product/service has both cognitive and affective dimensions, in addition to the behavioural consequences of purchasing/adopting process (Lewis & Weigert, 1985).

As noted above, cognitive components include many technical and functional aspects of perceived performance (*what and how*); meanwhile affective aspects comprise all non-cognitive components of customer satisfaction.

Table 5.7 below summarises the firms' key factors identified as relevant to the affective aspects of customer satisfaction linked to firms' adopted levels of marketing orientation, and focusing on the key factors of *Communication System, Corporate Image and Brand Name and Value*.

Table 5.7: A Summary of TSPs' Key Factors of Affective Aspects of Customer Satisfaction and the adopted level of Marketing Orientation (MO)

<i>Telecommunications Operators' KFs / Communications</i>				
Dimensions of Affective aspects of CS	MNO (O)	MNO (Z)	MNO (U)	MNO (X)
Communication System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interactive communication - Firm-customer relationship - Education - Employing physical evidence elements - Qualified employees - Diversity of used channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interactive communication channels - Creativity - Brand name - Staff - Appropriateness - Market research - Simplicity - Sub-dealers role - Cultural aspect - Added value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interactive channels (social media means) - Market research - Challenge (high customer expectation) - Promoting firm value - Simplicity and clarity - Long-run relationship - Customer rationality - Culture aspects - Physical evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personnel contact - Education\ technical issues - Staff experiences - Market research - Appropriateness
Corporate Image and Brand name	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Biggest integrated operator - International aspect - Availability - Introducing new products - Physical elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintaining satisfaction - Introducing new services - Complaints - Comprehensive/internal and external - Social responsibility - Physical elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Credibility - Internal culture - Value \Pricing system - Employee\challenge - Physical elements - Market research - Social responsibility - New services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performance \quality of basic - After sales service - Keeping up with development - New technology - Availability - Flexibility
Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Controlling costs - Optimum approach vs. Premier approach - Price sensitivity - Price elasticity - Customer purchasing power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Value-based pricing approach - Segmentation - Monitoring - Responsiveness - Low price strategy vs. low price tactic - Communication-Pricing coordination - Purchasing power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Value-based view - Dynamic system - Per Second Billing system - Communication\ensure pricing system - Customer rationality - Matching of pricing policies and firm strategic aims - Target market & appropriate tariff rates - Price elasticity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer rationality - Quality vs. price - Economic situation \pricing - Price sensitivity

TSP with high level of MO → 

TSP with low level of MO → 

Communication System

In general, data analysis showed an obvious inclination towards the adoption of the contemporary and interactive communication means such as Blogs, Facebook, Twitter,

and LinkedIn by the different telecommunications operators. In addition to interactive communication means, firm-customer partnership, customer education, employing the physical evidence elements, and qualified employees were indicated by MNO-O as key communication factors.

With regard to MNO-Z, data analysis pointed out several key factors in managing the communication system with the aim of enhancing customer satisfaction; these were creativity, brand name, appropriateness of used communication channels, employees' capabilities, market research, simplicity, sub-dealers' role, customer culture and adding value within the long-term view.

MNO-U adopts a challenge-based approach through the high customer expectations included in the firm message within MNO-U's communication programmes. The firm relies heavily on market research outcomes in developing and executing its communication programmes; meanwhile ensuring and promoting relevant values are binding ingredients of all the firm's communication programmes. Also, simplicity and clarity, long-run relationship, considering customer culture, and employing physical evidence elements constitute key issues in MNO-U's communication system.

In addition to coordination, market research, and dynamicity, MNO-X gives more attention to customer education aspects because of the associated technical features of the firm's PTT telecommunications service. Thus, face-to-face visits (personal contact) that based on the firm's well-trained employees are essential components of the firm's communication system.

Corporate Image and Brand Name

This section illustrates the key factors relevant to corporate image and brand name for each telecommunications operator where firm capability in managing the physical evidence and tangible factors emerged as common theme whereby all firms agreed on the important role it played in maintaining firm's image and overcoming the challenges of service marketing.

Regarding MNO-O, the firm's image as the biggest integrator operator in the market, the international partnership, and the firm's image relevant to its capability in managing the availability of service represent the more prominent factors for this operator. On the other hand, MNO-Z adopts a more comprehensive approach in managing firm's image. The firm focuses on both the internal and the external dimensions of corporate image.

Also, MNO-Z relies on ensuring firm image as a market leader by focusing on its capability to provide new and contemporary telecommunications services and keeping up with other international market trends. In addition, the firm pays great attention to maintaining customer satisfaction, complaints handling and social responsibility with the aim of managing firm image.

According to MNO-U, firm's internal culture, value, credibility and spirit of challenge are viewed as prominent key factors in managing the firm's image in a way that enhances the affective aspects of customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, the performance of basic service, after-sales services and the firm's ability to keep pace and introduce new products to the market constituted the most important key factors for MNO-X.

Perceived Value

Data analysis in this section showed a consensus between the different participants in considering that the PTSJ is a sensitive price market where price represents a main switching factor for customers.

MNO-O views considering customer purchasing power, price sensitivity, price elasticity, and controlling costs as main issues for ensuring perceived value by customers. According to MNO-Z, in telecommunications, 'low price' may be valid as an adopted tactic but not as a long-term strategy. Accordingly, pricing of provided services should be approached from the perspective of value. Thus, segmentation, monitoring, responsiveness and communication are seen as main factors in order to manage this aspect of satisfaction.

In addition to the importance of controlling costs (productivity), matching of pricing policies with the firm's strategic aims and target market, MNO-U is based on customers' perceived value regarding the firm's unique "Per Second Billing system." The firm argues that customer behaviour is affected by different variables (e.g. cultural, social, economic and psychological) meanwhile, the role of the communication system is critical in presenting and promoting such benefits.

Finally, several key value factors were pointed out as relevant to MNO-X: price sensitivity, customer rationality, quality vs. price, and the economic situation.

5.4.3.3 Dimensions of Customer Retention

(Behavioural Perspective)

In line with the relationship marketing view, retention of customers is seen as a substantial requirement for the survival and growth of telecommunications services providers, while customer satisfaction is often viewed as a central determinant of customer retention (Hennig-Thurau & Klee, 1997).

While the previous part of the data analysis was focused on customer satisfaction aspects, this part of the analysis is concerned specifically with identifying telecommunications operators' key factors in managing the behavioural dimension of customer retention (CR) (*i.e. Utilitarian reinforcement, informational reinforcement, utilitarian punishment, informational punishment, and learning history*).

It is worth noting that data analysis in this section focuses on three telecommunications operators, MNO-U, MNO-O and MNO-X, while MNO-Z Group was excluded because of insufficient information.

Table 5.8 below summarises the firms' key themes have been derived as being relevant to the different dimensions of customer retention which are categorised into two groups based on firms' adopted levels of marketing orientation: high (MNO-U) and low (MNO-O and MNO-X).

Table 5.8: A summary of TSPs' Key Factors of Customer Retention and the adopted level of Marketing Orientation (MO)

Dimension of Customer Retention	MNO (O)	MNO (U)	MNO (X)
Utilitarian Reinforcement (UR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performance of service - Int. standards - Technology & infrastructure - Product development - Diversity - Segmentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reliability & stability of core service - Data management - Customer orientation - Economic benefits - Product development - Diversity & Segmentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality of core service - Technology & product development - Content volume
Informational Reinforcement (UR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication - Brand name - Customer feedback - Customer expectation - Physical evidence - Customer education/ employee role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Symbolic and social factors - Firm image - Interactive communication - Customer satisfaction - Customer involvement - Customer feedback - Word of mouth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Firm image - Communication - Firm-customer relationship - Firm employees - Tangible elements

Cont'd

Dimension of Customer Retention	MNO (O)	MNO (U)	MNO (X)
Utilitarian Punishment (UP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motivators of switching - Satisfaction/ dissatisfaction - Substitutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Switching behaviour - Firm-customer relationship (<i>length, depth, and breadth</i>) - Consumption & trends - Switching barriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technology determinants - Functional faults - Monitoring customer consumption
Informational Punishment (UP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer complaints - Negative firm image - Customer service and communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Switching behaviour/ affective factors - Complaints - Communication - Responsiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication - Firm image - Complaint handling
Learning History (LH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer experience - Communication - Mentoring customer - Faults/dissatisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer experience - Sub-dealer satisfaction - Interactive communication - Responsiveness and devolution of power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer experience - Communication - Responsiveness

Telecommunications Operator with high level of Marketing Orientation → 

Telecommunications Operator with low level of Marketing Orientation → 

Utilitarian Reinforcement (UR)

Participants' answers on utilitarian reinforcement revolved around many different functional and economical facets mediated by firms' offerings which were viewed and discussed by participants from strategic and operational angles. With regard to the telecommunications operator MNO-O, technology & infrastructure, diversity of provided services, and product development (that based on high international standards) constituting three prominent themes were inferred from managers' answers. In addition, other factors such as segmentation and performance of service were also indicated by MNO-O participants as key issues in managing the utilitarian reinforcement dimension of customer retention.

MNO-U participants gave more attention to customer orientation (which is based on information management) as a leading philosophy while planning and managing the utilitarian dimension of customer retention. Moreover, economic benefits and perceived value, product development, reliability and stability of core service were also indicated by MNO-U as other important factors that enable the firm to enhance the utilitarian reinforcements represented in the functional benefits perceived by customers.

Regarding the telecommunication operator MNO-X, technology and product development and quality of core service (as two functional benefits-related themes), content volume (as an economic benefits-related theme) were inferred by data analysis as the most important utilitarian reinforcement aspects for MNO-X.

Informational Reinforcement (IR)

With regard to MNO-O, different themes were derived from data analysis with regard to the informational reinforcement aspect of customer retention (CR). Communication, brand name, customer satisfaction, customer feedback, customer expectations, and guiding and educating represent main informational reinforcement factors for MNO-O.

According to MNO-U Telecommunications Company, in addition to the interactive communication, customer feedback and customer satisfaction, the themes on which they agreed with MNO-O - firm image, and symbolic and social benefits, in addition to customer involvement which reflects an advanced level of the firm-customer relationship - all represent crucial issues from the viewpoint of MNO-U managers. On the other hand, communication, firm image, firm-customer relationship, employees and tangible elements are the main dimensions that were highlighted by MNO-X.

Utilitarian Punishment (UP)

The TSPs participants' answers on utilitarian punishment focused on different details aiming at controlling switching behaviour. Particularly, with regard to MNO-O, three main dimensions were derived; motivators of switching and switching barrier, satisfaction/dissatisfaction, and substitutes.

Regarding MNO-U, four prominent themes were inferred through data analysis which highlights monitoring consumer consumption and trends as an appropriate technique to enable the firm to predict consumer switching behaviour. In addition, MNO-U stressed the importance of the firm-customer relationship (*length, depth and breadth*) as a strategic approach in retaining good customers and controlling the 'churn rate'. Also, cognitive factors of switching barriers and the way in which the firm responds to the likelihood of changes in consumer-switching behaviour comprise a crucial dimension that should be taken into account in order to enable controlling customer defection.

According to MNO-X, in addition to the importance of analysing the functional benefits and faults of the provided services, technology determinants and monitoring of customer consumption emerged as two important utilitarian punishment themes.

Informational Punishment (IP)

In term of the informational punishment dimension of customer retention (CR), customer complaints handling, customer service and communication, and negative firm image represent three key factors for the telecommunications operator MNO-O. On the other hand, switching behaviour/affective factors, complaints, communication and responsiveness comprise the most informational punishment factors for MNO-U.

Regarding MNO-X, communication, firm image and customer complaint handling represent three significant informational punishment themes that are being given more attention by the firm with the aim of managing the affective facets of consumer switching behaviour which in turn will be translated to ensuring customer retention.

Learning History (LH)

Customer experience and communication constitute common themes that the different TSPs emphasised as playing important roles in enhancing the positive aspects of learning history as well as controlling its negative facets too. In addition to customer experience and communication, MNO-O stressed the role of mentoring customer consumption and faults/dissatisfaction analysis in managing customer learning history as such aspects provide an effective tool that has a positive impact on customer retention, as contended by MNO-O participants.

In addition to customer experience in dealing with the customer learning history aspect, MNO-U gave great attention to the role of sub-dealers as this can have a significant positive or negative effect on consumer experiences. Hence, satisfying and even retaining those sub-dealers and agents represents a key issue in the telecommunications market that contributes to managing customer learning history efficiently. Also, MNO-U participants' answers indicated the importance of interactive communication channels and responsiveness and devolution of power as key learning history factors. Finally, according to MNO-X, customer experience, responsiveness and communication emerged as three main key factors of customer learning history.

Data analysis showed relative agreement between the different participants from the different firms in indicating the same key factors in managing the different dimensions of customer retention. It is of crucial importance to note that, despite this apparent agreement between firms however, a considerable variation in the ways and mechanisms by which each firm manages these themes in order to support customer

retention constitutes a substantial difference between firms which is attributed to the different strategic visions and adopted orientations of firms.

5.5 Summary

This chapter presented two levels of data analysis. The first part was accomplished within the descriptive quantitative approach which presented an overall picture explaining the different adopted levels of marketing orientation for each telecommunications operator in the market. Consequently, the quantitative analysis section classified these operators within two different groups: firms with high levels of marketing orientation (MNO-Z and MNO-U) and those with lower levels of marketing orientation (MNO-X and MNO-O).

The second part presents the results of the qualitative data analysis. The initial results of qualitative data analysis were interesting in that they revealed the variation between the different telecommunications operators in (i) their market dominance strategies, (ii) dealing with customer expectations, cognitive, and affective aspects of customer satisfaction, and (iii) managing the different dimensions of customer retention.

This chapter has provided an overview of firms' variations in respect to their adopted levels of marketing orientation and their key factors in managing customer satisfaction and customer retention. However, in-depth evaluation of the influence of marketing orientation on the patterns and ways by which these key factors are managed on the ground is still needed: this is addressed in detail in Chapter Six - Findings and Discussion).

Chapter Six

Findings and Discussion

6.1 Overview

While the previous chapter five (Data Analysis) represented an initial phase of data analysis that focused on investigating the key factors for each telecommunications service provider (TSPs) in managing customer satisfaction and customer retention, this chapter is concerned with finding out the different patterns that comprise these key factors, and to link the variations between these patterns to firms' adopted levels of marketing orientation.

To achieve this, the chapter is divided into two main parts: (i) Section 6.2 evaluates the influence of adopted levels of marketing orientation for telecommunications operators on the approaches, drivers, and ways by which customer satisfaction is built, and (ii) Section 6.3 discusses the influence of marketing orientation adoption on firms' interrelationships, drivers, and ways adopted for building customer retention.

In accordance with the structure of other chapters of the thesis, this chapter starts with an introduction for subsequent sections (overview section 6.1) and is concluded with a summary of the chapter (section 6.4).

6.2 Investigating the Influence of Marketing Orientation (MO) on Customer Satisfaction (CS)

Building on the results of data analysis in the previous chapter (chapter 5, section 5.3.2), telecommunications operators could be categorised according to their adopted levels of marketing orientation into two groups: firms with high level of marketing orientation (MNO-U and MNO-Z) and firms with low level of marketing orientation (MNO-O and MNO-X).

This section is concerned with evaluating the variations between the two different groups of means by comparing the approaches, drivers and processes used by telecommunications operators to manage the three main dimensions of customer satisfaction: (i) customer expectations, the (ii) cognitive aspects of customer satisfaction, and (iii) the affective aspects of customer satisfaction.

It is worth noting that, although the research uses both the EDM and BPM logics in tracing how firms manage customer satisfaction (CS) and customer retention (CR), this study does not investigate the detailed practices of firms; rather it is more concerned with firms' managerial attitudes and behaviours towards marketing strategies in order to build a big picture focusing on the relationship linking marketing orientation, CS and CR.

6.2.1 The Influence of Marketing Orientation (MO) on Customer Expectations

MO influence on \longrightarrow *the way by which customer expectations is managed*
[the first dimension of customer satisfaction]

In-depth evaluation of data analysis results highlighted two different patterns that telecommunications operators follow in order to manage customer expectations. It was inferred that each of (A) approach, (B) value, (C) firm-customer relationship, and (D) market research emerged as substantial differences between high and low marketing orientations operators regarding managing customer expectations [**Customer Expectations finding 1 (CE1)**] (as illustrated in figure 6.1 in page 182).

Discussion

A. Approach

TSPs with high level of Marketing Orientation (MO):

It is worth noting that MNO-U was the third GSM telecommunications operator to enter the Jordanian market; meanwhile MNO-Z and MNO-O has already built their own market share. Thus, MNO-U has managed customer expectations taking into account the mature phase wherein the market shifted to it (see chapter four, section 4.4.3). In spite of the associated challenges, MNO-U adopted a high customer expectations level (figure 6.1, point A) approach consistent with the firm's penetration strategic aim as Mrs Reem Sabbagh/ MNO-U Communications Manager explained:

Customers are communicated with high levels of expectations services. Our marketing efforts were focused on customers' perceived added value. Although the high expectations levels promises of our communication mix includes a high risk, we worked hard to provide this level of value.

It is however argued that MNO-U's orientation towards the spirit of challenge could not be attributed just to the requirements of the firm's market penetration aim. In-depth

analysis of MNO-U participants' answers indicates high consideration for this value in MNO-U's internal organisational culture. The firm adopts the spirit of challenge within a strategic vision that goes beyond the tactical interim of penetration to the intended maintaining of firm-customer relationship in the long run:

...we focus on creating the spirit of challenge as internal culture and as an important success requirement in our mission.

Mr Anwer Ajlouni/ Market Research Manager

Thus, it is a genuine value that permeates the firm's internal culture where creativity and innovation values also represent key factors in the changing and volatile environment, as Mrs Reem Sabbagh/ MNO-U argues:

Since we started in 2005, all our staff members have brought up the spirit of challenge...success depends on an integrated system based on our internal culture, the challenge and the creative solutions.

In addition, the same participant summarises the firm's priorities and its key factors as consistent with the above perception:

... as a third operator, we have to think carefully and to be creative. Also, we have to work together driven by the spirit of challenge and to maintain customer-firm relationships aiming at achieving success and acceptance.

The above perception is in line with related literature in which innovation is viewed as a crucial antecedent of success particularly within dynamic and rapidly changing environments (Madhoushi et al., 2011), something which should permeate all firms' managerial and operational activities.

The other high marketing orientation operator, MNO-Z, manages customer expectations through a balanced system (figure 6.1, point A) where the level of promises regarding the expected functional, economic and social benefits is designed taking into account the credibility regarding exactly what benefits the firm is capable of providing. Despite the apparent difference between the approaches taken by MNO-Z and MNO-U in managing customer expectations, both firms stress the importance of credibility while setting the 'firm's promise' to maintain the firm-customer relationship in the long run.

Hence, credibility is a critical issue for both operators as they believe that customer adoption, purchasing or re-purchasing decisions are affected by previous experiences.

This perception is consistent with the assumptions of the BPM which views this behaviour as a learning history one (Foxall & Greenley, 2000; Foxall, 1994). Thus, this behaviour is influenced by customer previous experiences and the results of the comparison of pre-exposure performance [expectations] (Oliver et al., 1994) and post-exposure perceived performance (Bateson, 1991). According to this perception, in order to attain the intended credibility, the firm's message should be formulated carefully taking into account clarity and simplicity, and to ensure accuracy concerning what is intended to be understood by the customer and their expectations level regarding this message.

Although MNO-Z stresses the appropriateness of the used channels while communicating the firm's promise to the potential customer, the firm - and because of its market-dominant role as a market leader (*chapter 4, section 4.4.1*) - was keen to be proactive and to have a presence through the continuous promotional programmes. The firm intends to reach a large audience through the mass media channels. Thus MNO-Z, which has the largest market share distributed in all geographic areas in the country, relies largely on advertising as a common and appropriate communication tool for general promotional aims that supports the firm's image as a leader in Jordan's telecommunications market. This approach contributed positively in supporting consumer trust regarding promises made by the firm.

TSPs with low level of Marketing Orientation (MO)

On the other hand, MNO-O which was classified as a low marketing-orientation operator manages customer expectations based on customers' perceptions of the firm's partnership with the large international group 'France Telecom'. Moreover, MNO-O relies on highlighting firm's extended infrastructure and technological capabilities (figure 6.1, point A).

... MNO-O is the only telecom company in Jordan's market that has a fibre network which covers almost 100% of the populated areas. Thus, we are the only company that has 'Telecommunications Ground Wire' network... the possession of such advanced infrastructure enabled us to differentiate ourselves from competitors.

Mr Moner Kettaneh / MNO-O Strategic Account Manager

Philosophy of marketing orientation argues that, despite the importance of possessing any technical, financial or managerial capability — that may not be available for rivals

— in coping with the tough competition, however, a firm’s ability to harmonise between these capabilities with customers’ real needs is the key issue. The notion has not been given the attention it deserves by MNO-O which shows an inclination towards ensuring and highlighting firm technology capabilities, assuming that the quality of the firm’s offerings sells itself (i.e. product orientation) (figure 6.1, point A).

Figure 6.1 below highlights the prominent variations between high and low marketing-orientation firms with regard to the patterns by which both internal and external dimensions of customer expectations are managed.

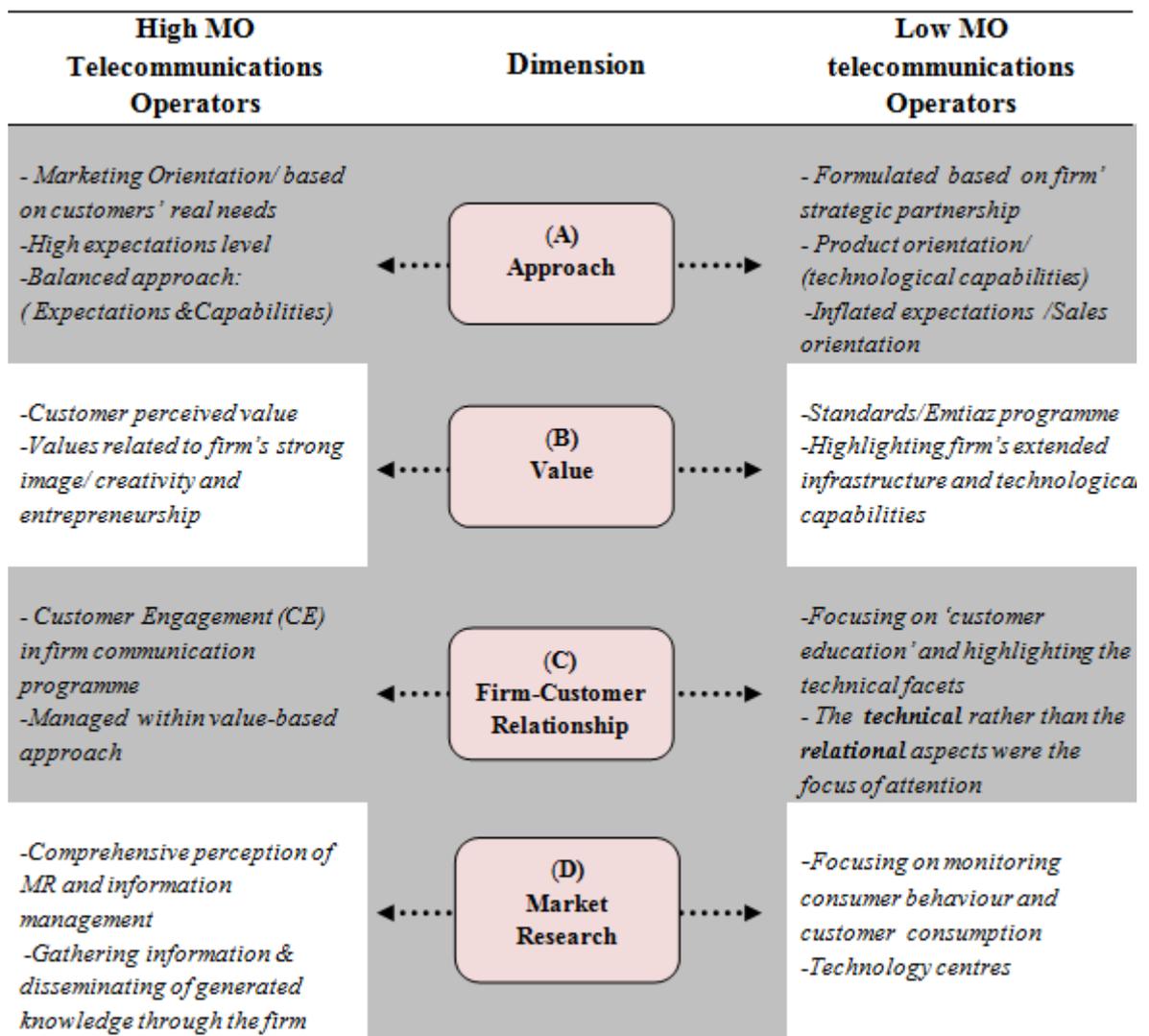


Figure 6.1: Key Variations between High and Low Marketing Orientation TSPs/ Customer Expectations

Source: Ashour (2014)

Marketing in telecommunications includes the challenges of service marketing due to the unique characteristics of services, e.g. intangibility and inseparability (Zeithaml et al., 1985). With regard to individual customers, MNO-O tries to deal with service marketing difficulties through highlighting the physical factors of the firm's facilities and tangible aspects of the complementary products. MNO-O employs elements of physical evidence within its overall communication programme in a way that enhances the customer's trust in what the firm promises to provide (i.e. customer expectations). Moreover, the psychological effect of influential people - e.g. athletes, actors or stars - is preferred by MNO-O as such persons have a positive effect on the individual consumer behaviour in particular.

In contrast, MNO-X (the other low marketing-orientation operator) relies on providing a particular telecommunications service with special specifications targeting specific sectors such as security services agents, maintenance companies, hotels, and airports etc. While other operators use GSM technology, MNO-X adopts iDEN technology to provide push-to-talk (PTT) telecommunications service.

According to MNO-X, PTT is a technology-based service with various benefits and many technical facets that should be focused on and highlighted for the potential and existing customers. Consequently, promotion and customer education aspects related to those technical issues are main ingredients while formulating customer expectations.

Because of the nature, features and specifications of provided services, MNO-X targeted the corporate market, not the individuals. Consequently, in order to manage customer expectations in such a market, MNO-X tried to adopt the most appropriate communication tools which suited the educational aims of the firm's message as well as the nature of the target market. Hence, organising specialised exhibitions or personal visits within a long-term firm-customer relationship view represents appropriate communication channels from the viewpoint of MNO-X. Meanwhile the attention generally was focused on the technical issues of the firm's offerings.

Although MNO-X agreed with other TSPs' considerations about the importance of interpreting consumer behaviour, the way that MNO-X dealt with this perception was insufficient. It is argued that the exaggerated focus on the technical aspects of the new provided services caused the customers' real needs and preferences to be neglected. To

a large extent, MNO-X' attention was mainly directed towards marketing and selling the firm's already produced service (PTT) as a unique telecom service.

Mr Sulaiman from MNO-X concluded his remarks on the firm's approach in managing customer expectations and the resulting shortcomings in the firm's performance in this area:

...we tried competing with the GSM operators, thus we raised our customers' expectations....customers expected to find in our Motorola devices all the existing applications in other competitors' GSM networks.... this was a fatal mistake.... maybe we could not pass on the message properly.

Mr Talal Al Sulaiman/Marketing & Sales Supervisor

Accordingly, regarding customer expectations management, it could be argued that MNO-X sales orientation was obvious as the firm's approach does not regard customer needs as being the firm's priority while managing customer expectations. This finding is consistent with the quantitative data analysis in the previous chapter (*MNO-X was ranked first regarding sales orientation criteria with a mean of 6.35, chapter 5, section 5.3.3*).

Thus, firm's orientation and the associated levels of target sales were translated on the ground into an excessive (inflated) level of customer expectations (*figure 6.1, point A*).

B. Value emerged as a key issue that reflects the variation between high and low marketing orientation firms in managing customer expectations.

It is worth noting that such a finding was expected as literature on marketing orientation suggests that creating superior customer value is a major goal for marketing-oriented firms (Narver & Slater, 1990).

MNO-U — for instance — manages customer promises (expectations) from a customer-perceived value approach (*figure 6.1, point B*). The perception comprises different pillars in which 'value pricing and billing' system represents one prominent underpinning of the firm's value creation strategy. In order to highlight the benefits relevant to this system, MNO-U uses different communication channels enhancing each other's performance, where transparency regarding the firm's message is critical. Thus, MNO-U as a high marketing-oriented operator develops relevant communication programmes based on the economic and psychological perceived values relevant to firm

'Per Second Billing System' where the consumers are confident that they are only required to pay what they have actually consumed.

...our Per Second Pricing approach and related communication programme and activities all aim at supporting the image of the firm and focus on the perceived value of such approach ... consequently, we build our communication and promotion strategy, firm's image and competitive advantage based on the benefits and values of this system.

Mrs Nancy Mahadin/ Pricing & Planning Specialist

Similar to MNO-U who focuses on the value associated with the provided services, MNO-Z's (the other high MO operator) communication system is also based on the perceived values embedded in the firm's different offerings and activities and is managed within a comprehensive perception, as Mrs Al Ameen from MNO-Z explains:

...in practice, our approach at MNO-Z is that... we focus on giving our customer a value through: brand perception, customer service and attention, quality ... we respect customers and offer them a value.

Mrs Nisreen Al Ameen/Marketing Planning Manager

In addition, physical evidence elements were employed by MNO-Z in a way that supports the firm image and its included values. Hence, perceived value remains the central theme around which all other marketing activities revolve.

Mrs Al Ameen also details MNO-Z's perception of the relationship of firm's image, value and customer expectations:

... MNO-Z's corporate house style, colours and facilities all reflect the image, brand name, and the values of the firm. The matter on one hand will enrich customer expectation, and on the other hand support our image. Our brand name indicates that we are a regional group not just a local one... which represents more trust and more benefits by adopting our telecommunications services.

Moreover, MNO-Z was the first operator to introduce mobile telecommunications service in Jordan's market. As noted in previous chapter, there is an obvious consensus that MNO-Z is leading the market in terms of its capabilities in launching new services, its ability to control the market and its considerable market share which constitutes half the total telecommunications market in Jordan.

MNO-Z participants, Mrs Al Ameen and Mr Marwan, summarised the overall image for players' different competitive positions in the market:

MNO-Z is the first mobile telecommunications provider to operate in Jordan. ... We also lead the market in terms of introducing new services.

Mrs Nisreen Al Ameen/Marketing Planning Manager

Unambiguously, we are the market leaders, ... and other operators follow us. MNO-U may be the challenger regarding its sophisticated marketing policies and strategies while other operators are followers.

Mr Abdalnaser Marwan/ Mass Segment Manager –Marketing

Consequently, MNO-Z relies on the values related to the firm's strong image in order to enhance the expectations of customers about the firm's provided services, where creativity and entrepreneurship are binding ingredients of the firm's brand name strategy:

... our marketing programmes, promotional and communication systems depend on the creativity and focus on the brand not on the product like others.

Mr Fadi Masoudi/ MNO-Z -Corporate Sales Manager

Consequently, MNO-Z's approach assumes that to promote and ensure the distinct image of the firm will contribute positively in supporting the firm's efforts in 'setting the promise' (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996) and in reducing customers' perceived risks attributed to the predominant characteristics of the intangible telecommunications services.

On the other hand, telecommunications operators with low levels of marketing orientation approached customer expectations from another perspective. MNO-O for instance manages customer expectations based on two pillars: (i) the firm's strategic partnership with the international telecommunication group 'France Telecom', and (ii) giving more attention to promoting the extended infrastructure and technological capabilities the firm possesses.

As indicated above, strategic alliances and partnerships are common in the telecommunications market. Despite the apparent similarity of the approaches of both

MNO-O and MNO-Z regarding highlighting the regional aspect (MNO-Z is a partner of the regional Group MNO-Z Kuwait) or the international strategic partnership (MNO-O is a partner of the international group France Telecom) in their communications programmes to support customer expectations, a main variation between the two operators remains. While MNO-Z's communication programme is focused on the perceived values of provided services, relationship, or brand name based on the firm's understanding of customer real needs, MNO-O's attention is directed towards highlighting the technical features and the advanced technology relevant to its partnership with France Telecom. In other words, these technical advantages have not been translated into understandable and reliable benefits from the viewpoint of customers when the firm manages customer expectations-related programmes.

Jordan Telecom Group (MNO-O) is the new acquirer of TCC, the national service provider of the traditional telecommunications service in Jordan. Thus, 'strategic accounts', e.g. government ministries and departments, national security and army directorates, constitute an important traditional market for MNO-O. Hence, because of the nature of technical needs and legal requirements of this market, many related marketing difficulties are expected; such as sensitivity to time, the high degree of risk, and the buyer-provider relationship (Goncalves, 1998). In order to overcome the associated marketing obstacles regarding the expected benefits or specifications of the promise being made to this kind of customer, MNO-O relies highly on standards (figure 6.1, point B) regarding the benefits, limitations and performance of offered services. The 'Emtiaz programme' reflects the firm's attention to ensure its commitment regarding different standards; meanwhile the development and adoption of such standards was in line with the international standards of France Telecom, the strategic partner of MNO-O Jordan.

The premise of the 'Emtiaz Programme' is its emphasis on the firm's strict commitment to the different aspects of the promises of the firm, consistent with the adopted standards of MNO-O as Mr Tareefi from MNO-O explained:

....to deliver the firm service with a strict compliance to all standards related to the quality of service... this programme (Emtiaz) is based on the clarity and commitment...

Mr Saeed Tareefi/ Marketing and Communication Manager

Similarly, MNO-X formulates its firm's promise to customers in a way that mainly highlights the various features of its iDEN-based PTT services:

...we try to differentiate from other rivals by providing a different service... 'iDEN technology' is a wireless mobile network technology which enables the provision of wireless mobile calls "push a button" or "push-to-talk" (PTT) telecommunication services... which is fast and enables a high-quality telecommunication service.

Mr Qasem Baseem/ MNO-X Operations Executive

C. Firm-customer relationship: for both MNO-X and MNO-O, firm-customer relationship constitutes an important issue as the corporate, not the individual customers represent their main target market. However, the way in which each firm manages this relationship was quite different from high MO firms (figure 6.1, point C). For example, with regard to MNO-X approach in managing this aspect of customer expectations, the focus of the firm-customer relationship is based on educational and technology awareness aims. Hence, the technical rather than the relational aspects were the focus of attention by MNO-X while managing firm-customer relationship.

On the other hand, MNO-Z and MNO-U managed customer expectations through an advanced view of the firm-customer relationship. According to MNO-U, extending the customer's lifetime will enhance the firm's capability in managing the internal factor of customer expectations (i.e. customer experience) as it allows more customer engagement (CE) in firms' communication programmes (Buttle, 2009; Ryals, 2002). In addition, the extended customer lifetime also represents an external factor that supports customer expectations. The positive recommendations (i.e. word of mouth) of the same customer to their colleagues, friends or family members have a high credibility and an influential effect on the adoption or repurchasing decisions for those groups of potential customers, the notion which was explained by Mr Khader Sawalha/ MNO-U Planning and Loyalty Manager:

...I think the most important issue here is the attention given to the 'customer lifetime'. When you have an effective promotional programme that means your customer is involved for a long period with all the firm's benefits and rewards within this long-term programme; consequently, the role of promotion here is critical as it ensures the perceived benefits by customers for long periods of the customer's life.

With regard to MNO-Z, despite the intensive competition and the increased number of licenced operators in the limited market, the firm managed to maintain its competitive position as a market leader and also enabled efficiently to retain its considerable market share. MNO-Z's approach was also to establish an advanced level of firm-customer relationship represented in the high engagement in firm communication programmes and customer loyalty (figure 6.1, point C). Such a relationship allows more mutual understanding of both parties as the firm could become closer to the customers and therefore be better able to identify their needs, trends and preferences.

Also, this mature relationship enables more support to the performance of customer expectations' most influential tool (i.e. word of mouth - WOM). It also allows more acceptance of and trust in the firm's promise as well as it enables a fast response for any potential shortcomings, which will in turn maintain the credibility of the firm's promise in the long run:

An effective communication system is that programme which can involve the customer for a long period. We adopted this approach to deliver our ideas, benefits, and offers to our customers... it is an effective and balanced system ...that aims to build trust in a way that if a particular customer talks about his experience with our firm....he will affect positively his friends, family...or any other group he belongs to.

Mr Fadi Masoudi/ MNO-Z -Corporate Sales Manager

D. Market research and information management also represents a prominent theme that distinguished high marketing-orientation customer expectations management. Market research is an essential issue for marketing-oriented operators. Literature on marketing orientation suggests that firm capability in creating superior customer value is highly influenced by its performance in managing market information and disseminating of generated knowledge through the firm's relevant departments efficiently (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990).

As a marketing-oriented firm, MNO-U considers highly managing market information (noting that MNO-U was ranked first by a mean of 5.23 regarding this behavioural aspect of MO. Chapter 5, section 5.3.2). Thus, market research and other information management activities are given great attention by MNO-U where its outputs represent the base for its decisions-making processes and also for the formulation of the firm's future reactions in response to a changing environment.

While the low MO operator MNO-X confined market research in monitoring consumer behaviour to a focus on customers' consumption levels, MNO-O gave great attention to market research within the context of the firm's technology centres (figure 6.1, point D). On the other hand, MNO-Z and MNO-U gave more attention to market research within its comprehensive understanding. According to these firms, market research is an essential behavioural issue that should be managed in consistency with the firm's strategic culture where satisfying the customer is priority (Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1997), as Miss Susan Manasrah, MNO-U Senior Market Research Officer stated:

...again, I would like to emphasise the importance of market research. Let me explain that we (I mean market research department) conduct more than 40 studies per year which focus mainly on customer satisfaction. ... the important role of our department here is to address the satisfaction or deficiencies and its factors from the view point of customers. I believe that such efforts highly contribute in ensuring the continuity of positive relationships with our customers and helps in keeping them.

Also, Miss Shawqi from MNO-U added,

The feedback of customers is very important... when developing a new idea, or even when launching new offer we adopt different pre-test market research. For example we may use focus group or we may send a questionnaire to samples of selected consumers... hence, we investigate their opinions to enable improve our services to match their actual needs.

Miss Nermin Shawqi/ MNO-U -Corporate Communications Specialist

6.2.1.1 Marketing Orientation (MO) and 'Customer Expectations Level' Management

The findings of this dimension of research presented 'customer expectations level management' as a prominent issue highlighting the variation between high and low marketing-orientation service providers.

In line with the perspective of the Expectation Disconfirmation Model (EDM), the service provider which intends to achieve customer satisfaction should take into account two facets: (i) determine the targeted level of customer expectations, and (ii) the firm's ability to meet the promise made to the customer (i.e. commitment to this level of expectations). Consequently, this part of the chapter discusses 'customer expectation management' from a theoretical viewpoint taking into account operators' considerations about their expectations of their actual capability of creating value and meeting their promises.

Finding CE2: Marketing orientation was reflected in enhancing firms' capability to raise customer expectations level.

Discussion:

According to Teas (1993), the level of customer expectations can vary widely; meanwhile ideal expectations represent the highest level of expectations that intend to match the customer's desired level of service that they hope to receive (Wilson, 2012).

High marketing orientation operators approached this dimension of customer satisfaction through raising the customer expectations level to be closer to the 'ideal expectations', as these firms' processes and functions are driven by marketing philosophy which intends to deliver the highest level of customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, this high level of expectations was presented by these firms as a promised 'value'.

Thus, the value which is embodied in provided services was a central issue in high marketing-orientation firms' communication programmes, which raised the level of promised value in consistency with their adopted approach of customer expectations. This technique was managed by high marketing-orientation firms assuming that customer satisfaction is the sum of the firm's overall performance of value creation functions, and that the firm would be able to meet this high level of performance by maximising its overall value creation capability at the internal and external levels.

At the internal level, marketing-oriented firms were more able to leverage their value creation capability as creating superior customer value is a major goal for marketing-oriented firms (Narver & Slater, 1990).

These firms were able to integrate, coordinate and renew their internal resources in a way that enhanced the firms' overall value. Meanwhile, marketing orientation of these firms worked as a supportive setting to stimulate internal resources and capabilities to become more dynamic (Day, 2011).

At the external level, high marketing-orientation firms were able to enhance their value creation capabilities depending on the adoption of external coordination and partnership approaches with other external actors in the market [i.e. value network model - Lusch et al., 2010; Peppard & Rylander, 2006]. According to this perception, all marketing and operational activities are managed in coordination with other external parties such as content creators, internet service providers (ISPs), media consulting agents or mobile

device manufacturers. The process was managed in a way that maximised the overall value perceived by the end customer through enhancing the firm's overall value creation capability.

Furthermore, the focus of high marketing-orientation firms was directed toward meeting customer needs and wants. Thus, customer expectations were designed to match or to surpass this level. This was the criterion that controlled customer expectations management for these firms. Accordingly, value creation capability for high marketing-orientation operators was managed in a way to be guided basically by customer orientation not the firm's technological capabilities.

To summarise, the value creation approach adopted by high marketing-orientation operators was reflected in raising the 'expected value creation capability' by these firms. Accordingly, this allowed them to also 'raise the level of customer expectations' as these firms postulate that they will be able to reach this level of expectations as shown in figure 6.2.

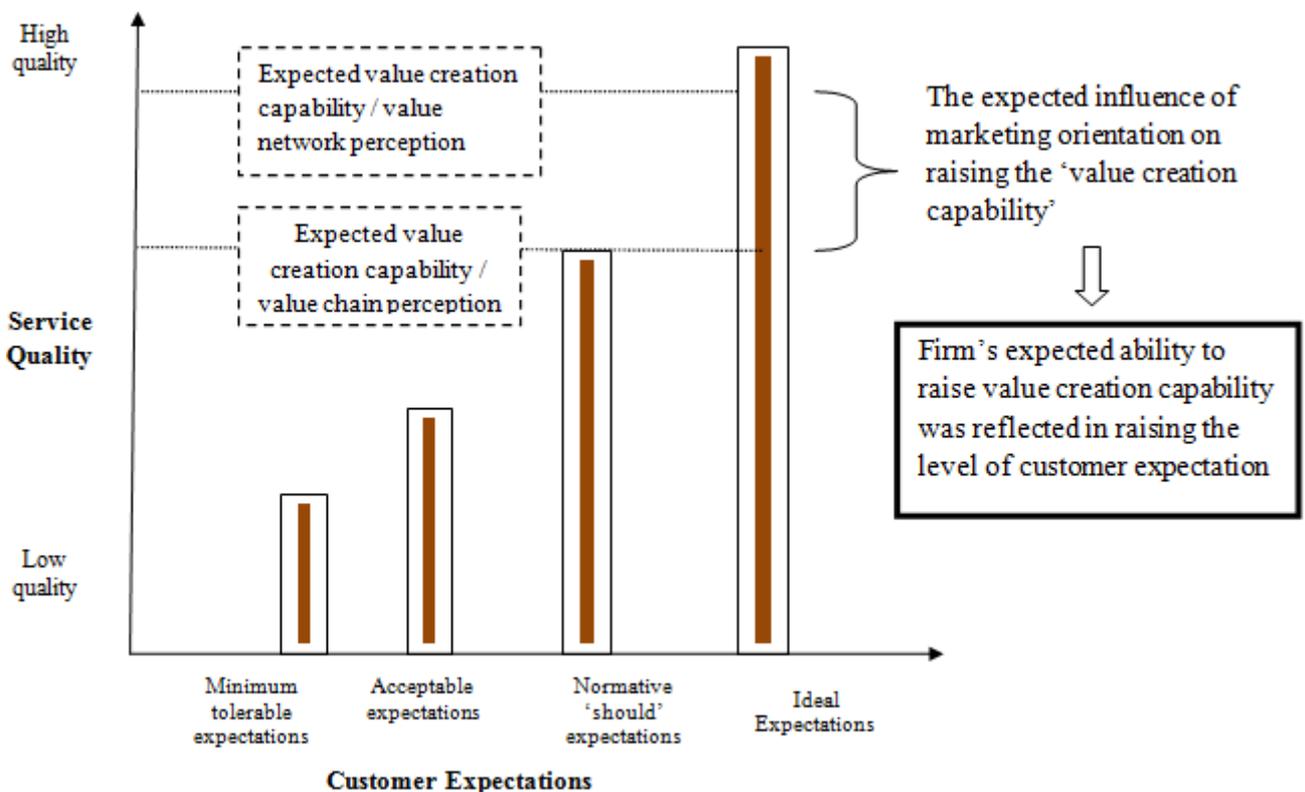


Figure 6.2: The Influence of Marketing Orientation on Customer Expectations Level

Source: Ashour (2014)

On the other hand, the low marketing-orientation operator, MNO-O focused on promoting the value relevant to the technical features and superiority of provided services. Thus, the firm developed customer expectations based on its possessed technological capabilities. Consequently, the firm's promises were formulated according to its perceptions of its internal technological and managerial capabilities (e.g. firm's infrastructure and technology, availability and physical evidence elements, standards of quality and international aspects of brand name among others).

Moreover, both low marketing-orientation firms showed less tendency towards expanding their value creation networks and partnerships with other parties within the market. Thus, the firms' ability to raise the level of made promises (customer expectations) was restricted. For example, MNO-O, which developed its firm's image based on the strategic partnership with France Telecom, managed communications relevant to customer expectations depending on normative expectations perception (Teas, 1993) in which the customer will postulate that: *as high as the quality standards of France Telecom are, its strategic partner MNO-O Jordan ought to provide services at distinct level of quality.*

Although normative expectations is considered within the customer's zone of tolerance (Wilson, 2012), the main weakness associated with this approach is ignoring the real needs and desired level of quality by the customer as the expectations level was developed depending on the firm's adopted norms. In addition, the normative expectations level remains less than the ideal expectations (Teas, 1993), which represents the highest level and expresses the desired services that customers need.

It is worth noting that MNO-X' high expectations level (inflated) was unreal as it is driven by sales aims not the firm's actual capability in creating value. Meanwhile the actual value-creating capability of MNO-X was restricted by the firm's traditional perception in this regard (value chain view). Thus, MNO-X' main shortcoming was related to the firm ignoring its ability to meet the made promise (level of expectations).

6.2.2 The Influence of Marketing Orientation (MO) on the Cognitive Aspects of Customer Satisfaction

MO Influence on \longrightarrow *the way by which of Cognitive Aspects of CS is managed [the second dimension of CS]*

Marketing literature defined customer satisfaction (CS) as a state of mind that results from a ‘comparison’ between customer expectation and perceived benefits (Bateson, 1991). Thus, customer satisfaction reflects a judgement for different cognitive and affective aspects (Gallarza et al., 2011) constituting the state of satisfaction/dissatisfaction feeling. Particularly, this section discusses the second main dimension of customer satisfaction i.e. the cognitive aspects.

A. Findings Relevant to the Cognitive Aspects of Perceived Performance/

Quality of What/Product (Finding Cog. 1)

Discussion

Kurts and Clow (1998) highlighted the technical (*what*) and the functional dimensions (*how*) as two variables constituting customer judgment with regard to the quality of service.

Specifically, the focus of the evaluation process in this sub-section is directed at *what* is being provided as the main ingredient of customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, findings of this section showed an obvious consistency with the results of previous section (marketing orientation and customer expectations) regarding the notion that the adoption of different levels of marketing orientation is reflected in variations of the patterns that customer satisfaction dimensions (expectations and cognitive dimension) are being managed according to.

The quality of core service and the performance of provided basic service seem to be common themes that all telecommunications operators agreed on its importance in evaluating the state of satisfaction/dissatisfaction (figure 6.3, point A). From the viewpoint of the consumer, the performance of core product aspects such as the clarity of voice and non-interruption during a phone call or network coverage issues represent strict standards for the quality of telecommunication service. Thus, the underflow of this minimum level will terminate any potential satisfaction regarding the output of customer comparison possess between expectations and performance. Hence, firm’s

ability to achieve this level of quality is viewed as a basic (but not critical) capability (Long & Vickers-Koch, 1995) that does not include any source of differentiation. Such capability is basic one which is necessary to practice and to operate in the market, and it is expected to be possessed by all competitors. In addition, similar to other operators in the market, dependability, reliability and stability of performance of the provided services are important issues of service quality from the viewpoint of MNO-Z, as such standards represent basic determinants of customer evaluation of core service quality (Figure 6.3, point A).

Figure 6.3 below illustrates the prominent variations between high and low marketing-orientation firms with regard to the patterns by which quality of provided service is managed.

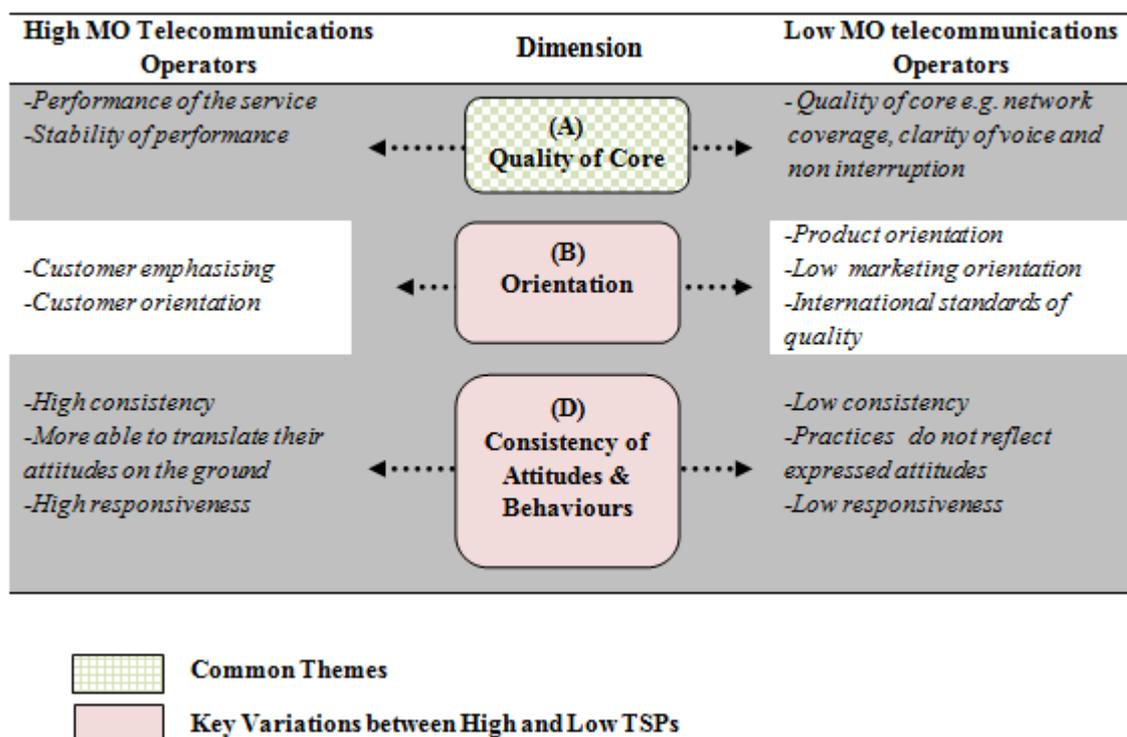


Figure 6.3: Key Variations between High and Low Marketing-Oriented TSPs - Customer Satisfaction/ Quality of What

Source: Ashour (2014)

Despite firms' agreement on the importance of the performance of core service however, an important aspects differentiated high MO firms' quality management from other low MO operators. For instance, the adopted vision by the high MO operator MNO-Z postulates that the features and specifications of the provided service should

essentially be managed based on identifying customer needs. The idea seems to be consistent with the main proposition of marketing literature which views ‘customer emphasising’ as one of the four different facets of marketing orientation (Zebal & Goodwin, 2011).

Consequently, the firm approached service quality aspects from the *customer orientation* view (figure 6.3, point B) as highlighted by Mrs Al Ameen from MNO-Z:

...we look at identifying our customer needs... and satisfying them as the firm's main mission that enables to lead the market. Thus it is the Key factor in such an industry... we measure satisfaction ... where quality of service is the essential factor.

Mrs Nisreen Al Ameen/ MNO-Z Marketing Planning Manager

According to the other high marketing-orientation operator (MNO-U), in general, Jordan's telecommunications market is a pre-paid one where youth constitute more than 50% of the population in Jordan (Department of Statistics-Jordan, 2012). Thus, the firm has established its market share targeting mainly youth customers as a considerable and promising telecommunications market. Similar to MNO-Z, MNO-U follows a customer emphasising orientation (Figure 6.3, point B) in managing product development and dealing with service quality policies. MNO-U seeks to determine, then to fulfil its targeted market needs efficiently. Consequently, creativity and innovation, empathy, and pleasure are important criteria suiting the requirements of the youth (i.e. firm's target market).

It is important to notice the relationship between firm's adopted level of marketing orientation and the way in which the customer mix (i.e. the served market) is managed. Consequently, the above features of service quality were identified according to the firm's understanding of the nature of its market, its needs and the expected level of expectations (i.e. customer orientation) based on the firm periodically undertaking market research.

On the other hand, for low marketing-orientation operators, MNO-O participants' answers emphasised firm attention to the applied international standards of quality based on firm strategic partnership. Also, additional different key factors were pointed out by MNO-O, e.g. product development, integrated solutions, diversity, and responsiveness; however, performance of core service and reliability were still common themes highlighted by all operators in the market (Figure 6.3, point A).

It is crucial to point out that, particularly for low marketing-orientation operators, data analysis showed a sort of inconsistency among the attitudinal and behavioural aspects of marketing orientation for these operators. Responsiveness for instance, is a prominent behavioural capability for the marketing-oriented firm (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). Although MNO-O participants' answers indicated responding to customer needs and changing environment as important factors in managing service quality at the aim of achieving customer satisfaction, it is however striking that data analysis showed an obvious discrepancy between both of MNO-O's attitude and practice behaviour in this regard.

Despite the firm's expressed consideration of responsiveness importance, data analysis shows an inefficient performance in managing the requirements of responsiveness; i.e. information generation and information coordination. Regarding to both criteria MNO-O was ranked last (*according to the 'information generation' variable the firm ranked last with a means of 2.31 and also ranked last for information coordination with a mean of 3.03 (chapter five, section 5.3.3).*

In other words, despite the apparent attention given to considering the identification and responding to customer's needs but MNO-O's behaviour on the ground was not consistent with such attitudes and the firm's behaviour did not reflect its expressed vision (figure 6.3, point C). Along the same line of argument, Mrs Mahadin presents a comparison between two operators, MNO-U and MNO-O, with regard to responsiveness capability:

When MNO-Z revealed its competitive offer "MNO-Z 5" targeting low spending segments, then, as a challenger in the market...just within two days we revealed our competitive offer, the "Impossible10" which was consistent with our values and strategy: youth, fun and futuristic.

While MNO-U required just a few days to have an action responding to "MNO-Z 5" offer, on the other hand:

MNO-O needed 9 months to react and to offer their new, same service.

Mrs Nancy Mahadin/ MNO-U Pricing & Planning Specialist

On the other hand, MNO-X presents the push-to-talk (PTT) telecommunications service as a unique, fast and high-quality service. Thus, the firm assumes that the quality of the

core service that relies on the advanced, new technology is a key issue and the technical feature of such products sell itself (i.e. product orientation) (figure 6.3, point B). Also, MNO-X participants indicated both the focused market and responsiveness to this market as key factors in managing customer perception of quality with the aim of achieving customer satisfaction. However, MNO-X showed inefficient performance in responding to available generated data or to market adaptation requirements (*as MNO-X was ranked fourth according to this dimension of marketing orientation with a mean of 4.83, chapter 5, section 5.3.3*). Thus, similar to MNO-O, MNO-X showed inconsistency regarding firm's attitudes and behaviours.

Many facets of the firm's service quality were restricted by the limitations of firm-adopted iDEN technology and its exclusive compatible handset, 'Motorola'. Although MNO-X was able to identify what customer needs, the firm's action initiation and response to market needs was insufficient, as its focus remains on promoting its new iDEN technology as the firm's main quality underpinning:

...actually we have faced difficulties related to the Jordanian mentality. The customer prefers his mobile device to be "funny", and to include many extra services such as video, camera, ring tunes, etc... but because of the nature of the used iDEN technology which required specific mobile devices to suit this technology, thus the diversity of provided services were restricted.

Mr Qasem Baseem/ MNO-X Operations Executive

It is argued that MNO-X' shortcoming in fulfilling customer needs is a reflection of the firm's low marketing orientation as an obvious tendency was directed towards concentrating on the technical features of what the firm possesses and what it produces (i.e. product orientation) rather than what the customer needs (Figure 6.3, point B).

B. Findings Relevant to the Cognitive Aspects of Perceived Performance/ Quality of what/Technology (Finding Cog.2)

Discussion

The central proposition of the resource-based view (RBV) stresses that the basis of creating a sustainable competitive advantage is drawn from the firm's distinct capabilities that comprise a bundle of valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable resources (VRIN) (Barney, 1991). Meanwhile, to which extent the possession of

telecommunications technology represents VRIN resources for achieving the superiority may need more evaluation.

The telecommunications market is characterised by the accelerated evolving technology it is based on. Deregulation, open market policies and the common international alliances within telecommunications markets eased the transfer of technology (TOT), facilitated the exchange of experiences and enhanced telecommunications service providers' capabilities in managing technology. Thus, in today's fully liberalised markets where telecom technology is transferred smoothly across boundaries, technology is available for all players and TSPs are facing more difficulties in differentiating themselves based on the possession of technology. In this connection, the key issue here is 'how to manage technology' not just to get to it, the notion which emerged as a prominent theme advocated by the high marketing-orientation operators particularly as a key factor in this regard.

In order to attain more insight into the effect of MO on the ways TSPs manage technology-related capabilities, evaluation was accomplished at two different levels: strategic and tactical.

At the strategic level

In telecommunications, technology is a binding ingredient of the product development process. According to the results of data analysis, a firm's capability to keep up with new technology seems to be a common theme for the different TSPs in Jordan telecommunications market (figure 6.4, point A).

In general, whether high or low marketing-orientation operators, technology and development were given great attention, as 'telecommunications' basically is a techno-based service market. For instance, MNO-O highly considers technology and development capability and is keen to support the firm's technology centres through its strategic partnership with 'France Telecom'. Meanwhile, managing telecommunications technology within a strategic long-run perception (i.e. technology settlement) is an essential mission for these centres:

We invest in and benefit from our international relationship with France Telecom... the 'Technology Centre' was developed in collaboration with France Telecom which is responsible for the investigation of new telecom technology.

Mr Malik Maqboul/ MNO-O Product Leader Enterprise

In addition,

...as MNO-O Jordan is part of the international group France Telecom therefore, we benefit from France Telecom support through the “techno centre” which aims at utilising and settling communications technology in Jordan.

Mr Basheer Al Khaire/ MNO-O International Carrier Services and Sales Director
Wholesale

In the same line of argument, MNO-Z and MNO-X consider technology settlement as a strategic aim; thus both firms will continue supporting investment in technology in the long run as Mr Masoudi from MNO-Z argued

...we have an orientation towards the “LTE”. It is a long term evolution of technology which represents the latest technology in the field of telecommunications as well as it is characterised by its highest speed and quality.

Mr Fadi Masoudi/ MNO-Z Corporate Sales Manager

Moreover,

...achieving differentiation depending on technology-based quality is possible and justified. It requires a comprehensive and advanced technology and more investments.

Mr Talal Al Sulaiman/ MNO-X Marketing & Sales Supervisor

To conclude, at the strategic level data analysis did not show a critical variation between high and low marketing-orientation TSPs in managing the technology aspect of provided services (figure 6.4, point B).

At the tactical level

Contrary to results at the strategic level, findings showed a remarkable variation between high and low marketing-orientation operators in managing technology in the short run.

Figure 6.4 below illustrates the common themes and variations between high and low marketing-orientation firms with regard to the patterns by which technology aspects are managed.

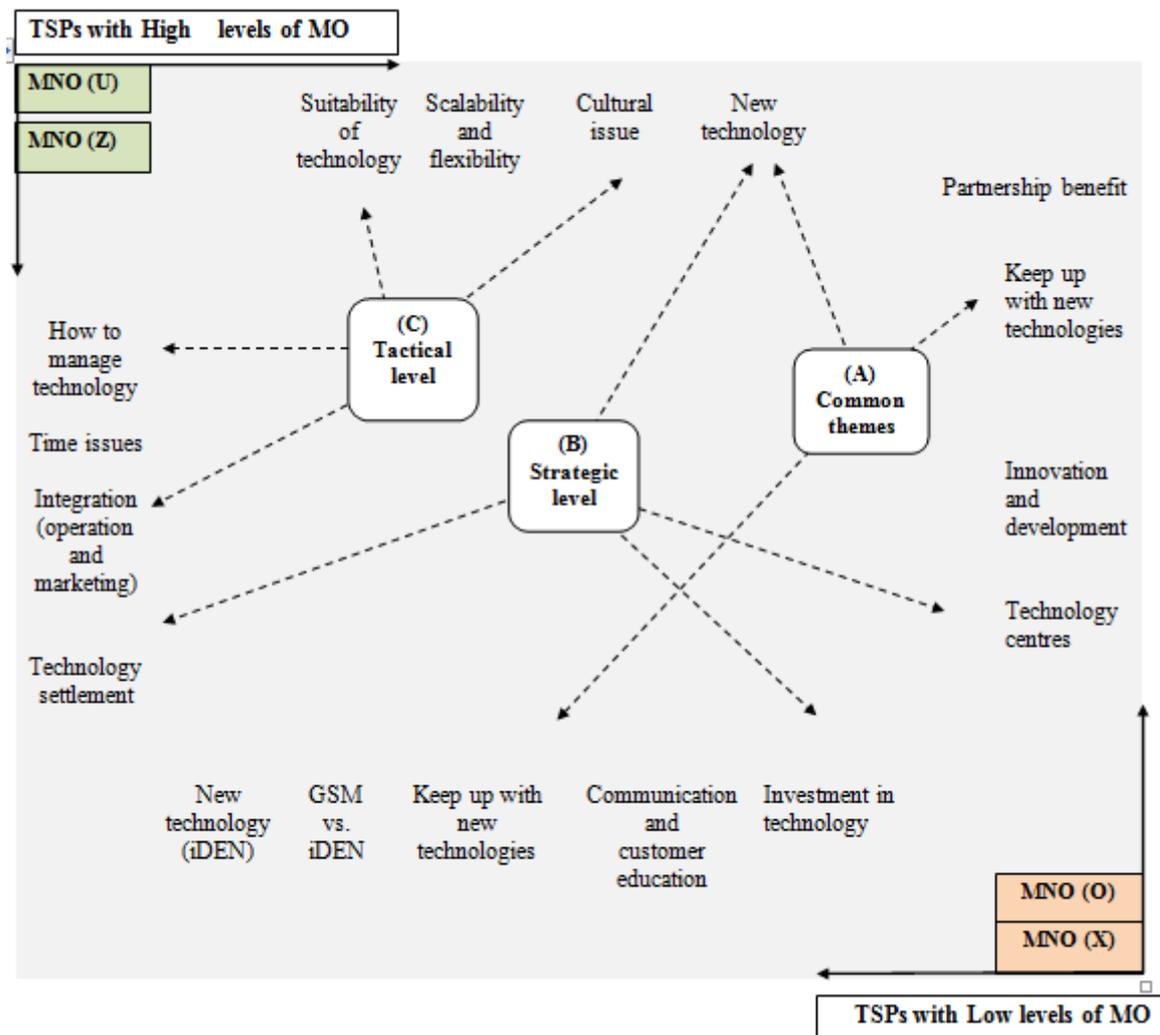


Figure 6.4: Variations between High and Low MO Operators –Technology

Source: Ashour (2014)

MNO-U, the high MO firm argues that the suitability of technology for a particular market, its needs and its cultural determinants are key factors in ensuring perceived quality by customers. Thus, the way by which the firm manages technology (figure 6.4, point C) in the short run represented in the firm's ability to match between technology features, customer needs and desires, and surrounding environmental factors has an influential effect on customers' evaluation of perceived quality as MNO-U participants explained:

The way in which 'tech-based services' is introduced and offered is the key point. The most important issue in this industry is not only to acquire the new technology, but be able to provide something to suit your customer's needs.

Mrs Reem Sabbagh/ Communications Manager

In addition,

... the suitability of this technology to Jordan's market is what we should be careful about. There are many determinants; cultural, financial and legislative barriers - all may restrict the use of the new technology in addition to its suitability to the needs of the largest segments in the market.

Mrs Nancy Mahadin / Pricing & Planning Specialist

The view of the other high MO operator, MNO-Z is consistent with MNO-U's perception regarding the notion of 'how to manage technology' as Mr Fadi Masoudi/ MNO-Z argued:

Managing technology represents the key to success in this industry.

In line with service marketing literature, TSPs utilise their extended service marketing mix elements to achieve the desired performance (Nath et al., 2010). Linking between the firm's input (resources) and output (business performance) is accomplished collectively by functional capabilities; marketing and operations.

Along the same line of argument, relevant literature highlighted the interactions of technology-related capabilities and marketing-related capabilities. According to Dutta et al. (1999), marketing-technology interaction is likely to occur in such a high technology-based market. Hence, a challenge remains relating to how telecommunications operators manage this interaction.

By the same token, MNO-Z emphasises "how to utilise technology" and the coordination of both of marketing and technology capabilities as a focal point (figure 6.4, point C) here where the timing issue is viewed as an important marketing-technology coordination capability at the tactical level:

...there are many aspects should be taken into account in this area: timing issues, ... achieving success here depends on how we manage the marketing mix ...we should not offer the service when there is no need ... in the marketplace or when customers are not educated yet about these new services. We had many experiences in this regard. For example the "super number service" that we launched a few years ago.

Mrs Nisreen Al Ameen/ MNO-Z

The above notion accords with Song et al. (2005) who found that the firm's capability in integration and coordination between its marketing and technological capabilities efficiently would be reflected positively in its organisational performance.

To summarise, regarding high MO operators, to achieve the highest level of customer satisfaction which is accomplished through matching between firm's capabilities and customers' needs represents the main philosophy that is controlling technology management, as expressed by Mr Fadi Masoudi of MNO-Z:

... but how to manage this technology the harness of this technology in a way to serve customers.... the real challenge is not to acquire technology but it is related to how to use it and how to harmonise between technology and your customers' needs.

On the other hand, an opposing view was adopted by MNO-X. The firm is based on its capability of introducing and keeping up with new technology as an influential and main factor in managing quality of service. Moreover, in order to manage customer perception of provided services at the tactical level, MNO-X relies on its communication and promotion system aiming at raising customer awareness and stimulating demand regarding what the firm already produces of the iDEN-based telecommunication services.

C. Findings Relevant to the Cognitive Aspects of Perceived Performance/ Quality of how/Employees (Finding Cog. 3)

Discussion:

A service in essence is a performance (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991). Consequently, the performance of a firm's employees has a crucial and direct impact on how service is perceived by customer. Particularly in telecommunications which includes difficulties of service marketing and the specifications of tech-based products, employees role is crucial.

Different findings were achieved regarding the effect of marketing orientation on TSPs' ways in managing employees' related capabilities. Firms - whether high or low marketing-orientation - agreed that employee selection criteria and training programmes are essential variables in managing employees' related strategies in the telecommunications market. Thus, the high standards of employee selection criteria and

the professional and well-planned training programmes, whether being held at the local or at the external international level, are viewed as basic capabilities that should be taken into account by any service provider in the market.

This finding is in agreement with the basic assumptions of marketing of service (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991) and 'tech-based service marketing' which highlight the role of the employee in overcoming the challenges associated with marketing in such markets (Davis & Brush, 1997). Moreover, data analysis showed consensus between the different operators in that, because of the nature of telecommunications (e.g. its inclusive marketing challenges, technical specifications, and high competition), a firm's employees should be managed from the strategic view. In other words, all TSPs view employees as a strategic source which deserves to be positioned at the heart of the firm's long-term strategic planning.

Despite the agreement in their attitudes however, a behavioural variation between high and low marketing-orientation TSPs regarding the translation of this understanding on the ground could be seen. For example, MNO-U and MNO-Z give considerable attention to the firm-employee relationship which constitutes the cornerstone of both firms' employee strategy. MNO-Z established a unique internal communication system based on deploying the values of 'esprit de corps' and entrepreneurship. Similarly, MNO-U focuses on the firm's internal culture as a key success factor that all staff members from all different managerial levels and departments share the same values, i.e. the 'spirit of challenge and creativity', the process which is accomplished within the long-term view.

...we ensure the 'esprit de corps', thus, we highly consider the role of internal organisational culture...we promote that 'we are Super Hero'... Thus, we focus on 'we lead the change'. Accordingly, we have launched an internal campaign that was called "Super U" which means 'you are super with what you can do at MNO-U'. Each person at MNO-U is seen as a salesman representing the company.

Miss Nermin Shawqi / MNO-U Corporate Communications Specialist

Mr Abdalnaser Marwan from MNO-Z added,

...and they accomplish their jobs, within the internal organisational culture focusing on cooperation and coordination.

In detail, marketing-oriented firms view the internal culture as the ‘glue’ that enables sharing the firm’s values efficiently (Day, 1994). According to Zaithaml and Bitner’s services marketing triangle (1996) model, the way by which a firm manages internal marketing (i.e. management-employee relationship) represents a main determinant of its capability in ‘enabling its promise’. Accordingly, MNO-U’s strategic view of the employee was reflected in the attention paid to the internal satisfaction and employee retention programmes.

Hence, the same approach that is adopted by the high MO firms in managing the firms’ relationships with external customers is also used in managing the firm-employee relationship. In detail, the sustainable value-driven relationship view represents a key success factor for high MO firms in managing both, the internal and the external customer.

...also, MNO-U employee is an important determinant for the firm’s customer retention; hence, satisfying and retaining them comes first as it is an important base for our loyalty programmes.

Mr Khader Sawalha/ MNO-U

Likewise, Mr Abdunaser Marwan details MNO-Z’s strategic view of employees and the attention given to the satisfaction and retention of the firm’s internal customers:

...it is priority. Staff should have a comfortable work conditions, so that they could achieve creativity which is important in this industry. Our employees have crucial roles; they represent the firm’s experience and capital. Consequently, they deserve considerable efforts aiming at keeping them... dropping out or defection of employees is viewed as a leaking of the firm’s accumulated experiences that have been gained during many years. It is difficult to be compensated.

According to Gronroos (1985), in services, relational aspects such as personnel contact for instance, represent influential factors affecting customer perception of satisfaction. In practice, MNO-Z prepares its employee to be presented as a firm’s ambassador who should be able to reflect the firm’s values and to support the distinct image of the firm too.

Consistent with previous findings regarding MNO-Z’s approach in managing the value associated with a firm’s strong image in ensuring customer expectations, MNO-Z also gives considerable attention to maintaining this strong image through raising the

awareness of 'its ambassadors' (i.e. firm's employees) of all related activities. Hence, in agreement with the recommendations of Lee et al. (2001) MNO-Z employees were trained to be able to deliver the needed information to customer where (i) staff knowledge of relevant matters and (ii) clarity of information provided by staff comprise two important variables of customer satisfaction measurement in telecommunications.

We look at our employees as the company's ambassadors. The firm's HR department seeks to give all new employees a comprehensive understanding about the firm's different activities, its divisions and its goals. MNO-Z's formal internal messages system "SMS" including internal communication system enables all to know each new service.

Mr Fadi Masoudi/ MNO-Z

In practice, employee productivity is a direct consequence of a firm's coherent internal culture and the efficient internal marketing programmes. From the viewpoint of MNO-U, employee productivity represents a rare and hard-to-copy source of differentiation in the stiff competitive market. As employee productivity is an intended outcome of firm employees' satisfaction and retention programmes, at the same time it is viewed as a unique source (input) and main underpinning in firm competitive strategy.

We do invest in people; an efficient wages and salaries system, an efficient employees' retention programme, and the well-planned training programmes. Our employees' competitive advantage depends on focussing on the quality not the quantity. Compared to other competitors the number MNO-U employees is the least, but within a complementary work team where the majority are young with the spirit of youth consistent with the firm's vision... productivity and efficiency of MNO-U employees is the highest when compared to other competitors.

Mrs Nancy Mahadin / MNO-U

From the above, it can be inferred that the validation of MNO-U's notion that considers 'employee productivity' as a valuable and hard to be copied advantage was confirmed on the ground as it enabled the firm to differentiate itself. At the strategic level, it supports the firm's overall image relevant to the 'high-value low-cost' perception of MNO-U's services. Also, at the tactical level, productivity reflects the firm's ability to control and reduce its costs; hence it allows greater manoeuvrability in pricing policies in the short run.

It is argued that MNO-X was not able to translate its attitude regarding the firm's 'strategic view of the employee' into sophisticated executable programmes. In practice, despite the firm's attitudinal perception regarding the importance of the developing of its functional skills (marketing and technical) through the local or external training courses, MNO-X main attention was directed towards expanding its organisational structure (number of employees). By the same token, there was an absence of a long-term view for employee development, training and maintaining programmes. Instead, "you can 'steal' an experienced" staff from other companies" was an adopted solution, Mr Talal Al Sulaiman from MNO-X suggested. The firm's unsatisfactory performance regarding productivity is also diagnosed explicitly by Mr Al Sulaiman:

Actually, we were competing with other operators based on our organisational structure. We had a large number of employees in all departments and sections; engineering and technical, marketing, sales, and finance. MNO-X structure was huge compared to its niche market. The number of MNO-X employees exceeded the number of other companies' employees combined.

Furthermore, coordination is a prominent theme characterising high MO operators in managing employee related capabilities. In literature, coordination was discussed from two different dominate viewpoints; marketing and strategy. From the strategic viewpoint, the dynamic capability view (DCV) postulates that the integration and coordination of the firm's different capabilities will enhance its ability to achieve and maintain its intended performance (Wang & Ahmed, 2007). The other viewpoint is represented in marketing orientation literature. The 'interfunctional coordination' of marketing activities represents a common component that all different perspectives of marketing orientation include to some extent (Lafferty & Hult, 2001). Regarding the decision-making perspective of marketing orientation, in marketing-oriented firms all "strategic and tactical decisions are made interfunctionally and interdivisionally" (Shapiro, 1988, p. 121). In both MNO-Z and MNO-U, the strategic application of integration and also the marketing application of coordination of the firms' different resources and capabilities are accomplished in line with the assumptions of the above two theories.

In high MO firms, generated information is disseminated efficiently through the different relevant divisions and departments (behavioural marketing orientation application). Also, coordination (i.e. strategic application in line with DCV) is the applied rule in managing marketing and operation activities.

I can argue that marketers are opened minded, while technicians prefer to work on the ground and generally they are pragmatic. In my opinion, the important issue here is the integration and the mergence between both of them. Integration is the way to success.

Mr Fadi Masoudi / MNO-Z

Accordingly, both firms - MNO-U and MNO-Z - manage their employee-related capabilities taking into account the integration of marketing-related resources (e.g. market research, training, communication, satisfaction and retention programmes) and technology-related capabilities (e.g. technology centres, technical support, tech-based delivery systems) in a way that enhances the perceived value by the end customer.

D. Findings Relevant to the Cognitive Aspects of Perceived Performance/ Quality of how/Processes & Distribution (Finding Cog. 4)

Discussion

While processes are the actual procedures, mechanisms and flow of activities by which services are delivered (Zeithmal & Bitner, 1996), distribution represents the “availability and accessibility of services to consumers” (Kurtz & Clow, 1998, p.21). In general, telecommunications operators consider the effect of the high provider-customer interaction on customer evaluation of perceived satisfaction. Hence, the customer journey was indicated by the majority of telecommunications operators as a ‘key factor process’ capability. Firms depend on analysing the steps of the adopted customer journey as well as evaluating all potential firm-customer touch points to enable them to diagnose any potential deficiencies.

Whether in services or industrial organisations, the key performance indicator (KPI) represents a common performance analysis technique for managers to define, measure, monitor and track their firm’s performance over time based on selected analysis factors. According to Pollock (2007), KPIs vary between services companies and industries, depending on their priorities or performance criteria. In service organisations, time criteria-related indicators, e.g. ‘Average Time to Respond’ (ATR) or ‘Mean Time to Repair’ (MTTR), represent common standards in evaluating service providers’ performance and the adopted functional steps and procedures.

In line with the above argument, time criteria represent a basic capability that seems to be considered as an important variable in firms' KPI assessments by all operators in the market. However, high MO operators have additional implementations on the ground consistent with the achievement of intended time standard. For instance, decentralisation and devolution of power at all firm-customer touch points that include a potential need for instant decisions are an essential requirement capability from the view of MNO-Z to enable the firm to achieve a satisfactory performance regarding this KPI.

It is worth noting that this interpretation is in accord with marketing orientation literature that postulates the positive association between adopted level of marketing orientation and the firm's ability in managing action initiation- (responsiveness) related capability efficiently (Zebal & Goodwin, 2011).

In line with the logic of triangulation (i.e. the research adopted methodological strategy) the above findings were supported by the researcher observations in the fieldwork during data collection phase through the frequent visits carried out during the periods from March to April 2010 and January to March 2013.

In this evaluation, attention was focused on firm' adopted procedures regarding customer journey map. Participants observations showed different issues that differentiated the high marketing orientation operators from others firms. Time criteria (time efficiency) emerged as main aspect that characterised the processes of the high MO firms. Also, each of the number of procedures needed by customer starting from ordering or asking for a specific service to the time of receiving it, the number of employees, the number of procedures, and the number of different sections that the customer needs to deal with in order to receive the service were relatively less in high MO firms in comparison to other firms.

Furthermore, in telecommunications, the role of different members of distribution channels and firms' agents is critical in terms of their potential influence on the formulation of customer's perceived satisfaction. Although each agent is often constitute a part of the distribution channels for different telecommunication operators in the marketplace at the same time however, from the point view of customer, this agent is a representative of the operator particularly that produced the service adopted by this customer. Thus, an agent's performance highly affects — positively or negatively — the operator's 'firm image' as well as customers' overall satisfaction.

From more comprehensive perspective, distributors, dealers and sub-agents undertake the essential distributing role along with several other parties involved in the process of providing and delivering telecommunications services in the market. Despite the attention given to the role of agents and sub-agents by the different TSPs, firms vary in the way they manage value creation through the different actors in the market place according to the approach they adopt: value chain or value network.

Value Chain vs. Value Network

In the era of the communications and information technology revolution, telecommunications services have become ubiquitous, in developed and developing countries alike. Meanwhile, the mobile phone is not merely a functional piece of technology that can make and receive mobile telephone calls. For many, it is a fashion item and an abiding ingredient of today's life style. In addition to its broadly interactive communications applications, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Blogs etc, the mobile phone "has become an indispensable device for managing emails to contacts to diaries. It also provides the access capability for many different types of content and services, such as financial transactions, entertainment, and gambling" (Peppard & Rylander, 2006, p.4).

The distinguished level of the quality of provided services and the diversity of complementary offerings that telecommunications market witnessed were accompanied by the increase of the parties involved in providing these advanced services. Content services for instance (e.g. entertainment, news, sport, interactive communication platforms, and gambling, etc) are likely to be provided by a large number of third-party organisations. Meanwhile, overall value perceived by the end customer is a reflection of the sum of values generated in different functional areas by different actors.

Both supply chain management (SCM) and marketing in general have been moving from models and purposes narrowly focused on goods to more general models associated with partnerships and value networks (Lusch et al., 2010).

According to Akehurst (2008, p.7) the increased networking and linkages between businesses, between suppliers and across sectors are main themes of today's new global business environment.

Findings of this section were interesting in that it indicated — again — the inconsistency of ‘strategic attitudes’ and ‘operational behaviours’ for low marketing-orientation operators regarding the adoption and execution of a particular value creation model. An example of such a situation is MNO-X’ paradox relevant to the firm’s attitude that supports the adoption of the value network approach and its contradictory implementations on the ground.

It is arguable that there is a general agreement among TSPs that the traditional perception of value chain is invalid in today’s high mutual-relationship market. However, an in-depth review of TSPs’ processes management implementations shows a variation between high and low marketing-orientation operators in this regard. Such disparity between firms could be viewed within three prominent aspects: (i) the collaborative nature of the value network approach, (ii) actors’ (parties’) expected benefits, and (iii) mutual relationship between different actors and the dominant role of mobile network operators (MNOs) in the value network.

(i) The collaborative nature of value network approach

Regarding the high MO operators, the value network represents a powerful collective approach for managing the efforts of various actors to convert their tangible and intangible assets into deliverables accompanied with perceived value by the end customer. Consequently, various parties have different contributions in delivering the total offering and its related values to customer, e.g. mobile network operator (MNO), virtual mobile operator (VMNO), content/service creator (such as sport, entertainment, news, and weather etc), internet service provider (ISP), media consulting agent, market research consulting agent, and mobile device manufacturer (such as Nokia, Apple, Black Berry etc), in addition to distribution channels’ members and related supporting services’ agents (e.g. Aramex, DHL, FedEx). It was inferred that the collective nature of the value network represents a preferable approach for high MO operator as highlighted by Miss Susan Manasrah of MNO-U:

...achieving a high level of customer satisfaction will reinforce and entrench retaining firm’s customers. But, how to achieve it, this depends on many collective efforts whether at the internal level or at the external level with other partnerships, content providers, agents, and consultation companies.

(ii) Expected benefits by actors

The value network could be viewed as set of economic entities (EE) (Biem & Caswell, 2008) connected through transfer of offerings. Thus, financial or marketing benefits are the expected output for these economic entities involved in the network activities. Accordingly, the value network should be managed in a way that allows all actors to realise the values resulting from the assumed mutual interaction through ensuring that their inputs are converted into gains.

An example of such a perception is MNO-U's practical implementation regarding the management of 'firm-distribution members' relationship in the market. Because of many financial and cultural restrictions, e-marketing applications remain immature in Jordan's market. Thus, to a large extent, TSPs depend on the traditional distribution channels in delivering firms' offerings to the end customers. Consequently, distribution channels' members and agents are important actors in the telecommunications value network in the Jordanian market where the satisfactory commissions represent an important benefit for their contributions in delivering the service and in maintaining the positive image of the telecommunications operators as well. Consequently, MNO-U views the role of distribution channel members as a key success factor in the firm's value network; hence, the firm sees satisfaction of those actors as priority.

In addition, sub dealers, agents, and distributors should be satisfied and should get the better commission in order to ensure delivering our message as we hope.

Mr Khader Sawalha/ MNO-U

Despite TSPs' general inclination toward value network perception, a closer look at MNO-X attitudes and its actual adopted approach shows that the firm continues to model its processes within a traditional value chain view. It was obvious that MNO-X did not manage its relationships with other actors in the market based on a cooperative value network. MNO-X argues that the firm's main offering (PTT) represents a core basic telecommunication service. Thus, because of the nature of the service, target market (the focus on the core service not on the content) and the specifications of used technology and compatible handset (Motorola and iDEN technology), the firm's 'content' services and other complementary services are limited. Consequently, MNO-X relies on its internal HR and distribution capabilities rather than extending its external networks. MNO-X approaches its processes and distribution activities within the value

chain view, which allows more control over its processes; meanwhile, the number of external parties involved in the firm's operations or delivering processes is limited. Thus, the firm's extreme orientation towards centralisation and the reliance on increasing the capacity of its internal distribution capabilities were reflected negatively in its external coordination, which in turn restricted the firm's overall value creation capability. Also, the firm adopted approach has a similar negative influence of firm's dynamicity and ability to response and to adapt in the high changing market.

As discussed above, MNO-X recorded unsatisfactory performance regarding productivity (*Mr Talal Al Sulaiman/ MNO-X*) attributed to the firm's organisational structure which was developed in accordance with the centralised aspects of the supply chain view.

(iii) The role of mobile network operators (MNOs) in the value network

It is worth noting that, particularly in the telecommunications value network, despite the different roles, actors, tasks and contributions within each value network, the role of the mobile network operator (MNO) remains dominant in managing relationships in this network. In detail, MNOs are keen to restrict any direct relationship between other actors with their end customers.

Despite the diversity of provided services, MNOs should manage their marketing and operation processes focusing on highlighting their core service (i.e. mobile communication service) as a main and indispensable product/service that all other content services are supplementary to, and provided as additional services for end customers. Along the same lines of Peppard and Rylander (2006) suggest a practical solution for managing 'mobile operator-other actors-customer relationship' in which MNOs adopt a "walled garden" strategy that aims to ensure that content creators and other actors are kept well away from firm end-customers. However, to which extent the different telecommunications operators in Jordan can manage the three above aspects of value network perception represents a challenge, and also reflects their orientation towards value management and external coordination.

The conclusion with respect to the value creation network is that, to a large extent, high MO operators show higher ability to achieve a balanced management of the three apparently contradictory aspects: (i) the dominant role of MNO within the value

network, (ii) the collaborative relationships between these parties and (iii) ensuring the realisation of the values resulting from the assumed mutual interaction by different parties.

E. Findings Relevant to the Cognitive Aspects of Perceived Performance/ Quality of how/ Complaint Handling & Customer Service (Finding Cog.5)

Discussion

In the services market, the increase of customer complaints is a reflection of dissatisfaction. Satisfaction has a negative relationship with customer complaints, as the more satisfied the customers, the less likely they are to complain (Angelova & Zekiri, 2011). Meanwhile, the consequences of immediate and effective response to customer complaint are decreased customer attrition and increased loyalty. In contrast, customer service comprises all provided services to customers before, during, and after purchasing and using service.

In today's market, technological advances extend the after-sales services portfolio from traditional service encounters to interactive, voice, and bit-based services (Birgelen et al., 2002). Meanwhile, many customers may show less interest in interaction and may be less concerned by the social absence of a service provider in the case of technology-based customer care services (Gallois & Callan, 1997). On the other hand, various cultural factors may influence customer behaviour toward more interest in traditional purchase and direct interactive contact with the service provider. Consequently, TSPs have to adopt and formulate their particular balanced communication and after-sales service system based on their orientations and strategic visions, taking into account the cultural determinants of the market.

Findings of this section pointed out the great attention given by different firms to customer service and complaints management in this industry. Participants' answers from different operators showed an agreement on that complaint handling and customer service should be managed within a strategic vision because of its direct effect on the firm's image and its capability in maintaining the firm's market base in the long run. Furthermore, there is a consensus between all TSPs — regardless of their adopted level of market orientation — that monitoring customer satisfaction is a basic capability that should be taken into account by all operators in the market.

Perceived value associated with customer services is of major importance in service industries (Solnet & Kandampully, 2005). Particularly, in telecommunications, 'average time to respond' (ATR) and other time criteria -related performance indicators have a crucial influence on customers' perceived satisfaction (Pollock, 2007) which in turn is reflected positively or negatively on the firm's image.

According to MNO-U and MNO-Z, the philosophy of service orientation constitutes the backbone that all customer service and complaint handling-related activities are based on.

By the same token, Solnet and Kandampully (2005) argue that sophisticated service orientation is that which is embedded in the firm as a core strategic initiative. It is more than a passing comment, a wall poster, or an edict from management. Such perception is highlighted by Miss Nermin Shawqi from MNO-U, where customer service is a main component of the firm's internal culture that views customer as a partner (long-term relationship) rather than a client (instant transaction relationship):

....customer service department which receives customer suggestions and feedback ... Consequently, the customer is the core of our business, he is a partner and our business cannot continue without a good relationship with him.

It is argued that TSPs with a genuine marketing orientation seek ways to establish strategic long-term value-based relationships with customers. Likewise, MNO-Z Marketing Planning Manager, Mrs Nisreen Al Ameen argues that customer service could be a suitable approach for building a long-term sustainable competitive advantage in the mature and fully open market where technology is available for all competitors:

We focus on providing our customer a value through brand perception ...we respect the customer and offer him a value.

In order to

...be able to differentiate, customer service could be a suitable approach.

Mrs Nisreen Al Ameen / MNO-Z

In contrast MNO-O, which follows its partnership 'international standards' indicated the importance of establishing a set of criteria controlling complaint management.

Consequently, documentation, criteria of time and criteria of implemented action, are considered as key issues in dealing with customer complaints efficiently.

On the other hand, MNO-X highlighted the firm's capabilities in documentation, computerising and automating in managing complaints-related procedures in a way that enables controlling all followed steps starting from classifying relevant complaints and ending with the implemented action.

It is worth noting that, while high marketing-orientation operators rely mainly on the value associated with the philosophy of service orientation, low marketing-orientation firms are based on the standardisation and automating capabilities in managing customer services and customer complaint handling.

6.2.3 The Influence of Marketing Orientation (MO) on the Affective Aspects of Customer Satisfaction (CS)

MO influence on  *the ways by which the Affective Aspects of CS are managed [the third dimension of CS]*

From the viewpoint of social psychology literature, a particular consumer satisfaction has both cognitive and affective dimensions in addition to the behavioural consequences (Lewis & Weigert, 1985).

As mentioned above, customer satisfaction cognitive components include many technical and functional aspects of perceived service quality (*what and how*). On the other hand, affective aspects comprise all non-cognitive facets of customer satisfaction, e.g. perceive value, corporate image and communications.

A. Findings Relevant to the Affective Aspects of Perceived Performance/ Communication System (Finding Aff. 1)

Discussion

“...in fact, the product doesn't exist until you experience it; and even then that experience is almost entirely in the mind. So what we are selling is the expectation of value to be received. In effect customers are buying a PROMISE, which is why the communication of value offered” by service providers is “*so fundamental*” (Baker & Roth, 2012, part 4, p.1).

Consistent with the spirit of marketing orientation philosophy, principles of marketing emphasise satisfying the needs of customers efficiently. According to Kotler et al. (2008), marketing is concerned with exploring, creating and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. Thus, the process of value creation for the customers should also generate value for the company, in order to make the relationship between the company and customer mutually beneficial (Kar, 2006). Consequently, the achievement of this matching of the firm's goals and customer interests requires the parties to communicate (Varey, 2002).

Following the logic of the service marketing triangle, in order to enable the firm to set, enable and deliver its promise, communications should be given central attention within an integrated marketing communication strategy (Daly et al., 2004). Consequently, a distinct marketing communication system is based on a synergistic combination with other marketing mix elements. All sub-marketing strategies must work together consistently within the firm's adopted marketing orientation vision.

In this section, data analysis showed an obvious inclination toward the adoption of interactive communication means - e.g. Blogs, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn - by the different TSPs as a common theme agreed by all firms in the market.

In addition to interactive communication means, firm-customer partnership, customer education, employing physical evidence elements, and the role of qualified employees were indicated by MNO-O as key communication factors.

With regard to MNO-X, in addition to the appropriateness of used communication tools, MNO-X gives more attention to communication programmes that include educational aims because of the associated technical features of the PTT telecommunications service. Thus, the firm's well-trained employee-related capabilities that are based on face-to-face visit are essential components of the firm's communication system.

On the other hand, for the high marketing operation operator, MNO-U, the firm —as discussed above — adopts a challenge-based approach through the high customer expectations level which is highlighted by the firm's communication programmes. The firm relies highly on market research outcomes in developing and executing its communication strategies and programmes; meanwhile the promotion of firm's values is an essential ingredient of such programmes. Also, simplicity and clarity, long-run relationship, customer rationality, considering customer culture, and employing physical evidence elements constitute key aspects in MNO-U communication system.

With regard to MNO-Z, data analysis pointed out several important factors in managing the communication system with the aim of enhancing customer satisfaction: these were creativity, brand name, appropriateness, market research, simplicity, sub-dealers role, customer culture and added value.

B. Findings Relevant to the Affective Aspects of Perceived Performance/ Corporate Image (Finding Aff. 2)

Discussion

Corporate image is concerned with “what does the organisation believe others think of the organisation?” (Brown et al., 2006, p.101). Thus, it focuses on the “outside world’s overall impression of the company including the views of customers, shareholders, the media and the general public” (Hatch & Schultz, 2003 cited in Shamma, 2012, p. 153).

Regarding this dimension of research, each of the images associated with the biggest integrator operator in the market, the international partnership, and the availability of services represents the more prominent factors for MNO-O. On the other hand, performance of basic service, after-sales services and the firm’s ability in keeping pace with technology developments and introducing new services are the key factors for the other low marketing-orientation operator, MNO-X.

It is worth noting that a main variation between low and high marketing-orientation operators is seen. ‘How do external stakeholders view the firm’ which represents the external variables of firm reputation (i.e. overall images of firm) was the main focus of MNO-O and MNO-X. In contrast, high MO operators adopt an integrated approach comprising both the internal and external variables of corporate reputation in managing the overall image of the firm.

MNO-Z for instance manages the firm’s image starting with the internal factors of firm image (how do employees perceive the firm; its vision and its mission). Then, the external factors relevant to its image from the viewpoint of customers and other stakeholders are considered too. In addition to maintaining customer satisfaction, complaints, and social responsibility-related factors, MNO-Z also relies on ensuring the firm’s image as a market leader by focusing on its capability for providing new and contemporary telecommunications services and keeping up with other international market trends.

Likewise, MNO-U gave great attention to the role of a coherent internal culture in managing the overall image of the firm. Also, credibility, value and spirit of challenge emerged as prominent key factors for the high MO operator, MNO-U.

C. Findings Relevant to the Affective Aspects of Perceived Performance/ Perceived Value vs. Price (Finding Aff.3)

Discussion

Value has economic and psychological dimensions that were approached from different viewpoints in literature. Classical Economic Theory suggests that people act rationally, using cost benefit analysis to make choices and come to conclusions. Along the same line of argument, Egan (2008) and Lauterborn (1990) claimed that marketing should be viewed from a customer perspective where price is perceived as cost, sacrifice and risk.

On the other hand, psychologists argue that many irrational factors may influence consumer adoption or purchasing decision. In such cases, the ‘optimal option’ will not be the ideal choice for the customer as Classical Economic Theory assumes. By the same token, Ahmetoglu et al. (2010) indicated that several studies affirmed the psychological effect on consumer behaviour; for instance

restaurants are able to systematically influence customers’ choice of wine, simply by manipulating the background music; stores have been able to influence people to buy the more expensive of two microwaves by adding a third even more expensive option; and researchers have been able to influence whether people choose a Sprite or an Orangina simply by manipulating the colour of the pen people are writing with (Ahmetoglu et al., 2010, p.6).

Data analysis showed a consensus between the different telecommunications operators in that Jordan’s telecommunications market is a sensitive price one and price represents a main switching factor for a consumer. In addition, TSPs agreed that pricing policy should take into account price elasticity in a way that enables them to respond to changes in the national economic situation and its reflections on customer purchasing power.

Regardless of TSPs’ agreement on the importance of price elasticity and dynamicity of pricing policies however, to which degree can a telecommunication operator translate this attitude into a dynamic behaviour responding to market changes and competitors’ pricing tactics emerged as an obvious theme that differentiated high MO operators from others in the market.

Each of responsiveness and the dynamicity was indicated as an important factor characterising high MO operators' (MNO-Z and MNO-U) pricing programmes. Consequently, findings regarding high MO operators' attitudinal consideration of pricing capability in responding to changing environment as a key factor were also in line with research previous findings regarding the behavioural aspects of marketing orientation too. Both firms gave more attention to the behavioural dimensions of MO (i.e. market intelligence; generation, dissemination, and responsiveness) (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990) (*with regard to MO behaviour, MNO-U was ranked first while MNO-Z was ranked second, chapter 5, section 5.3.2*). Furthermore, a firm's capability to coordinate its different pricing-related resources and activities consistent with the firm's strategy is also represents a critical success capability for high MO operators.

Furthermore, according to the high marketing orientation operator MNO-Z, in telecommunications, "low price" may be valid as an adopted tactic but not as a long-term strategy. Accordingly, pricing of service should be approached from a value-based long-term perspective. Similarly, MNO-U is based on customer-perceived value regarding the firm's unique "Per Second Billing system."

Both operators argued that customer behaviour is based on different economical, social or psychological variables and the role of the communication system is critical in delivering the embedded values. Accordingly, customer-perceived value was pointed out for both high MO operators as an essential pillar in their pricing strategies. The finding supports findings from a previous section (*section 6.2.1, customer expectations*) where the adoption of value perception was a dominant characteristic of customer expectations management for the marketing-oriented TSPs particularly.

On the other hand, regarding low MO operators, several pricing key factors were pointed out. While MNO-X highlighted price sensitivity, customer rationality, quality vs. price, and the economic situation, in contrast, MNO-O considered customer purchasing power, price sensitivity, price elasticity, and controlling costs as key factors in managing this affective aspect of customer satisfaction.

Pricing represents one of the most sensitive elements of the services marketing mix. One of the main aspects that pricing focuses on is the supply-demand relationship. Pricing a product or service too high or too low could mean a loss of sales for the organisation (Rust & Chung, 2006). To a large extent, price perception influences customer satisfaction and trust (Oliver, 1997). Hence, pricing strategy should be

formulated systematically with other sub-marketing strategies. Product development, communication, distribution, naming, customer service and processes all have to be managed within a reinforcement and synergistic combination with the aim of building a sustainable value-driven relationship with the customer.

To conclude, how a firm manages both the economic and psychological effects of value, and to which extent the firm balances between the Classical Economic Theory assumption of consumer behaviour rationality, psychologists' arguments and planned marketing and financial aims, represents the success on the ground in this regard. Meanwhile, to a large extent, high MO operators were better able to translate their attitudes and to accomplish the firms' pricing policies in accordance with the above criteria.

6.3 The Influence of Marketing Orientation (MO) on Customer Retention (CR)

MO influence on \longrightarrow *the ways by which the Behavioural Aspects of CR are managed [the components of BPM]*

Consistent with the research framework, this section is concerned with discussing findings relevant to the influence of marketing orientation adoption on the ways by which each dimension of customer retention is built (*i.e. utilitarian reinforcement, informational reinforcement, utilitarian punishment, informational punishment, and learning history*).

1- Utilitarian Reinforcement (UR)

In line with the research framework in which customer retention is approached from the behavioural perspective, the more utilitarian reinforcements — *i.e. functional and positive economic benefits* (Foxall & Greenley, 2000) — perceived by customers, the more customer retention is expected. Consequently, how to maximise the functional benefits represented the main implicit question that embodies the steps of evaluation in this sub-section of research: thus -

Section's norm (criteria) of data analysis: *“how do firms maximise the utilitarian reinforcements (i.e. functional benefits), and how do they manage this process in order to ensure customer retention (CR)?”*

Participants' answers on utilitarian reinforcement revolved around many different functional and economical facets that were mediated by firms' offered services.

Data analysis in this sub-section showed an agreement between firms; whether high or low marketing orientation in that performance of service (MNO-O), reliability and stability of core (MNO-U) and quality of core (MNO-X) represent basic and important capabilities for all operators. Such aspects should be achieved by any service provider operating in the market, as they represent the minimum tolerable of utilitarian reinforcements needed to manage customer retention. However, data analysis pointed out several findings that concluded critical variations between high and low marketing-orientation operators regarding the management of utilitarian reinforcement facets.

Utilitarian Reinforcement Finding 1 (UR1): *Marketing orientation has an influence on the way firms manage utilitarian reinforcement regarding the adopted vision by which firms approach functional benefits: customer orientation vs. technical superiority.*

Discussion

According to MNO-U (the high marketing-orientation service provider) customer emphasising is a main component of the firm's adopted marketing orientation that gives priority to satisfying customers' needs (Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1997), and views "delivering superior value to customers" as an essential mission for the firm (Mokhtar et al., 2009). Along the same lines, customer orientation represents the foundation that the design of all functional benefits is based on in order to match between the firm's offerings and customer expectations and needs.

The strategic view of MNO-U that is ensuring firm-customer relationship and the adoption of customers' opinions and needs, definitely will result in high satisfaction and more support to the firm's efforts in keeping our market base in the long run.

Miss Susan Manasrah/ MNO-U Senior Market Research Officer

In addition, MNO-U also gave great attention to maximising the utilitarian reinforcements relevant to the economic benefits of provided services. For example, MNO-U's adopted 'per second' billing system affords a prominent advantage in differentiating the firm's pricing policies as it is the only system in Jordan's market in

which consumption is being calculated based on the consumed seconds not minutes, unlike other common systems. Economic benefits which are mediated by the firm's provided services were managed in a way to be highly considered by customers in order to ensure customer retention — consistent with the notion of utilitarian reinforcements of the behavioural perspective model (Foxall & Greenley, 2000) — as Mr Anwer Ajlouni / MNO-U market research manager explained:

Value is given to our customers at the best price. We do not say that we compete at the least prices. Maybe some competitors' services are offered at lower prices than ours, but we give the best value for the best price.

He also added:

We conducted a lot of market research in this area which confirmed that more than 98% of customers appreciate positively the benefits related to MNO-U per second billing system.

On the other hand, with regard to low marketing-orientation service providers (MNO-O and MNO-X), different functional procedures and techniques were indicated as key issues for managing the utilitarian reinforcements by both firms. While MNO-O highlighted international standards, technology and infrastructure, diversity of provided services, and segmentation, MNO-X indicated quality of core, technology and product development and volume of content as key factors in managing the functional benefits of the firm's offerings. However, the question remains: what is the strategic vision for both firms while managing these procedures and functions?

According to MNO-O, the firm supposed that, adopting the distinct international standards that are already being used in controlling service quality will enable them to achieve the intended level of functional benefits that the customer is looking for. Likewise, MNO-X which introduced the new push-to-talk (PTT) telecom service to the Jordanian market assumed that the technical superiority of the firm's iDEN technology included the functional benefits that customers need, as Mr Qasem Baseem the operations executive at MNO-X stated:

We try to differentiate from other rivals by providing a different service ... iDEN technology.

It is worth noting the apparent similarity between the low and the high marketing orientation operators in considering the importance of customer perceived value included in firms' offerings while developing their retention strategies. For instance, Mr Moner Kettaneh the strategic accounts manager at MNO-O (the low MO operator) said in this regard:

...there is no single main factor, but it is an integrated system, whose cornerstone is the "added value"... and is based on the high quality...taking into account the after-sales services to ensure retaining customer and enhancing their loyalty.

Also, Mr Saeed Tareefi the marketing and communication manager from the same company added:

In such fierce competition the responsibility of companies here is to position their services carefully, through managing technology efficiently, providing added services, and more value for the customer...

Although this similarity in both of low and high MO operators attitudes towards customer perceived value, document analysis (specifically firms newspaper advertisements) indicated that the promised value of the low MO firms was highly focused on the technical benefits of the provided service while the approach of high marketing orientation firms was more comprehensive.

Finding UR2: *Marketing orientation has an influence on the way firms manage data management, as it represents a key success factor (KSF) differentiated high marketing orientation firms in managing utilitarian reinforcement.*

Discussion

In previous sections, data management constituted a binding ingredient of customer satisfaction sub-strategies of high marketing-orientation firms. Similarly, in customer retention strategy, data management that includes planning, collecting and disseminating of data emerged as a key capability that differentiated the high marketing-orientation operator MNO-U while evaluating the firm's utilitarian reinforcement aspects.

It is worth noting that, while customer orientation represents the strategic vision that MNO-U adopted in managing the marketing activities that enhance the firm's functional benefits, data management represents an essential behavioural application for this vision, enabling the firm to identify and understand the real needs of customers in

order that these needs are fulfilled sufficiently. Thus, data management provided the firm with the needed practical tool for hearing the voice of customer with regard to their preferences and expectations of the different functional and economic benefits they are looking for.

...to maintain our existing customers largely depends on to which degree we can successfully manage the relationship with them, hearing their view and understanding their needs and wants. I can argue that this is one of the most important strategies in our company.

Miss Susan Manasrah/ Senior Market Research Officer

In addition, the data management system enabled MNO-U to keep up-to-date with market trends and other competitors' activities and platforms, and provided functional and economic benefits relevant to utilitarian reinforcements. Such a technique was reflected in strengthening related decisions, as it is based on a comprehensive understanding of the firm's competitive environment.

According to MNO-U, although the firm is targeting different segments in the individual or the corporate markets, youth in particular constitutes a remarkable and growing telecommunications market from the view of the firm. Hence, MNO-U established its retention strategy focusing on acquiring, developing and maintaining this market within a long-term strategy. MNO-U views youth as a considerable and promising telecommunications market where people aged from 15 to 45 years constituted 49.4 % of the Jordanian market by the end of 2012 (Department of Statistics-Jordan, 2012). Thus, the firm developed its product, communication, and other related sub-marketing mix strategies consistent with all characteristics of its target market: social, psychological, financial and preferences.

MNO-U's data system allowed it to manage efficiently identify its target market, explore the needs and preferences of this market, and to then develop the most appropriate product strategy to match these needs and expectations. In detail, MNO-U's data management system was managed within a long-term strategy supported by the constant attention of the firm's top management. In addition to the above, the sustainability and continuity of feedback represented an important feature in the firm's data management system. Also, it relied on the diversity of used tools (e.g. market research, customer feedback, interactive communication platforms) to collect needed

data within a continuous process. It was obvious that, customer feedback was given great attention, as it allows immediate and constant inputs for this system. Thus, the way by which customer feedback is being managed represents a key factor supporting the firm's marketing and retention efforts:

What I want to add here is that one of the most important inputs that strengthen the role of marketing is how feedback is being managed. At MNO-U, we consider customer feedback as an effective weapon to face competitors.

Miss Susan Manasrah/ MNO-U

Also, the dynamicity of exchanging information and deploying it to the concerned departments (data inter-functional coordination) was reflected in superiority regarding the firm's reactions' to competitors or customers' feedback, e.g. launching new products, pricing amendment decisions or amendment on existing product:

.....when MNO-Z revealed their competitive offer "MNO-Z 5" targeting low spending segments, we as challenger and just within two days revealed our competitive offer the "Impossible10" which was consistent with our values and strategy: youth, fun and futuristicas I said, our new service (Impossible 10) required just a few days, while MNO-O needed 9 months to react and to offer their new same service.

Mrs Nancy Mahadin /Pricing & Planning Specialist

According to the telecommunications operators MNO-O and MNO-X, although both firms developed their data management systems including the traditional aspects being focused on in telecommunications (e.g. customer satisfaction research and call centres feedback), however, both systems were focused mainly on two issues: (i) monitoring customer consumption and (ii) market intelligence and competitors' related information. In other words, customer needs, expectations and wants were given less attention by these systems.

Despite both firms' considerations about the importance of satisfying customer needs, in practice both systems were insufficient with regard to generation and dissemination of related data, consistent with the results of quantitative data analysis (*chapter 5. section 5.3.2*).

On the other hand, to a large extent, MNO-U's data management system was viewed as a dynamic and up-to-date one expressing the real needs and wants of customers.

To summarise, MNO-U's data management system enabled in-depth understanding of market needs, and also allowed a more focused segmentation strategy. Consequently, MNO-U adopts a personalisation marketing strategy in which segmentation, product development and technology and diversity of provided services were managed based on the outcomes of the firm's data management system which in turn supported the perceived functional benefits of customers efficiently.

Finding UR3: *Marketing orientation has an influence on the way firms manage utilitarian reinforcement regarding the adopted segmentation level and the related marketing strategy: mass marketing vs. personalisation strategy.*

Discussion

As mentioned above, consistent with marketing orientation adopted by MNO-U, the firm enjoyed the capability to understand its customers and to identify their specific needs, wants and aspirations. The outcomes of the firm's dynamic data management system represent the basis on which MNO-U's segmentation and product strategies are set. Such advanced understanding of detailed market needs called for more personalised marketing strategy.

On the ground, MNO-U's customer orientation was translated into a 'balanced personalisation marketing strategy' [not the extreme understanding of personalisation, which refers to making a unique product offering for each customer]. According to Pires et al. (2006), the notion of personalisation is that customers can be served better through personalisation as it heightens consumers' selective perceptions and leads to a preference towards the supplier, which in turn will result in enhancing the firm's capability to strengthen long-term relationships with customers.

As a result of the firm's marketing orientation and its consequences (e.g. data management system and personalisation), MNO-U's product strategy was closer to customer needs and aspirations, more capable to respond to market change, more innovative, and less standardised as shown in figure 6.5.

In contrast, with regard to MNO-O, the operator which has the largest network and the most extended infrastructure, the firm built its competitive advantage as the biggest integrated operator in Jordan's market as Mr Basheer Al Khaire, MNO-O international carrier services and sales director said:

MNO-O Jordan builds its image as the 'biggest integrated operator'. We provide a wide range package of telecommunication services: fixed telephone call service, mobile service, Internet, and many other services.

Based on its technological capabilities, MNO-O provides an extended range of telecommunications services that are directed toward three main markets. (i) Individual customer market - in addition to mobile communications services and digital subscriber line (DSL) services, MNO-O is the exclusive provider for land-line services calls in the market. (ii) Wholesale market - as MNO-O has the biggest *Ground Wire network*, the firm is a wholesale supplier; meanwhile many virtual service providers are customers for MNO-O's internet services. (iii) Corporate market - comprising companies, government ministries and departments and national security and army directorates (among others) represent an important market for MNO-O. In addition, because of its strategic alliance with France Telecom, MNO-O is a regional supplier for other foreign external markets in the Middle East (e.g. Palestine and Lebanon markets) for different telecommunication services. Consequently, a closer look at the firm's adopted communication, segmentation, and product strategies indicated that, to a large extent, the firm adopts a mass marketing strategy while dealing with its varied markets, as shown below.

An obvious relationship between a firm's customer mix (i.e. the served market) and the adopted alternative orientation is apparent in the above discussion. As noted earlier, while the high MO operator MNO-U followed a high customer expectations approach that is based on innovation, creativity and the spirit of challenge in accordance with the nature of its market (i.e. the youth), both MNO-X and MNO-O followed a more standardised approach that is based on 'normative expectations' and 'standards'. The second approach seems to be more consistent with the requirements of both firms' primary market (i.e. corporate market).

Data evaluation pointed out that the detailed preferences and needs for each sub-market within these whole markets have not given the attention they deserve. MNO-O's mass

marketing strategy ignored market segments differences, and dealt with each whole market with main offers and main strategy. For example, in the individual market, telecommunications ‘integrated packages’ that comprise several telecommunications services and solutions, was MNO-O’s main offering in this market. However, it is argued that these ‘integrated packages’ included more standards and less flexibility as they are consistent with the ‘conformance to standards’ strategy (Feather & Sturges, 2003) of its strategic partner, i.e. the adopted quality management approach by MNO-O, as shown in the figure below.

Figure (6.5) highlights telecommunications operators choices of product and marketing strategies linked to the adopted level of marketing.

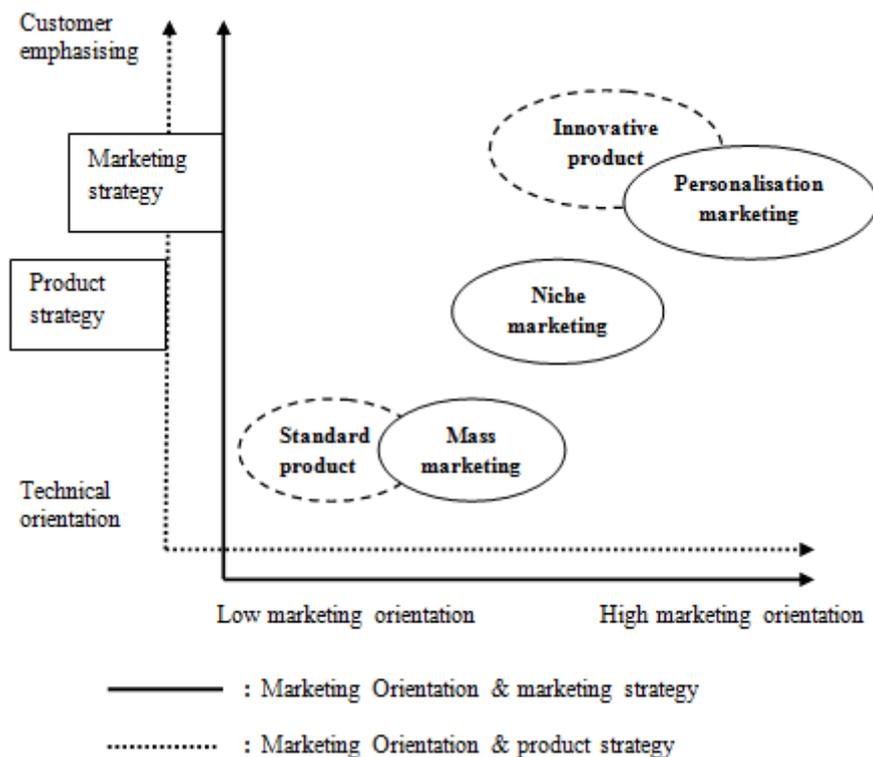


Figure 6.5: The Influence of Marketing Orientation on Product and Marketing Strategies

Source: Ashour (2014)

It is worth noting that, although “products/services diversity” was indicated by both high and low marketing-orientation firms as a key factor that supports service providers’ utilitarian reinforcements, an obvious variation however still exists between both groups in managing this capability. For instance, while MNO-O products’ diversity

was a reflection of the firm's technological capability as MNO-O tried to benefit from its extended infrastructures, on the other hand MNO-U offerings' diversity basically was a translation of its market research outcomes and responding to the firm's dominant philosophy, i.e. marketing orientation.

Furthermore, although some aspects such as customer orientation, market defragment and segmentation were indicated by MNO-O participants as key issues in this regard, in practice, the firm's segmentation strategy remains general and focuses on three main extended markets. Meanwhile each market includes different sub-markets with different needs, different characteristics, and different desires that need to be identified and fulfilled satisfactorily.

On the other hand, Jordan MNO-X developed its product (service) strategy targeting a specific customer base (i.e. the corporate market not the individuals) as Mr Qasem Baseem, MNO-X explains:

MNO-X telecommunications services were directed to a specific segment of the market which was only interested in the basic telecommunications services. We targeted customers who have no interest in SMS, MMS, ring tones services or other extra service...at MNO-X we focus on the corporate market such as construction, and factories... Our target was to achieve 10% of the corporate market.

MNO-X' main provided service (PTT) was not compatible with the common GSM technology. Hence, MNO-X followed a niche marketing strategy focusing on specific customers of the corporate market. Despite the difference between MNO-X and MNO-O in terms of market share and technological capability, however, an obvious similarity between both firms is seen. Similar to MNO-O, MNO-X dealt with its targeted market as a mass. Because of the restrictions and limitations of iDEN technology the firm's capability regarding the diversification of its provided services was restricted. Consequently, the firm's ability to diversify its products and services in responding to customer needs and preferences was the main deficiency of MNO-X product strategy. It is argued that MNO-X' strategy which ostensibly seems to be a niche marketing strategy is in fact closer to being viewed as a mass marketing approach. Practically the firm was unable to take into account the variations and differences within its targeted market. Thus, MNO-X provided its customers with just one rigid offer, with less innovation, less diversity and differentiation.

2- Informational Reinforcement (IR)

Informational reinforcement is a reflection of consumer feedback regarding service provider/service performance indicating how well they are doing with the firm's offerings (Ibrahim et al., 2013; Foxall, 1998). It is a consequence of consumer behaviour that embodies the symbolic attributes of the provided services (Yan et al., 2010) which may lead to changes in social status or reported feelings of self-esteem (Foxall & Greenley, 2000).

Similarly to utilitarian reinforcement, the research framework assumes a positive relationship between informational reinforcements and the achievement of customer retention; consequently:

Section's norm (criteria) of data analysis: *“how do firms maximise the informational reinforcements and how do they manage this process in order to ensure customer retention (CR)?”*

Participants' answers pointed out various key informational reinforcements that respondents from different firms agreed on relating to its importance in this regard, e.g. communication, customer satisfaction and firm-customer relationship. However, firm image represented the most prominent informational reinforcement theme that all other key factors revolved around.

There is a substantial difference between services providers and manufacturers with regard to the management of symbolic and social benefits related to the provided products/services. For example, the social benefit related to luxury cars like Lamborghini or Ferrari is relevant to the possession of one of these cars. Correspondingly, in telecommunications, intangible services are what firms offer their customers. Thus, symbolic and social benefits are associated with the image of service provider rather than the core service itself. Consequently, in services, to which degree the service provider can manage the firm's image efficiently will highly affect his capability in dealing with the informational reinforcements of consumer retention behaviour.

According to Doorley and Garcia (2007), corporate reputation is the sum of the firm's overall images which reflect its superiority in managing the different functional and

communication activities. Consequently, the authors define reputation according to the following understanding: *Reputation = Sum of Images = (Performance + Behaviour) + Communication*. Hence, symbolic and social benefits associated with a particular service provider are reflections of the firm's overall images performance.

A closer look at telecommunications operators' managerial implementations pointed out a variation between low and high marketing-orientation firms regarding their followed approaches in managing their firm's overall image to maximise the informational reinforcements, as two different patterns are clearly viewed through data evaluation.

Finding IR1: *Marketing orientation has an influence on the way firms manage informational reinforcement regarding the internal aspects of firm image, i.e. identity and personality of firm.*

Discussion

Corporate marketing landscape highlighted two initial steps of corporate reputation management: corporate identity and corporate personality. While firm image reflects "what does the organisation believe others think of the organisation?" (Brown et al., 2006) 'corporate identity' is the internal stakeholders' perceptions about an organisation (Shamma, 2012). In other words, corporate identity represents the main determinant of the firm's overall image. Organisational identity asks the question; "Who are we as an organisation?" (Brown et al., 2006, p.101).

MNO-U, the high marketing-oriented service provider, focused on what members perceive, feel and think about their organisation. The firm developed its image starting with establishing a coherent internal culture. This culture was established taking into account the challenges that it may face as a third telecommunications operator introducing itself to the matured and limited market. This approach seems to be consistent with Barnett et al.'s (2006) view that theorising 'corporate reputation' starts with corporate identity which reflects the character of the firm reflected in the internal culture and values of the firm.

Corporate identity is thought of as a collection of symbols derived from internal values and beliefs (Shamma, 2012). By the same token, MNO-U's internal culture was based

on the values of ‘*spirit of challenge*’, ‘*we lead the change*’ and ‘*we are super hero*’ as prominent values shaping the firm’s internal culture. In other words, marketing orientation philosophy that puts customers’ concerns above all else, and giving the priority to satisfying their needs, constitutes MNO-U’s dominant organisational culture that the firm’s values were derived from. Thus, MNO-U was based on enhancing and deploying these values, beliefs and rituals, the essential components that guided its corporate culture, and shaped the organisation identity of the firm (Balmer, 1997).

In conclusion, MNO-U’s identity was reflected in a collective, commonly-shared understanding of the firm’s distinctive values (Hatch & Schultz, 1997) of the spirit of challenge and marketing philosophy. Miss Nermin Shawqi, corporate communications specialist at MNO-U, highlights the values that shaped the internal culture of MNO-U:

I would like also to indicate that at MNO-U we ensure the ‘esprit de corps’, thus, we highly consider the role of internal organisational culture...as I mentioned earlier, we adopted the “spirit of challenge” as internal culture. Now...,we promote that ‘we are Super Hero’... Thus, we focus on ‘we lead the change’. Accordingly, we have launched an internal campaign that was called “Super U” which means ‘you are super with what you can do at MNO-U’. Each person at MNO-U is seen as a salesman representing the company.

‘Corporate personality’ is an advanced level of the firm’s overall image management that is concerned with achieving more distinctiveness and uniqueness for corporate identity regarding - Who are we? What are we doing? - and the way to doing things comprising mission, vision and culture of the organisation.

On the ground, corporate personality was a key element that gave distinctiveness to MNO-U’s identity. The approach is consistent with Balmer (2001) and Olin (1978) who concluded in two different research ‘corporate personality’ as the soul, the persona, the spirit, the culture of the organisation that attains the distinctiveness to business identity.

Mr Khader Sawalha, MNO-U planning and loyalty manager, summaries his internal perception about MNO-U which is consistent with the firm’s vision:

...we are a new company which focuses on innovation, youth and renewal.

A similar notion is described by Mr Anwer Ajlouni, MNO-U market research manager:

Our brand is directed toward young people... our target market is the youth who will grow up within a few years, and will develop and extend their relationships. Therefore, we believe it is a promising market share.

On the other hand, the low marketing-orientation operator MNO-O for instance, adopted another approach in managing the firm's overall image. As noted above, MNO-O has built its firm image strategy based on the values of its strategic alliances with France Telecom Group: but to which degree this approach was efficient in maximising the firm's informational reinforcements is an issue which needs more evaluation.

According to corporate marketing literature, customers have a tendency to theorise a link between country of origin and corporate identity such as "German efficiency" and "Japanese innovation" (Foo, 1999). However, "the link between country of origin and corporate identity becomes weak when the organisation grow international merger" (Melewar 2006 in Chamchong & Wonglorsaichon, 2009, p.531) as is the case with many multinational telecommunications carriers.

Along the same line of argument, with regard to MNO-O, the effect of social and symbol benefits associated with the firm's parent company, France Telecom declines as the international telecom group extended its operations at the international level; meanwhile its branches exceeded 166 international markets as Mr Malik Maqboul, MNO-O product leader enterprise stated:

MNO-O Jordan is a partner of a large international group which operates in 166 other international markets.

Moreover, MNO-U developed its corporate identity based on the internal shared values that shaped the firm's organisational culture in which: MNO-U is a Jordanian operator which is closer to its customers' culture, and which is also more capable of understanding and satisfying their preferences and needs.

On the other hand, with regard to the low marketing-orientation operator, MNO-O corporate identity vacillated between the local and the international aspects of identity. Hence, MNO-O's employees were confused, as some of them described the firm as a branch for an international foreign group:

MNO-O Jordan is part of the large international group France Telecom who is present in 120 countries with more than 100 million subscribers around the world.

Mr Basheer Al Khaire/ MNO-O International Carrier Services and Sales Director

In contrast, other MNO-O employees considered the firm as a Jordanian telecommunications operator. For instance, Mr Moner Kettaneh continues to view MNO-O within its previous image, the formerly state-owned entity (Jordan Telecom):

MNO-O is not that company which just operates for 5 or 10 years, but we are the oldest and largest telecommunications company in the country.

Similarly, Mr Saeed Tareefi, MNO-O marketing and communication manager indicated customers' misconceptions with regard to MNO-O's identity and the negative effects the firm faced:

MNO-O Jordan which was previously known as Jordan Telecom, was a state-owned company like many of the telecom companies in the Middle East region....previously, because of the negative perceptions associated with government companies, we faced such challenges...

In conclusion, high marketing-orientation firms enjoy an advantage that allows a clearer understanding of its visions and missions, which in turn enabled it to manage corporate identity in a way reflecting the values and culture of these firms efficiently.

Finding IR2: *Marketing orientation has an influence on the way firms manage informational reinforcement regarding the external aspects of firm image, i.e. company's communication and company's behaviour.*

(Note: data analysis did not show any critical effect for marketing orientation on the third external aspect of firm image, i.e. company's symbolism.)

Discussion

While corporate identity represents the internal members' perceptions about an organisation (Albert & Whetten, 1985), firm image is concerned with the "outside world's overall impression of the company including the views of customers, shareholders, the media, and the general public" (Hatch & Schultz, 2003, p.1048).

Gotsi and Wilson (2001) disaggregated a firm's image into three different components: communication, behaviour and symbolism. Accordingly, evaluating the influence of marketing orientation on the informational reinforcements represented in the symbolic attributes of firms' offerings is accomplished covering the three main components of firm's overall image as shown in figure 6.6 below.

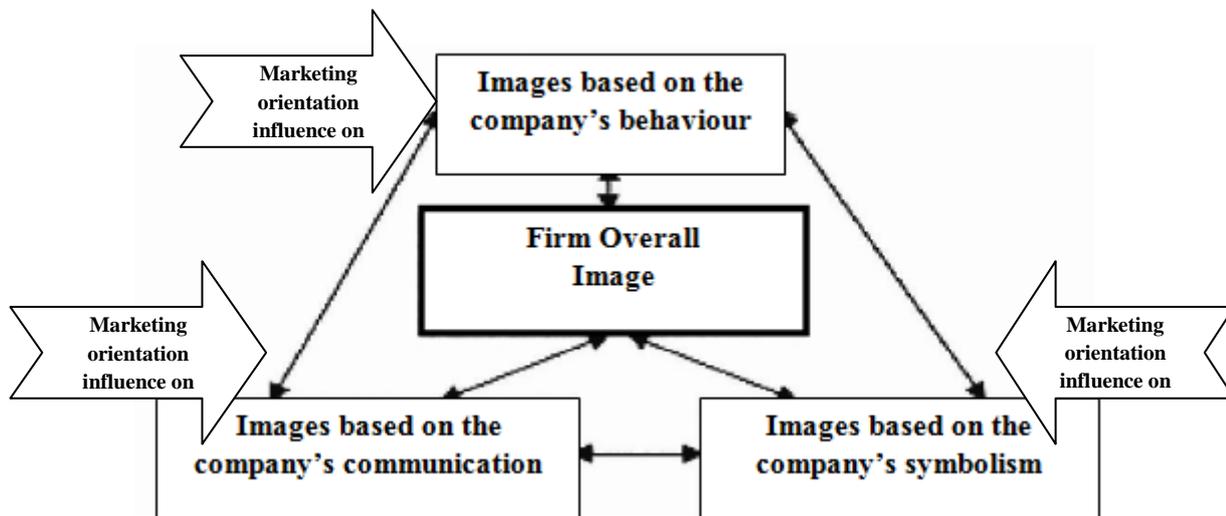


Figure 6.6: The Influence of Marketing Orientation on Firm's Overall Image

Source: Adapted from Gotsi and Wilson (2001)

Images based on company's communication

Firm's overall image represents stakeholders' collective representations and communications established over time (Cornelissen, 2008). Communication includes all channels that a firm adopts to communicate with the stakeholders. In this regard, MNO-U managed an effective communication system that acts as a link translating the firm's organisational culture and values into a favourable image and good reputation.

Consequently, the communication system of the high marketing-orientation operator, MNO-U was managed effectively and within an integrative system. It enabled the firm -within a short period (extended from 2005-2007)- to build a strong image and supported the firm's efforts in establishing its market share and maintaining it. This finding corroborates the ideas of Gray and Balmer (1998) who argued that a firm's overall image can be fashioned more quickly through a well-conceived communication programme. Such programme constitutes a bridge that connects the corporate identity with the intended image of the organisation. This notion was detailed by Mr Khader Sawalha, MNO-U planning and loyalty manager:

We entered Jordan's telecommunications market in 2005 as the third operator, and after 10 years of MNO-Z and after 5 years of MNO-O starting. It was a 5 to 10 year period for MNO-Z and MNO-O to benefit from this situation. Thus, both were able to establish their own large customer base. In spite of all these challenges, we have succeeded in penetrating the market and building a considerable market share. All of the above represent clear evidence that MNO-U's communication system is

an effective and sophisticated one which successfully contributed in building a strong reputation and to achieve the firm's goals.

With regard to the low marketing-orientation operator (MNO-O), in addition to the aspect of its international alliance, MNO-O built its firm image also based on ensuring the physical evidence elements relevant to product availability. According to Mr Moner Kettaneh, MNO-O, in order to differentiate themselves from competitors, the firm ensured the image of its capability “to offer our services, at any time, and in any location in Jordan.” Hence, MNO-O has the largest number of branches and stores in Jordan. Although the firm adopted different communication channels (e.g. advertising, word of mouth, interactive communication means), to a large extent, the MNO-O communication system was affected highly by the performance of its salesmen in the firm's stores and branches. The firm provides various packages of telecommunications services and offerings. Meanwhile, many related procedures of these services such as ordering, modifying, cancellation, billing services or technical support, require the frequent visits of customers to firms' stores. Taking into account the extended range of firm-provided services, MNO-O's communication system that was based mainly on employee performance was not able to deal efficiently with the complex catalogues of provided products and services, as Mr Saeed Tareefi, MNO-O marketing and communication manager explained,

We have a lot of telecom services and packages that our sales reps offer to customers, which seem to be very difficult to explain in detail each service... actually, this is a constant problem we face. Often, the sales rep has his marketing target he wants to achieve; at the same time we may have a long queue of customers who have many inquiries ... Thus, the sales rep will not be able to deliver the message properly to the customer...

Similarly, MNO-X' communication system was unable to deliver the firm's message properly which reflected negatively on the firm's overall image:

Customers expected to find in our Motorola devices all existing applications in others GSM networks ...this was a fatal mistake ... the nature of such services is quite different. We maybe could not pass on the message properly.

Mr Talal Al Sulaiman/ MNO-X

Furthermore, MNO-U's corporate communications were managed based on the premise that customer retention is a history-based behaviour, and a consumer's re-purchasing decision is affected by their experiences that shape the firm's image in their mind over time. Thus, the communications system was designed to transmit the firm's messages

accurately, whether internally or externally, to targeted customers or stakeholders. In addition, it considered the values of transparency, credibility and ethics as it planned also to support corporate reputation efforts which in turn will result positively in customer retention:

Credibility helps in keeping the customer; it's an essential ingredient while managing your strategic relationship with customers in the long run. It gives the acceptance for your message, and enhances trust in your promises.

Miss Susan Manasrah/ MNO-U

Images based on company's behaviour

While corporate communication refers to the firm's verbal and visual messages to stakeholders, behaviour represents what the organisation does and the way it does it. Thus, behaviour is an intangible part of corporate identity including employee behaviour and management behaviour (Melewar, 2006 in Chamchong & Wonglorsaichon, 2009).

With regard to the role of service providers' employee strategy role, MNO-O for instance has a distinct selective and training programme. The firm benefits from the international experience of its partner France Telecom Group in developing employee training programmes. Thus, MNO-O policy supports training as a very important pillar in the telecommunications industry.

However, it was concluded from the data analysis a shortcoming with regard to employee retention in MNO-O as market indicators show a higher employee turnover rate compared to other firms. In addition, many current employees of MNO-O's competitors were actually employed by MNO-O and benefited from the firm's training programmes, but for different reasons they have been attracted by those competitors, as inferred from the answers of Mr Saeed Tareefi, MNO-O:

... it is common to hear that MNO-O is a training factory in Jordan's market.

In related literature, there is widespread belief that internal customer (employee) satisfaction is a requirement for external customer satisfaction. Following the same lines, MNO-O's high employee attrition rate may indicate employee dissatisfaction, which has a direct influence on employee performance and on customer evaluation of the service provider's overall image.

On the other hand, MNO-U (the high marketing orientation operator) was able to manage the firm's members' behaviour in a way that reflects its values and supports the firm's overall images. It is worth noting that the firm's internal culture (i.e. spirit of challenge and esprit de corps) here plays a crucial role in enhancing this capability, according to Mrs Reem Sabbagh from MNO-U:

The presence of a unified vision for all firm's staff is important. As well as firm internal culture by which employees feel that they are important to the company.

This was reflected positively in employee productivity and performance superiority too:

Compared to other competitors, the number of MNO-U employees is the least... but it is a complementary and team-work environment where the majority are young with the spirit of youth consistent with MNO-U's vision. ... therefore productivity and efficiency of MNO-U employees is the highest when compared to other competitors.

Mrs Nancy Mahadin/ MNO-U

Images based on company's symbolism

Symbolism refers to corporate design. It is a powerful tool which including short sharp messages presenting firm's values and philosophy and also supports corporate communication efforts. Corporate design represents the visual identity of firm which comprising several elements such as organisation's name, slogan, logos/symbol, colour and typography (Melewar, 1998; Dowling, 1994; Topalian, 1984 cited in Chamchong & Wonglorsaichon, 2009).

It is worth noting that data analysis did not show any critical variation between high and low marketing-orientation operators in managing image related to company's symbolism. Because of the common marketing services challenges that telecommunications operators face, all paid great attention to employing the tangible elements in order to enhance customer-perceived value and to support the firm's image.

To a large extent, telecommunications operators were the same in managing the company's symbolism in (i) the way that all the elements are arranged in a distinctive design and pattern, (ii) supporting the firms' communication programmes and (iii) reflecting the values of these firms.

Figure 6.7 below presents marketing oriented service providers' approach in managing a firm's overall corporate image (reputation). It highlights the integration of the basic

five components of reputation and its relevant techniques adopted by marketing orientation firms. In other words, finding IR1 (i.e. internal aspects of firm image) and finding IR2 (i.e. external aspects of firm image) are summarised in figure 6.7 below.

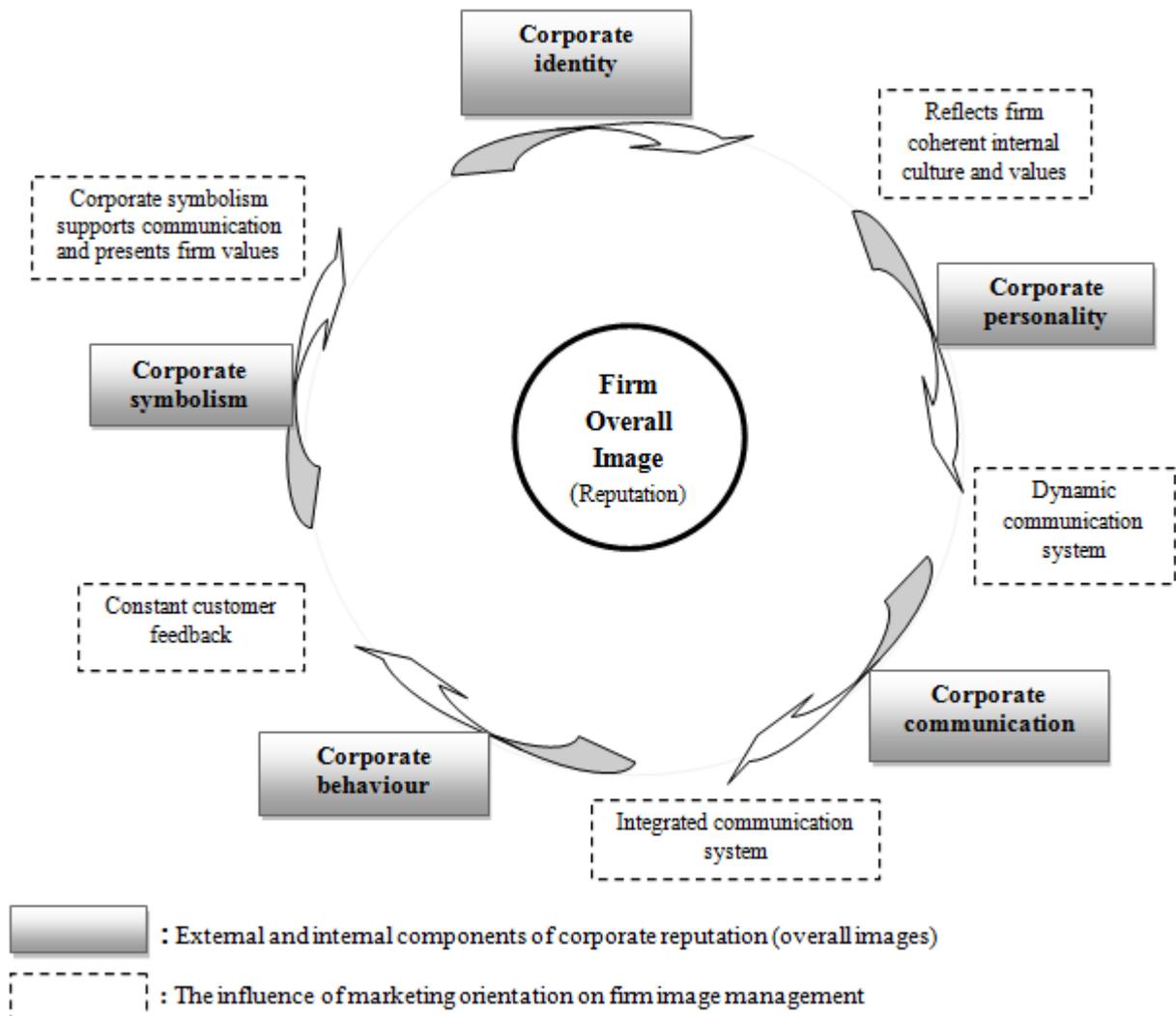


Figure 6.7: High Marketing Orientation Corporate Reputation Model

Source: Ashour (2014)

3- Utilitarian Punishment (UP)

Consistent with the assumptions of the Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM), behaviour setting consists of discriminatory stimuli that signal different kinds of rewards (i.e. utilitarian and informational reinforcements) and aversive outcomes (i.e. utilitarian and informational punishments) which are contingent upon specific consumer behaviour (Foxall & Greenley, 2000).

Specifically, utilitarian punishment is an aversive consequence of consumer response which is likely to reduce the probability of future repetition (Fagerstrom, 2005). Thus, it is concerned with the negative aspects of consumption, e.g., relinquishing money or time-consuming registration before payment (Fagerstrom et al., 2011, p.114) associated with consumer behaviour.

Section's norm (criteria) of data analysis: *“how do firms minimise the utilitarian punishments, and how do they manage this process in order to ensure customer retention (CR)?”*

Finding UP1: *Marketing orientation has an influence on the adopted vision by which a firm approaches utilitarian punishment: positive approach vs. negative approach.*

Discussion

Data analysis highlighted several themes that represent a consensus between different high and low marketing-orientation operators as utilitarian punishment key factors such as the cognitive factors of switching behaviour, switching barriers, monitoring consumer consumption and customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

In the telecommunications market, switching barriers are viewed as a common approach used in controlling customer defections. Despite the important role of switching barriers in customer retention, many dissatisfied customers remain with their current service providers because of the solid switching barriers policies of those firms. However, this approach seems to be more associated with low marketing-orientation firms' strategies, as it constitutes a main pillar for their customer retention policies in the market.

It is argued that service providers have two alternatives techniques in order to manage customer switching behaviour: enhancing the perceived value by customers [positive approach] or maximising the costs and barriers of switching [negative approach]. Correspondingly, low marketing-orientation firms showed greater tendency towards adoption of the second approach that relies on maximising customers' perceived costs of switching and enhancing the social, financial and procedural constraints and barriers of switching. For instance, one prominent switching barriers technique which was highly adopted by MNO-O is 'Number Portability' which refers to the difficulties and control imposed by service providers on keeping the same number (e.g. mobile,

landline) while a particular customer is switching to another company. Thus, MNO-O strongly calls for non-application of this procedure in the market.

It is crucial to note, however, the efficiency of such retention technique in controlling customer switching in the short run: but on the other hand, it has negative consequences on the firm's image, as it restricts the customer's rights regarding their choices and selections, which in turn will negatively influence firm's image and customer retention in the long run.

While MNO-O relies to a large extent on the common switching barriers techniques to control any potential customer defection, MNO-X participant Mr Qasem Baseem expressed a shortcoming of the firm in developing a coherent retention strategy. Customer churn rate continues to increase dramatically as firm market share reached less than 1% of total market by the end of 2010:

...let me be honest ... actually we are facing some problems in this area... with regard to retaining valued customers also we have the same situation.

Mr Qasem Baseem/MNO-X

On the other hand, the high marketing-orientation operator, MNO-U adopted a proactive and positive-based retention strategy depending basically on rewarding customers to reduce the aversive outcomes (i.e. utilitarian punishments) mediated by provided services. Along the same line of argument, MNO-U supports more deregulation, and fewer restrictions on customer selections:

We support the activation of number portability regulations in Jordan...it is the customer's right to be able to choose his preferred services providers fairly, freely and without restrictions. It is the Telecommunication Regulatory Commission's [TRC] responsibility to manage the market and to protect customer rights.

Miss Nermin Shawqi / MNO-U

Consistent with relationship marketing literature that pointed out 'length' (i.e. duration of this relationship), 'depth' (i.e. frequency of service usage over time) and 'breadth' (diversity in customer purchases) of the firm-customer relationship as three essential variables affecting customer consideration regarding switching costs (Polo & Sese, 2009). On the ground, MNO-U employed these variables positively; focusing on

involving the customer in a long-term relationship and maximising the customer's perceived benefits during this relationship.

Accordingly, MNO-U approached the utilitarian punishment aspect from the firm-customer relationship perception. Meanwhile, extending the benefits associated with the depth, length and breadth of this relationship supported the firm's ability to manage customer retention behaviour as the customer will think carefully about what he is going to lose of benefits if he decided to switch to another firm.

To summarise, this approach enabled MNO-U to understand its customers' needs, monitor their consumption behaviour, and maximise the firm's capability to manage this relationship. Moreover, it allows for reducing the aversive consequences of consumer behaviour and enhancing the perceived benefits which in turn will result in superior retention performance.

I think the most important issue here is to give the attention to the "customer lifetime" ...the long period means more support for customer retention in telecommunications... again, the longer the period of firm-customer subscription which is associated with the benefits and advantages of firm communication programme, the more customer retention is expected.

Mr Khader Sawalha/ MNO-U

It is important to note that the above findings relevant to firms' approaches in managing the 'utilitarian punishment' aspects of customer retention were also achieved by other document analysis.

In more detail, the data analysis of firms-individual customers contracts that focused on customer retention related terms, showed the attention given by the low MO operators to the procedural and financial restrictions aiming at controlling customer switching behaviour.

On the other hand, the contract of MNO-Z (the high MO operator) seems to be more balanced through including both of restrictions of switching and the benefits such as discounts, cost reduction and volume increase of the provided service, which are intended to maximise the duration of customer stay with the same service provider.

Consequently, both findings inferred from the semi-structured interviews and data analysis related to firms' contracts lead to the same results and corporate each other.

4- Informational Punishment (IP)

Informational punishment is an aversive consequence of consumer choice mediated by the social network (Fagerstrom et al., 2011). Thus, it explains the case when people do not approve of what consumers purchased and consumed (Oliveira-Castro et al., 2008).

From the viewpoint of service providers, informational punishment is seen as an indirect negative feedback that firms receive regarding their offerings of products/services; consequently,

Section's norm (criteria) of data analysis: *“how do firms minimise the informational punishments and how do they manage this process in order to ensure customer retention (CR)?”*

Data analysis pointed out different aspects of variation between high and low marketing-orientation operators in the way by which informational punishment is managed.

Finding IP1: *Marketing orientation has an influence on enhancing firms' capability to manage communication system in a way that reduces the negative social effects perceived by customers.*

Discussion

Similar to utilitarian punishment, informational punishment represents a sort of aversive consequence of consumer behaviour. According to research framework, telecommunications service providers should manage informational punishment postulating that, the less informational punishment perceived by customers the more customer retention is achieved.

Informational punishment is mainly concerned with the negative feedback of consumers' social networks and reference groups (affective variable) not the functional performance (cognitive variable) of service. Thus, the communications role emerged as a critical marketing technique controlling the informational punishments mediated by provided services. It is worth noting that communication is evaluated here as a key success capability in managing the informational punishment aspect of consumer retention behaviour. To the contrary, in previous section it was viewed as a critical

capability in managing the informational reinforcement, as communication constituted an influential factor affecting a firm's overall image (i.e. reputation) (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001). Consequently, the mentioned variation between high and low marketing orientation operators in managing communications relevant to firm image, continues to exist while also managing the informational punishment dimension. Thus, the dynamicity of the communication system, integration and credibility represent three themes that differentiated the high marketing operator's (MNO-U) communication programmes from other operators while managing the informational punishments aspects of customer retention.

It is interesting to note that the same communication-related themes (i.e. integration, credibility and dynamicity) were used to deal with two different and opposite consequences of consumer behaviour: the first in maximising the social perceived benefits associated by firm's image [rewarding], and the second in minimising the negative influence of customer social networks related to the adoption of a service or a particular service provider [punishing].

5- Learning History (LH)

The Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM) interprets consumer behaviour as occurring at the intersection of the individual's learning history and the consumer setting (Foxall et al., 2011). According to Hwang (2003), consumer learning history is a constant process that is being formed through consumer interaction with different setting factors and behavioural consequences.

In this section, data evaluation process was accomplished based on the research framework assumption, in which the more positive learning history attained by the customer the more customer retention is achieved, and the less negative learning history, the more customer retention is achieved too. Consequently,

Section's norm (criteria) of data analysis: *“how do firms maximise customer positive learning history, how do they minimise its negative effect, and how do they manage this process to ensure customer retention (CR)?”*

Data analysis pointed out each of customer experience, communication, and responsiveness as three essential themes that firms agreed on regarding their importance in managing both positive and negative aspects of consumer learning history. However,

in-depth evaluation of firms' different implementations showed a variation between high and low marketing-orientation operators in the ways they manage the above aspects.

Finding LH1: *Marketing orientation has an influence on the way firms manage the customer learning history aspect with regard to customer experience.*

Discussion

According to the high marketing-orientation operator, MNO-U, consumer retention behaviour is reasonable, and a customer's re-purchasing decision is highly affected by their judgment of their previous experiences. Hence, the firm manages customer experience within a long-term strategic view. Consequently, credibility was the key issue that MNO-U emphasised should be taken into account in all the firm's communication programmes, pricing policies and the actual quality level of provided services. Hence, MNO-U views credibility as an essential requirement for shaping the positive experience of the customer.

Such credibility is achieved when the customer is satisfied with the result of the comparison between expectations (i.e. firm promise) with what they actually received. Therefore, both sides of the equation - (i) communication related to customer expectations and (ii) the actual performance of all aspects of provided service (e.g. level of quality, price, content, delivery, volume, commitments and conditions) - must adhere to standards of transparency and credibility.

Furthermore, inseparability which indicates the simultaneous of production and consumption process represents a dominant attribute characterising services (Lovelock et al., 1999).

In Jordan's telecommunications market where e-marketing implementations remain immature, the employee-customer interaction is expected as the traditional shopping is common and preferred by the majority of Jordanian customers, as Mrs Nancy Mahadin from MNO-U explains:

....in general, the dominant culture in Jordan regarding the use of electronic financial means such as debit or credit cards and internet banking in shopping is fear and distrust.

In the same vein, Mr Qasem Baseem from MNO-X added,

Jordanian people do not trust the similar local websites of eBay or Amazon. Customers' confidence in the electronic financial system remains quite low.

Thus, for many customers, experience is formed based on their particular evaluation of their interactions with service providers, whether during buying a service, complaining about an existing service, or paying bills. Thus, a firm's employees' performance and customer journey management are important issues in this regard.

Accordingly, MNO-U views customer experience as an opportunity enabling it to present firm's superiority compared to other competitors:

...through all different activities and procedures, we always try to make the customer's experience with us unique and better than any experiences he tried or witnessed with other competitors.

Miss Susan Manasrah/ MNO-U

Accordingly, 'customer experience management' at MNO-U gave great attention to the firm's employee strategy which is based on three main pillars: (i) firm's coherent internal culture where satisfying customer represents the firm's priority and the philosophy that leads all marketing- and employee-related activities; (ii) The value of 'spirit of challenge' represents another underpinning for MNO-U's employee policy that enabled the firm to be the more entrepreneurial, innovative and proactive operator in the dynamic market, and (iii) MNO-U relies on internal customer (i.e. employees) satisfaction as a main base for its employee strategy:

We believe that, employee does not just look for a good salary to be loyal to his company, but also he looks for the attention and appreciation in addition to other incentives and benefits too. All these aspects are important for the employee to be satisfied.

Mrs Reem Sabbagh/ MNO-U

According to this perception, employee satisfaction/dissatisfaction is a direct factor affecting several aspects of employees' performance, e.g. employees' internal communication, employees' external communication, and employees' interactions with customers. At the same time, customer judgment of employee performance during this

interaction will result in his evaluation of overall service provider performance (i.e. customer satisfaction), the essential requirement for customer retention.

Moreover, because of the nature of telecommunications and its high reliance on technology, in many cases the cause of customer dissatisfaction is attributed not to performance of the core service itself, but to the customer's lack of knowledge about its technical features, or about how to maximise its benefits. Thus, customer experience is affected by service provider performance regarding customer service and technical support management, the capability that was taken into account by all telecommunications operators in the market.

It is worth indicating that, despite the attention given to technological awareness and customer education regarding provided services by all telecommunications operators, however, for some firms (MNO-O and MNO-X) this aspect constitutes the most prominent issue within these firms' communication programmes (*as discussed in the next finding LH2*).

Finding LH2: *Marketing orientation has an influence on the way firms manage customer learning history aspect regarding communication programme.*

Discussion

In services, the firm's communication programme is concerned mainly with delivering the firm's promise, and supporting the firm's overall image.

Compared to a tangible product, a customer who is interested in buying a service will perceive a higher risk in purchasing services in that he may not be able to evaluate its quality until after he has received the service and committed its value (Martin, 1999). Accordingly, in telecommunications services, the communication system is given great attention by service providers as an essential factor to a firm's success whether before [customer expectation], during, or after delivering the service [customer experience and learning history].

Regarding their adopted level of marketing orientation, operators were different in dealing with communication while managing the 'learning history' aspect of consumer retention behaviour. MNO-O, for instance focuses on promoting its technological capability and its strategic alliance in order to positively influence a customer's

judgment of their experiences with the firm. In addition, the firm that provides an extended range of different telecommunications services gives great attention to customer technical educating aspects through the firm's communication programmes. It is argued that, to a large extent, MNO-O communications in this regard are managed within a technical educating-oriented vision.

Likewise, MNO-X which targets specific segments of the corporate market, developed its communication programme focusing on two aspects: similarly to MNO-O, (i) the common message in the firm's communication programme was raising existing customer awareness of PTT technical features and advantages. Also, (ii) MNO-X' communication programme focused on promoting iDEN technology and relevant services, aiming at enhancing the firm's sales with less attention to the real needs of the target market because of the limitation of adopted technology [sales-oriented programme].

Since 2010, Jordan's telecommunications market has witnessed a considerable evolution with regard to the adoption of social media communication means, e.g. Blogs, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Such a shift in the adoption of these communication channels was fuelled by the accelerated increase of the internet service penetration rate that grew from 13% in 2006 to 67% in 2013 (TRC, 2013).

Consequently, MNO-U managed its communications regarding the 'learning history' aspect of customer retention through the adoption of an interactive communication system that allowed contemporary, influential, and immediate and highly interactive channels. Such an interactive system was aimed at enhancing all positive aspects of the customer experience by diagnosing any deficiencies even during the service production phase, but not after that.

Moreover, MNO-U developed its communication programme in this regard with the aim of maximising the firm's value creation capability through ensuring value perceived by customer during firm-customer interactions. The same technique used in managing utilitarian punishment (i.e. customer involvement) was also adopted in managing the learning history dimension of customer retention. Accordingly, MNO-U's communication programme was designed to enhance the customer-perceived value by involving the customer in the firm's communication programmes in a way that enabled

them to realise the positive association between these benefits and each of the depth, length, and breadth of this relationship with the firm.

According to Pollock (2007) 'Average Time to Respond' (ATR) represents a prominent key performance indicator (KPI) for service providers. Consequently, MNO-U's interactive communication programme system allowed the firm to raise its performance regarding this criterion through delegation of power, which enables staff to make immediate decisions, the issue which is directly and positively reflected in the customer's experience. In other words, MNO-U's system goes beyond monitoring customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction to the quick response, as this programme takes into account the dynamicity in reaction to any feedback or complaint. Also, it was designed to follow up the action taken through re-assessing customer satisfaction through the constant and interactive feedback generated by the system.

In conclusion, although communication and customer experience were taken into account by all service providers in managing the learning history aspect of customer retention, however, prominent variations emerged differentiating high and low marketing orientation in this regard. High marketing-orientation service providers approached customer service from a strategic and long-term view, and focused on extending the positive experience of customer through involving them in the firm's communication programme and increasing investment in this phase to enhance the perceived value by existing customers. Moreover, interactivity and dynamicity represent two important attributes that characterise the communication systems of high marketing-orientation firms.

6.4 Summary

This chapter evaluates the influence of the firm's levels of marketing orientation (MO) on the approaches and ways by which organisational performance is being managed. Thus, it links marketing orientation levels of telecommunications operators with the patterns and related mechanisms by which each sub-dimension of customer satisfaction and customer retention is managed by each telecommunications operator.

Many similarities were identified between the different telecommunications operators in managing the different sub-dimensions of customer satisfaction or customer retention.

Such similarities could be attributed to the nature of provided services and the industrial factors that firms are sharing and are being equally influenced by in the market.

The findings of the research however confirm significant variations between high and low marketing-orientation firms with regard to the patterns, approaches, and mechanisms by which firms manage their capabilities to achieve customer satisfaction and customer retention within a dynamic and changing environment. Telecommunications operators followed two different patterns in managing competitive advantage in the market which were associated with firms' levels of marketing orientation.

Data analysis stressed the importance of approaching marketing orientation from an integrated perspective. Marketing orientation was highlighted as a combination of two dimensions - behavioural and attitudinal, the view which constitutes a key success factor for marketing-oriented firms and which enables them to translate their attitudes efficiently on the ground.

Data management, value, customer emphasising, internal communication and internal organisational culture factors represent key variation areas that differentiate high marketing-orientation operators in managing value creation capability (i.e. customer satisfaction). In addition, value network perception, corporate identity, the interactive and dynamic communication system, and value-based firm-customer relationship (i.e. the positive approach) emerged as critical and long-term retention key factors associated with marketing-oriented service providers within the fast-changing and fierce competitive telecommunications environment.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

7.1 Overview

This chapter draws together the findings of the present research, and relates the data analysis results to the literature reviewed. In addition, as the aim of this chapter is to achieve a complete picture and consolidation of results, a reflection on the research objectives is also given. This is followed by discussion of the research contribution to marketing knowledge, and summary of the chapter.

The importance of the present research stems from its focus on the acquisition of further insight into the marketing orientation-organisational performance relationship in Jordan's telecommunications market. In contrast to the bulk body of studies on marketing orientation, this research was not concerned with re-examining the causal relationship between marketing orientation and organisational performance; rather it was focused on investigating the mechanisms and interrelationship underlying marketing orientation with the targeted organisational performance (as shown in figure 7.1), the aspect that has been neglected in the majority of prior research.

Consequently, this research was accomplished within a qualitative style focusing on 'how' rather than 'what' with regard to this relationship.

Accordingly, to attain an in-depth understanding of this relationship, and to identify the patterns that telecommunications operators follow in managing customer satisfaction and customer retention and then to investigate the influence of marketing orientation on these processes, represented the main aspects that evaluations, discussions and arguments of this research revolve around.

Figure 7.1 highlights the focus of this research as it is directed towards achieving more understanding of the influence of marketing orientation adoption on the ways by which each component and sub-dimension of customer satisfaction and customer retention is managed within the view of V-dRM. Meanwhile, the majority of previous relevant research focused on both sides of the 'marketing orientation-organisational

performance' equation while the mechanisms by which organisational performance is achieved and the internal components of this relationship were neglected to a large extent.

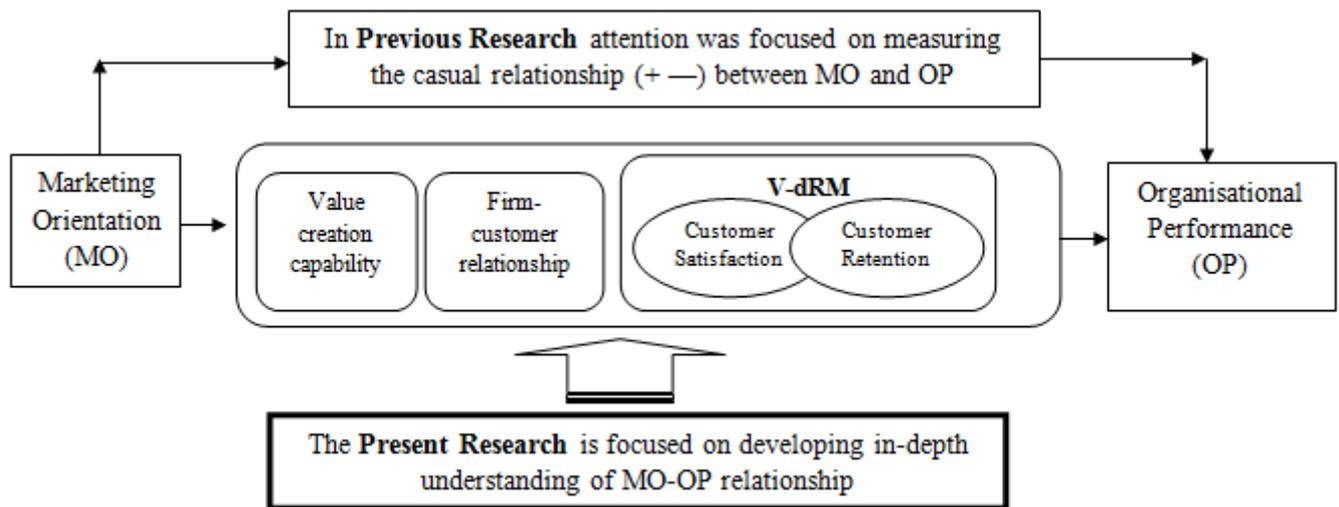


Figure 7.1: The Central Attention of Present Research Evaluation

Source: Ashour (2014)

7.2 Reflection on Research Objectives

The conclusions of this research were drawn from each objective, with the aim to synthesise the findings and drawing them together within a complete picture.

Research Objective (I. a): Determining the adopted level of marketing orientation (MO) for each telecommunications service provider in Jordan's market.

The intended outcomes of this research objective represents a substantial requirement for implementing the subsequent phases of evaluation [i.e. the effect of marketing orientation on the ways by which firms achieve their targeted organisational performance represented in customer satisfaction and customer retention]. In other words, the inclusion of this objective was to develop an overall perspective of the adopted levels of marketing orientation by the different telecommunications operators in the market, and to evaluate how managers in these firms perceive and implement marketing.

Findings relevant to this objective identified the variation between the main four telecommunications operators in the market regarding their adopted levels of marketing orientation. The research pointed out two different groups of operators: high marketing-orientation firms and low marketing-orientation firms; meanwhile the quantitative statistical applications (One-Way Anova and Scheffe Post Hoc test) confirmed this variation as both groups differed significantly from each other.

Although this research was not planned to re-examine the relationship between marketing orientation and organisational performance, results related to this objective were important as they were consistent with marketing-orientation literature assumptions in this regard. The findings of the study concur with Bunic (2007), who undertook a comprehensive review of 111 studies on marketing origination-business performance relationship in which 78% of positive effects was confirmed from the studied cases.

In general, findings relevant to objective (I.a) were in line with the central attention of marketing strategy which assumes the *positive association between marketing orientation and firms' organisational performance* (Ismail et al., 2009; Panayides, 2004; Vorhies & Harker, 2000; Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1999, 1997).

A closer look at some of the most prominent marketing performance indicators (e.g. market share and year-on-year (YOY) market growth analysis) for the different telecommunications operators in Jordan market during the period from 2006 to 2012 shows a positive relationship between a firm's adopted level of marketing orientation and marketing performance (*chapter four, section 4.4*).

To summarise, the importance of results relevant to objective (I. a) *is concluded in the given overall picture regarding the degree of marketing orientation for each service provider in Jordan's market. Moreover, the consistency of the initial findings of the research with marketing literature provides a solid ground for the subsequent steps of the research as the basis of the starting point of this study was supported by the bulk of the body of related literature (Conclusion 1)*.

Research Objective (I. b): To investigate the mechanisms of the marketing orientation-customer satisfaction relationship.

A. The influence of marketing orientation on ‘customer expectations management’

[the first component of the Expectations Disconfirmation Model EDM]

Regarding customer expectations, the findings of this dimension presented ‘*customer expectations level management*’ as a prominent issue highlighted the variation between high and low marketing-orientation operators. Marketing-oriented operators were more capable to maximise their value creation capability through ensuring the coordination of their organisational resources internally and externally, which in turn enabled these firms to promote higher levels of customer expectations.

At the internal level for instance, the strategic application of the dynamic capability view (i.e. integration) was managed by the marketing-oriented operators, MNO-Z efficiently in a way that supported the firm’s value creation capability. Focusing on marketing and technology capabilities in telecommunications, Mr Fadi Masoudi from MNO-Z said that:

... the important issue here is the integration and the merger between both of them [marketers and technicians]. Integration is the way to success.

It is argued that the internal coordination capability of MNO-Z served as an intermediate variable between firm orientation and the targeted organisational performance. In more detail, the integration of marketing and technological resources enables the firm to maximise its value creation. Thereafter, MNO-Z was more capable of raising the level of promised value to customer (customer expectations).

Accordingly, it was concluded that marketing orientation was reflected in enhancing firms’ capability to raise customer expectations level (Conclusion 2).

Theoretically, firms managed customer expectation assuming that they would achieve the level of value they promote. With regard to a firm’s commitment to the promised level of expectations, this process was managed by high marketing-orientation firms taking into account that any deficiency in ‘expectations-performance’ equation will have a direct and long-term negative influence on customer satisfaction. In addition, any negative experience in this regard will also affect customer retention as it is considered as learning history behaviour.

In order to manage ‘expectations-performance’ efficiently, marketing-oriented firms rely highly on market research and data management systems to identify their customers’ needs specifically, and to investigate what kinds of value they are looking for. Thus, customer expectations (firm promise) are designed carefully to meet customers’ needs and ambitions based on the outcomes of the firm’s data management system, and taking into account firm value creation capacity, too.

In other words, the adoption of marketing orientation in which identifying and fulfilling customer needs represents a dominant culture afforded these firms the advantage of enhancing their capabilities in designing, developing and delivering the ‘customer expectations message’ (promise) to meet the real needs of the customers efficiently. In contrast, low marketing orientation firms’ communication programmes were focused on promoting ‘what the firm has’, not ‘what the customer needs’ which seemed to express the aspects of sales orientation rather than the philosophy of marketing orientation which puts identifying and satisfying customer needs as priority.

Accordingly, it was concluded that marketing orientation has an influence on enhancing firms’ capability in matching between real customer needs and the firm’s made promise (customer expectations) (Conclusion 3).

B. The influence of marketing orientation on the affective aspects of customer satisfaction

[the second component of the Expectations Disconfirmation Model EDM]

Communication system and firm image emerged as two prominent areas that highlighted the influence of marketing-orientation adoption on managing the non-cognitive aspects of customer satisfaction.

In the telecommunications industry, to a large extent ‘communication’ represents an essential ingredient that is embedded in many different marketing sub-strategies, e.g. external aspects of the firm’s image, customer expectations, affective dimension of quality, informational reinforcements, and punishment facets of customer retention, among others. Thus, the ways by which communication programmes are planned and executed determines the success or failure for many service providers.

High marketing-orientation service providers were more able to develop and manage integrated communication systems in a way that supports all other related firm’s

strategies and activities to enhance the overall performance of the firm. For these firms, the dynamicity, responsiveness, and interactivity of the communication system that was also based on the continuous feedback were prominent themes that characterised marketing-oriented firms' communication programmes. In other words, marketing oriented firms enjoy distinct communication capabilities that work as a linkage between marketing orientation and the firms' ability to positively support their overall image; i.e. the prominent performance indicator in telecommunications services.

Accordingly, it was concluded that marketing orientation was reflected in enhancing a firm's capability to manage an integrated, interactive and dynamic communication system (Conclusion 4).

Furthermore, the low marketing-orientation 'firm image' strategy was managed by focusing basically on how external stakeholders view the firm. In contrast, the marketing-oriented 'firm image' was built based on a more comprehensive and integrated perception. The approach starts with internal components [corporate identity and corporate personality] to enable the building of a strong reputation that presents the firm's internal and external values.

MNO-O Jordan, for instance, developed 'firm image' by relying on promoting the firm's technological capability, international partnership, and capability to develop and launch a wide range of services (the image of the integrated operator). In other words, the firm's attention was directed towards the external aspects regarding how external stakeholders view the firm.

On the other hand, high marketing-orientation operators established an integrated approach comprising both external and internal components of image strategy. However, corporate identity based on the internal culture and the solid internal communication system of high marketing orientation operators represented a main underpinning of the firms' image strategy.

Accordingly, it was concluded that firm's identity (i.e. organisational culture and internal marketing aspects) represented the key success factor and the starting point of the high marketing-orientation firm's image strategy (Conclusion 5).

C. The influence of marketing orientation on managing the cognitive aspects of customer satisfaction

[the third component of the Expectations Disconfirmation Model EDM]

It is worth noting that findings relevant to the cognitive aspects of customer satisfaction showed an obvious similarity to the achieved results in the customer expectations dimension with regard to the attention given to the same key factors, drivers and approaches. An explanation for this closeness is that customer satisfaction results from the judgment of pre-exposure performance [expectations] and post-exposure perceived performance (Bateson, 1991). Thus, satisfaction is confirmed when the potential gap between both dimensions is closing or when performance is approximately equal to experiences (Ha, 2006). Consequently, firms' operational and marketing functions are managed with the aim of reaching the same level of performance that the customers have been promised. Thus, similarity in managing both dimensions is justified and expected.

With regard to the cognitive aspects of perceived performance, customer emphasis emerged as a central issue for high marketing-orientation operators which controls all processes and activities relevant to 'quality of what' (i.e. quality of core service). On the other hand, low marketing-orientation operators viewed quality of service from the perspective of "conformance to standards" (Feather & Sturges, 2003). According to these firms, standards of quality represents the most appropriate approach for managing quality of provided service as these standards are used by customers in the comparison of expectations with performance (Lewis & Booms, 1983).

While high marketing-oriented firms were keen to provide what the customer needs [as a reflection of firms' high marketing orientation], low marketing-orientation firms focused on the distinct standards based on their technological and managerial capabilities. Hence, these firms paid less attention to identifying and meeting customers' real wants.

We focus on the service that we are more able - and have the capability - to produce and provide.

Mr Saeed Tareefi/ MNO-O

Theoretically, each firm has different levels of different orientations - marketing orientation, sales orientation, product superiority among others - and it is unlikely to have a particular service provider with one exclusive orientation. However, in practice, the adoption of a particular genuine orientation has consequences as firm's different plans, approaches, programmes, and techniques are being managed consistent with this orientation.

Accordingly, it was concluded that marketing orientation has an influence on determining a firm's approach in managing 'quality of what': customer emphasising vs. conformance to standards (Conclusion 6).

According to *technology*, the second dimension of service quality, because of the nature of telecommunications as a techno-based industry, all firms gave great attention to technology settlement as a strategic aim for all operators. Hence, all operators agreed that keeping pace with new technology and enhancing the firm's ability to introduce new products/services requires managing technology within a strategic long-term view.

In contrast, at the tactical level, an obvious variation between high and low marketing-orientation firms was pointed out. High marketing-orientation firms gave more attention to "how to utilise technology", "suitability of technology" and "cultural determinants". Thus, *which* technology and *how* this technology should be managed was the focus of high marketing-orientation operators while formulating the firm's new product strategy. Meanwhile, coordination and technology-marketing integration were indicated as key success capabilities in managing this facet of service quality by marketing oriented service providers.

Accordingly, it was concluded that while marketing orientation has no critical influence on technology management at the strategic level, a substantial effect was shown at the tactical level, as it supported a firm's ability to harmonise between technological capabilities and customer needs which in turn enhanced customer's perceived satisfaction (Conclusion 7).

Similar to technology, at the strategic level, both high and low marketing-orientation operators viewed *employee* as a crucial success factor in the telecommunications industry. In addition, findings pointed out firms' consensus in considering the influential effect of employee performance — taking into account the inseparability

characteristic of service — on firm's image and customer satisfaction. However, operators' practices on the ground reflected a variation between high and low marketing-orientation firms in managing the 'relational aspects' of the quality of provided services. While quality of core represents *what* the consumer is provided with, employee performance is relevant to *how* the consumer perceives it (McDougall & Levesque, 2000). Gronroos (1985) stressed the considerable weight of relational aspects (e.g. employee, communication, delivering, complaints, etc) in customer judgment on the perceived quality.

Consistent with service relationship marketing logic, each of organisation, employee, and customer constitutes one of the three main actors in the interactive service marketing triangle (Zeithmal & Bitner, 1996). By the same token, marketing-oriented firms were more able to manage employee relationships with other actors of the service marketing triangle. Meanwhile the role of the employee was prominent in both internal and interactive marketing.

Marketing-oriented firms managed these interrelationships assuming that, to enable the delivery of the firm's promise to be commensurate with customer expectations [interactive marketing], the firm should start with establishing and strengthening the relationship with its internal customers - i.e. employees [internal marketing] - and focusing on satisfying them first. This in turn would result in superior performance regarding *enabling* and *delivering* the firm's promise, which are the two employee-related relationships within the context of the service marketing triangle, as shown in figure 7.2 below.

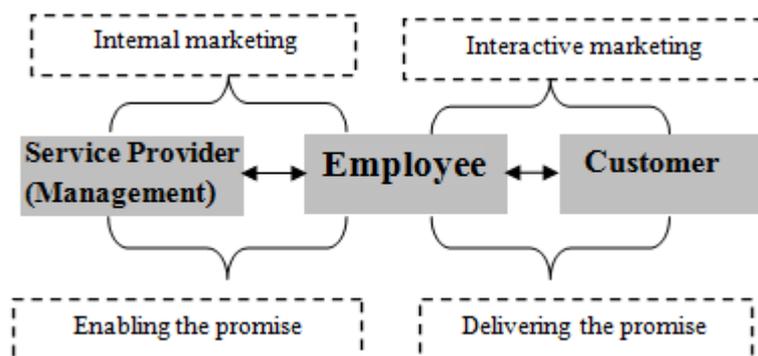


Figure 7.2: Marketing Orientation and Employees' Internal and Interactive Relationships

Source: Adapted from Zeithmal and Bitner (1996)

In detail, the internal communication system and internal culture of high marketing-orientation operators enabled all employees to share the same values (e.g. spirit of challenge, esprit de corps, and coordination). This idea is in accordance with Day's (1994) work, *The Capabilities of Market-driven Organizations*, which described the mechanisms of such intermediate capability as the 'glue' that enables a firm to bring its resources together and to deploy them advantageously.

Thus, the capabilities related to the 'coherent internal culture' which characterises employee strategy of high marketing-orientation firms was reflected positively in the performance of relational aspects (Gronroos, 1985) of perceived quality of provided services.

Accordingly, it was concluded that internal culture represented a key success factor in employee strategy of high marketing-orientation firms, as it enhanced the performance with regard to enabling and delivering the firm's promise (Conclusion 8).

With regard to the high marketing orientation operators, *processes* were managed in a way that enhanced the delivered value to the customer. The process was accomplished at two levels. (i) At business unit level: all service production-related processes and all customer journey steps were designed to raise the perceived value by end-customer based on ensuring the internal coordination capability. (ii) At the market level, compared to low marketing-orientation operators, high marketing-orientation firms showed greater tendency to move from traditional centralised value creation perceptions to more general models associated with partnerships and value networks. The approach is consistent with the recent development thoughts of both supply chain management (SCM) and marketing (Lusch et al., 2010) literature, in responding to telecommunications shifting from a focus on the advantages of digital over analogue, and transmission of digital 'bits' to content and services as highlighted in figure 7.3 below.

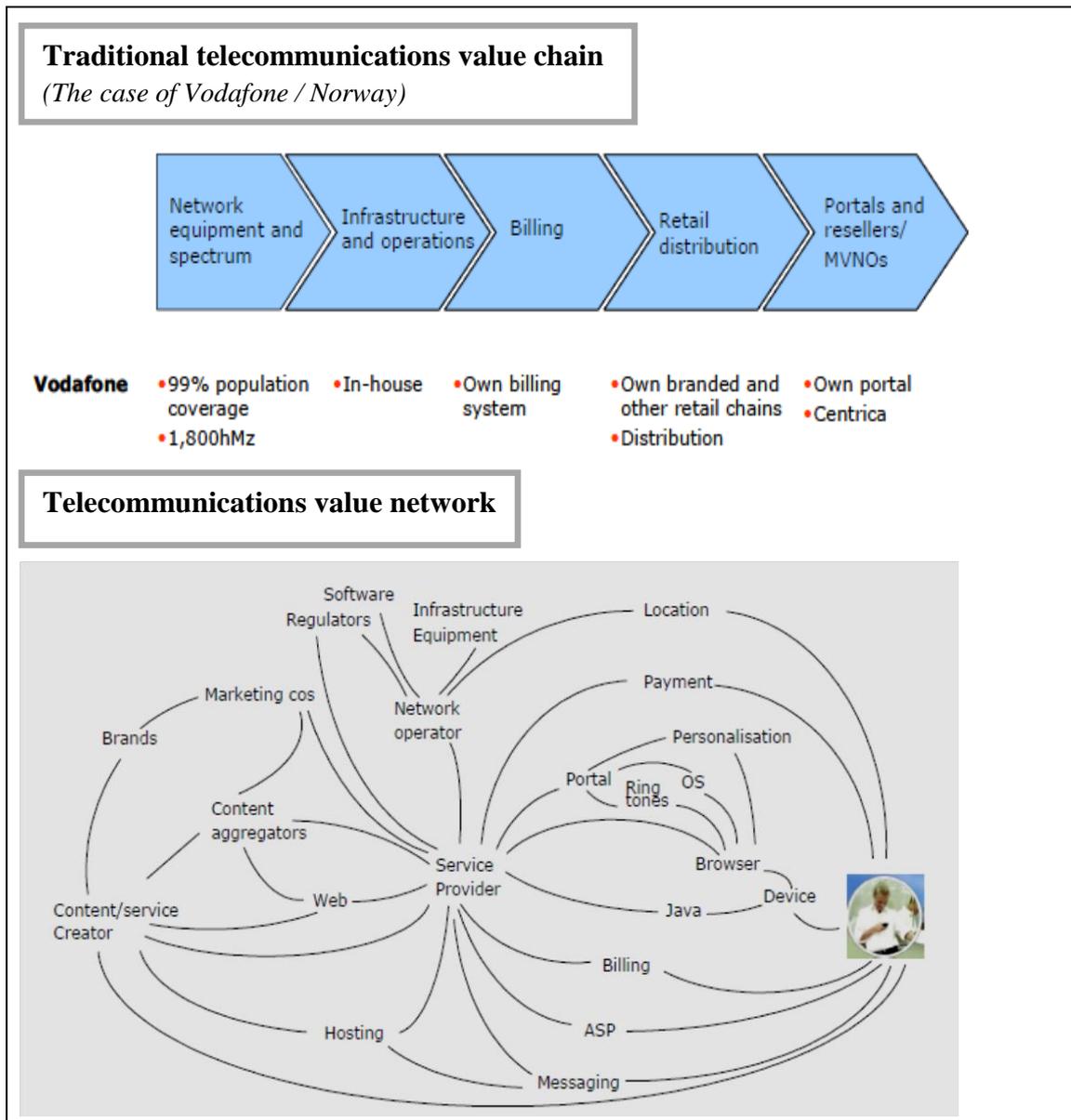


Figure 7.3: Telecommunications Value Network and Traditional Telecommunications Value Chain of the Telecommunications Operator

Source: Peppard and Rylander (2006)

The tendency towards traditional value networks and more centralised models by MNO-O and MNO-X is obvious. Focusing on the distribution process for instance, both firms relied on their internal resources rather than developing boundary-spanning capabilities within the market they operate in. While MNO-O has more than 200 branches (according to Mr Moner Kettaneh from MNO-O) which represents the highest number of branches compared to other operators in the market, MNO-X – despite its limited market - has the highest number of employees in Jordan's market:

MNO-X structure was huge compared to its niche market. The number of MNO-X employees exceeded the number of other companies' employees combined.

Mr Talal Al Sulaiman/ MNO-X

On the other hand, the marketing-oriented firm, MNO-U developed a dynamic and extensive distribution network that included many external partners and agents, taking into account that “*MNO-U employees' numbers are lower, but more efficient*” as Mrs Nancy Mahadin from MNO-U argued.

Enhancing the satisfaction perceived by the end-customer represented in the firm's ‘value-creation capability’ was the focal point that high marketing-orientation operators’ processes revolved around. Meanwhile, the value network model which is based on firms’ distinct internal and external coordination capabilities emerged as an appropriate approach, consistent with today’s manifestations of alliances and partnerships orientations:

Adopting a contrasting network approach, organisations focus not on the company or the industry, but the value-creating system itself, within which different economic actors –supplier, partners, allies, and customers – work together to co-produce value (Peppard & Rylander, 2006, p.7).

To conclude, while marketing-oriented operators managed their processes within the context of the value network, on the other hand, low marketing-orientation firms practiced a more controllable approach in managing internal processes and other external value-creation activities, which seemed to be akin to vertical integration within the supply chain model rather than partnership and external coordination perception.

Accordingly, it was concluded that marketing orientation has an influence on enhancing a firm's external coordination capability which in turn resulted in the adoption of the value network model rather than the traditional value chain perception (Conclusion 9).

Moreover, because of the unique capabilities relevant to their strategic orientation e.g. innovation, integration, and market information management etc, high marketing orientation firms were more able to adapt to the changing environment, the result which is consistent with Vorhies and Harker (2000) findings of a positive relationship between a firm's marketing orientation and its subsequent adaptability.

It was obvious that marketing oriented firms were more capable of responding and adapting quickly (i.e. criteria of time) and efficiently (i.e. criteria of action) to the potential changes in the market. In telecommunications, the environment is volatile and different changes are expected in the dynamic market; for example, the entry of a new competitor, new regulations, price amendments or the launching of new services by competitors, and critical complaints about the provided service, among other factors. Thus, to adapt efficiently to the surrounding environment will support the firm's overall value creation capability as adaptation reflects a firm's dynamic capability to constantly renew and recreate its resources and capabilities in response to the changing environment (Wang & Ahmad, 2007).

Accordingly, it was concluded that marketing orientation has an influence on enhancing a firm's adaptability, which in turn resulted in maximising customer perceived value (Conclusion 10).

Research Objective (I. c): To investigate the mechanisms of the marketing orientation-customer retention relationship.

(The components of the Behavioural Perspective Model (BPM))

With regard to the influence of marketing orientation on the ways firms manage their activities to maximise the functional benefits perceived by customers, marketing-orientated operators approached utilitarian reinforcements based on customer-emphasising orientation. Meanwhile, data management emerged as a key success factor that differentiated these firms in managing utilitarian reinforcements as it works as a link enabling the implementation of customer emphasising to meet the real needs and preferences of the customer.

Moreover, the adoption of customer orientation, and the sophisticated data management system by high marketing-orientation firms was reflected in more focused segmentation and more balanced personalisation marketing strategy. On the other hand, conformance to standards and technical superiority was the strategic vision that low marketing-orientation firms relied on to enable maximising the perceived functional benefits of provided services. Consequently, the low customer orientation of these firms was translated into less focused segmentation and marketing programmes that seemed to be closer to mass and general marketing strategy.

Accordingly, it could be concluded that marketing orientation has an influence on determining a firm's approach in managing the functional benefits mediated by provided services (i.e. utilitarian reinforcement): balanced personalisation vs. mass marketing (Conclusion 11).

Furthermore, research findings showed a critical influence of marketing orientation on the way by which firms manage internal and external components of firm overall image (i.e. corporate reputation). Meanwhile, in telecommunications, because of the lack of tangible elements of provided services, symbolic and social benefits (i.e. informational reinforcement) associated with the image of service provider constitute an important factor influencing customer retention behaviour.

Marketing-orientated firms enjoy an advantage that allows a clearer understanding of the firm's vision and mission which in turn enabled them to manage the internal stakeholders' perceptions about the firm (i.e. corporate identity) (Shamma, 2012) in a way that efficiently reflects the values and culture of the firm.

Consequently, high marketing orientation operators built corporate reputation (i.e. firm overall images) starting with establishing a coherent internal culture that enabled all members to share the same perception regarding the identity and personality of the firm they belong to. Then, external factors of image were managed in a way that expressed the corporate identity that had already been established. Thus, the marketing-oriented firm was able to develop an integrated firm image strategy in which all internal and external components serve the overall image of the firm. This finding corroborates the ideas of Barnett et al. (2006). In their work *Corporate Reputation: The Definitional Landscape*, the authors stressed that corporate reputation management should start with corporate identity in a way reflecting the character and values of the firm.

On the other hand, low marketing-orientation firms focused on the external components of the firm's image (e.g. corporate external communications, corporate symbolism, etc) (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001). In other words, internal culture was given less attention by these firms; this was reflected negatively in corporate identity. For example, MNO-O corporate identity was confused between the local and the international identity which negatively affected the overall image of the firm.

Accordingly, it was concluded that a firm's internal culture represented a key success factor in high marketing-orientation firms' image strategy. It enabled establishing a coherent corporate identity which in turn supported the external components efforts of firm image (Conclusion 12).

Moreover, marketing orientation has an influence on how firms minimise the aversive outcomes of adoption and repurchasing process (i.e. utilitarian punishments) in order to ensure customer retention. In detail, the adoption of marketing orientation has an influence on firms' approaches in managing the utilitarian punishment regarding switching barriers to reduce the utilitarian punishments perceived by customers.

Related literature highlighted two approaches to manage the aversive outcomes of adoption or repurchasing in order to manage customer switching behaviour: (i) The commonly used approach in dealing with the threats of switching behaviour is based on maximising customers' perceived costs and barriers of switching [negative approach] (Wen-hua et al., 2011; Klemperer, 1995). (ii) The second approach involves enhancing customers' perceived value through extending the benefits associated with the firm-customer relationship [positive approach] (Ul-Haq et al., 2011; Polo & Sese, 2009).

Findings of this research highlighted the inclination of high marketing-orientation firms towards the adoption of a proactive and positive-based retention approach. The technique depends basically on rewarding customers to reduce the aversive outcomes (i.e. utilitarian punishments) of re-purchasing behaviour. Meanwhile, the involving of the customer within the firm's communication and retention programmes that focus on rewarding the loyal customer, and at the same time, raising their awareness of values relevant to their relationship with the firm, represents the practical translation for this approach on the ground. This notion was supported by Light et al. (2010), who argued that customer satisfaction which reflects the overall value perceived by customer represents an appropriate solution for the challenge of market maturity and the continuous increasing of penetration rates in telecommunications. Thus, because of the considerable values and benefits associated with the firm-customer relationship, the customer would not want to risk switching, and this will result in positive customer retention (Ul-Haq et al., 2011). On the other hand, low marketing-orientation service providers showed a tendency towards the common used technique in managing

switching behaviour that relies on enhancing the procedural, financial, or social constraints and barriers of switching.

To summarise, marketing orientation has an influence on determining a firm's approach in managing switching behaviour: enhancing perceived value to manage customer retention [positive approach] vs. enhancing perceived constraints to manage customer retention [negative approach].

Accordingly, it was concluded that customer involvement in a value-based relationship with a firm's positive approach represented a key success factor for high marketing-orientation firms in managing the utilitarian punishment aspect of customer retention (Conclusion 13).

The 'learning history dimension of customer retention' behaviour is influenced highly by customer judgment on all aspects of 'customer experience' with the service/service provider. Despite the importance of performance, reliability and stability of core service [technical aspects of quality] (Kurts & Clow, 1998) in a customer's evaluation of previous experience, however, data analysis presented it as a basic capability that all service providers should possess to enable them to operate in the market, but not to gain competitive advantage over competitors. On the other hand, the *relational* aspects (Gronroos, 1985) (e.g. communication system, customer service, etc) included several alternatives that allowed high marketing-orientation firm to develop a critical capabilities which enabled them to differentiate while managing customer experience.

By the same token, in order to facilitate managing the learning history dimension of consumer retention, the relational aspects which indicate *how* service was delivered and *how* the customer perceived it, was the focus of the marketing-oriented firm's communication system. Such a programme was managed taking into account two facets: (i) the continuous and interactive feedback and (ii) the dynamicity in reaction through delegation of power, the technique which is expected to have a direct and positive influence on customer experience.

Accordingly, it could be concluded that relational aspects of quality [e.g. interactive communication programme, customer service, etc] represent a key success factor for high marketing-orientation firm in managing the learning history dimension of consumer retention behaviour (Conclusion 14).

Research Objective (II): To evaluate the influence of marketing orientation (MO) on service providers' dynamic capabilities.

(The applications of the Dynamic Capability View (DCV) (i.e. innovation, integration, and adaptation)

Firms' different orientations have different influences on the achievement of organisational performance and on the ways firms manage their capabilities to achieve it (Day, 1990; Day & Wensley, 1988). Particularly, to investigate the influence of marketing orientation on firms' value creation capability (represented in the applications of DCV: innovation, integration/coordination and adaptation), constitutes the intended aim of employing the analytical logic of the Dynamic Capability View (DCV) (Luna-Reyes et al., 2012) in this regard.

A. The influence of marketing orientation on innovation (i.e. the prominent application of the Dynamic Capability View (DCV))

Findings indicated the association between the adoption of marketing orientation and innovation applications. Both service providers, MNO-Z and MNO-U were better able to adopt and implement new ideas, processes and products successfully (i.e. innovation as defined by Hurley and Hult, 1998). Such capability is crucial in telecommunications, as it remains an important variable affecting the satisfaction of customers (Nemati et al., 2010) and repeating purchase (Foxall, 1994). This finding corroborates the ideas of Qureshi and Mian (2010) who indicated the role of marketing orientation at the business level as a supportive environment for innovativeness. Accordingly, the focus of high marketing-orientation operators on the values of creativity and innovativeness was an imperative response for meeting consumer innovativeness and as a reflection of their high marketing orientation; while fulfilling the needs of the customer constitutes a priority for these firms.

Thus, both marketing-oriented operators (MNO-Z and MNO-U) established their firms' organisational culture in a way innovativeness constitutes a considerable included value.

Success depends on an integrated system that is based on internal culture... challenge and creative solutions.

Mrs Reem Sabbagh / MNO-U Communication Manager

According to MNO-Z, innovativeness is a comprehensive concept that should permeate every corporate function:

We seek to enrich innovation ... through a comprehensive interrelated system starting with giving attention to the high quality of services, ending with an after-sales services programme.

Mr Abdunaser Marwan / MNO-Z Mass Segment Manager–Marketing

Marketing orientation and consumer innovativeness

Organisations that operate in high-velocity and turbulent environments must take responsibility for introducing greater levels of entrepreneurship into all aspects of marketing efforts. While firm innovation reflects its capability to introduce new ideas, concepts or technologies with the potential to enhance value creation (Ehret & Galanakis, 2011), consumer innovativeness refers to the tendency to buy new products more often and more quickly than other people (Ho & Wu, 2011; Midgley & Dowling, 1978).

As noted above, firms that manage to differentiate the early adopters from general consumers will have more chances of success regarding the new launched products or services (Hirunyawipada & Paswan, 2006). In this light, marketing-oriented firms were better able to identify and categorise customers regarding innovativeness criteria as the high attention paid by these firms to customer emphasising was translated into focused segmentation levels and more personalised (tailored) marketing strategy.

According to Mr Marwan of MNO-Z, innovation should be managed by taking into account (i) market differences: needs, wants and innovativeness as customers vary *regarding the adoption of new services*; and (ii) innovation should be managed in a way that enhances the firm's value creation capability (in line with Ehret and Galanakis' (2011) viewpoint above):

Early adopters of new services and new technology are looking for more than voice call services; they look for something to be new and creative, e.g., M wallet, business solutions, 3G, voice over IP, Wimax and others. Those customers are the real source of a company's revenues. So, a firm's marketing efforts should be directed towards innovation in developing services and the diversity of provided services and packages taking into account the needs and characteristics of such a target market.

Mr Abdunaser Marwan/ MNO-Z

Ehret and Galanakis (2011) stressed that meeting customer requirements is an imperative for effective innovation activities. Particularly in telecommunications, ‘idea generation’ capability (McKelvie & Davidsson, 2009) is of vital importance for service providers. Along the same line of argument, marketing-oriented firms are expected to be more able to provide a supportive environment for innovativeness as marketing philosophers are concerned basically with amplifying the voice of the customer and tracking their different needs, preferences and ambitions.

It is worth noting that high marketing-orientation service providers were more able to harmonise between idea generation, innovation and technology-related capabilities on one side, and customer needs on the other side. The above finding is consistent with those of other studies’ results. For instance, Keskin (2006) considered a firm’s innovativeness and learning as intermediate capabilities bridging the firm’s marketing orientation and performance, and also confirmed the positive impact of marketing orientation on a firm’s performance. In addition, the present finding is in accord with Carbonell and Escudero’s (2010) results, which affirmed the positive association between the behavioural aspects of marketing orientation (i.e. intelligence generation, intelligence dissemination and responsiveness) and new product performance.

Innovation is a dynamic capability; it is not just a simple process but is embedded in processes (Wang & Ahmad, 2007). By the same token, MNO-U managed this capability in line with this perspective in which innovativeness represented an integral value that was included in the firm’s different marketing sub-strategies. For example, while developing the firm’s product strategy:

Young people represent MNO-U’s targeted market. This market is always looking for what is new in telecommunication services and innovations.

Mr Anwer Ajlouni /Market Research Manager

In pricing strategy:

The role of effective, creative and innovative management of our resources at lowest cost is crucial. It enables firm to control its costs and to compete at lower prices.

Mrs Nancy Mahadin/ MNO-U Pricing and Planning Specialist

and also in firm image strategy,

...also, other factors were planned to support our general marketing strategy, that we are a new company which focuses on innovation, youth and renewal.

Mr Khader Sawalha/ MNO-U Planning and Loyalty Manager

On the other hand, regarding low marketing-orientation operators, innovation was associated with the adoption of new technology and a firm's capability in launching new services. For example, MNO-O Jordan linked firm innovation to its partnership with Franc Telecom, which allocated "USD 2.4 billion" for product development and new technology research, as Mr Moner Kettaneh from MNO-O stated. Meanwhile, to which degree this imported technology really matches customer needs, and also its compatibility with cultural determinants was given less attention by the firm:

MNO-O Jordan is part of the large international group (France Telecom) who is present in 220 countries with more than 100 million subscribers around the world. Therefore, we are the leader in Jordan's market in terms of provided services and innovation. Recently, we have introduced the third generation of telecommunication services (3G) in the market.

Mr Basheer Al Khaire / MNO-O International Carrier Services and Sales

Contrary to the above perception, Teece (2011) emphasised that, in the global economy, investing in technology – and only technology – is unlikely to pay off.

Accordingly, it was concluded that marketing orientation represented a supportive environment for innovation capability (Conclusion 15).

B. The influence of marketing orientation on coordination and adaptation (i.e. the prominent applications of the Dynamic Capability View (DCV))

While *coordination* capability describes a firm's ability to integrate (combine) its resources (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000) to shape new competencies (Protogerou et al., 2008), *adaptive* capability refers to abilities related to problem-solving and speed to identify and capitalise on emerging market opportunities (Hooley et al., 1992; Chakrovarthy, 1982).

According to Iansiti and Clark (1994, p.565), firm can develop two types of coordination: internal and external. While internal integration represents the capacity for extensive coordination between a firm's different departments and sub-units in managing its internal resources, external coordination is concerned with the firm's capabilities "that span the boundary with its external environment and explore responses to its evolution".

Findings of the present research pointed out high marketing-orientation firms' superiority in developing and managing coordination and adaptation capabilities in a way that maximises the firms' performance at the internal as well as the external levels.

At the internal level

In addition to the integration of marketing-technology capability, the firm's internal resources were managed by high marketing-orientation firms taking into account coordination/integration to be enclosed and permeated within all different marketing processes and activities. The approach enhanced the firm's overall value creation capability, and allowed hard-to-copy advantages for these firms, thus differentiating them from competitors.

Dynamic capabilities are not simply processes, but are embedded in processes which are developed over time through complex interactions (Wang & Ahmad, 2007, p.10) among the firm's resources. Accordingly, the achievement of coordination/integration represents a distinct source of competitive advantage as such capabilities are built rather than bought in the market (Makadok, 2001). Along the same line of argument, MNO-Z built its internal culture where coordination represented an integral distinct value affecting all other processes and activities:

....and they accomplish their jobs, within internal organisational culture focusing on cooperation and coordination.

Mr Abdalnaser Marwan / MNO-Z Mass Segment Manager –Marketing

Furthermore, one of the most important coordination capabilities that differentiated high marketing-orientation firms from low ones is the firm's capability to integrate its marketing-technological capability. Such capability represents a key success factor in telecommunications:

...marketers are open-minded while technical people prefer to work on the ground and generally they are pragmatic. In my opinion, the important issue here is the integration and the merging of both of them. Integration is the way to success.

Mr Fadi Masoudi / MNO-Z Corporate Sales Manager

The present finding is in agreement with Song et al. (2005) who concluded that a firm's ability to integrate and coordinate marketing and technological capabilities would be reflected positively in the firm's organisational performance.

At the external level

Collaborating with actors from outside of an organisation, such as consultants, or suppliers, has proven to be a success factor for business process change (Bjoern & Henser, 2011). In line with this, findings indicated that high marketing-orientation firms were better able to enhance value creation capability via the development of boundary-spanning capabilities. The capability that represents a firm's ability to manage its internal and external emphasises bridging outside-in processes and inside-out processes (Day, 1994) in a way that maximises the sum performance of the overall processes.

Dynamic capabilities are a firm's behavioural orientation (Wang & Ahmad, 2007) and boundary-spanning capability reflects the firm's tendency toward linking internal resources with external networks. Meanwhile, value-creating network perception in which different economic actors — supplier, partners and allies — work together to co-produce value was the adopted choice by marketed-oriented firms.

Thus, the adopted approach by marketing-oriented firms was consistent with the broad orientation of supply chain management (SCM) toward partnerships and value networks (Lusch et al., 2010).

Accordingly, it was concluded that marketing orientation has an influence on enhancing a firm's ability to develop and manage internal and coordination external coordination capabilities advantageously (Conclusion 16).

Compared to other firms, high marketing-orientation firms were also more able to *adapt* to the surrounded environment efficiently. This finding was supported by the assumptions of marketing-orientation literature that postulates the positive association

between adopted level of marketing orientation and a firm's ability in managing action initiation (responsiveness) (Zebal & Goodwin, 2011). This finding also corroborates the ideas of Charles et al. (2012) who followed the proposition of resource based-view to interpretive the influence of marketing orientation on the firm's organisational performance. The authors concluded that marketing-oriented firms enjoy the capability of knowledge management which in turn enabled them to perform better in responding to the surrounding environment, and hence to achieve the intended performance.

Accordingly, it was concluded that marketing orientation has an influence on enhancing a firm's ability to develop and manage adaptation capabilities advantageously (Conclusion 17).

7.3 Consolidation of Results -The Complete Picture

Genuine marketing orientation is an integrated attitudinal-behavioural perspective

With the passage of time, competition becomes tougher as companies become more experiences and more familiar with the procedures and techniques of the traditional implementations of marketing. In Jordan, where the telecommunications market has shifted to the phase of maturity, to maintain a firm's valuable customers represents a challenge for the survival and growth of all service providers. In addition, the nature of the telecommunications industry regarding the rapidly evolving technology, the fast-changing and fluid environment and the low switching costs, has complicated firms' mission to satisfy and protect their customers.

Meanwhile, in such a competitive scenario, marketing orientation offers an effective solution as several previous studies have substantiated the positive association between marketing orientation particularly and the achievement of competitive advantage represented in firm's organisational performance (e.g. Charles et al., 2012; Rodriguez & Berrio, 2011; Ismail et al., 2009; Panayides, 2004; Vorhies & Harker, 2000; Vorhies et al., 1999).

From an attitudinal perspective, marketing orientation is defined as an organisational philosophy that focuses on determining and meeting the needs and desires of customers. Consequently, marketing philosophers view marketing as a dominant culture

(Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1999:1997; Deshpande et al., 1993; Hooley et al., 1990) guiding all of an organisation's activities. Following the same line of argument, marketing orientation was viewed as a culturally-based behavioural perspective (Menguc, 1996; Siguaw et al., 1994; Narver & Slater, 1990) considering marketing as an internal culture by which the achievement of sustainable competitive advantage is attained through delivering superior value to customers.

In contrast, marketing orientation has behavioural facets too. In order to attain the intended superiority regarding marketing orientation philosophy (i.e. identifying and satisfying customer needs), the adoption of a marketing orientation culture should be accompanied with behavioural dimensions, e.g. market intelligence (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990), interfunctional coordination of marketing activities and relationships and action initiation (responsiveness) (Zebal & Goodwin, 2011).

Accordingly, the notion of marketing is comprehensive, and in order to increase the potency of marketing orientation influence on organisational performance, marketing orientation should be approached from an integrated perspective including the attitudinal and behavioural aspects. Hence, any deficiencies or even ignoring to any aspect will weaken the firm's overall value creation capability which is the main mission for the marketing-oriented firm.

'How' rather than 'what' is the key success factor of marketing-oriented firms

An in-depth review of the research conclusions indicated that a main variation between high and low marketing-orientation firms is represented in the approach by which these firms manage the different components of customer satisfaction and customer retention.

From the viewpoint of low marketing-orientation firms, in telecommunications, superiority is attributed to the firm's capabilities in identifying and possessing [*what*] the keys success elements that commensurate with the nature of the telecommunications industry, such as infrastructures, technology and brand name, etc.

In contrast, high marketing-orientation firms concentrate on [*how*] to manage these factors in a way that increases its perceived value by the customer. Thus, these firms gave more attention to the ways, details, methods and interrelationships that elements are managed and based on.

In general, telecommunications services are operated by licenced companies that are required to possess huge managerial and technological requirements. Also, because of the common strategic alliances with other international conglomerates and groups it is expected that all telecommunications operators have the tolerable ability to identify the different success factors in this industry, e.g. technology, value, firm image, segmentation and firm-customer relationship. However, findings of this research showed an essential variation between low and high marketing-orientation firms in managing these aspects in a way that enables enhancing the customer's perceived value (i.e. customer satisfaction) and managing the firm-customer relationship (i.e. customer retention), the two prominent success factors in the telecommunications industry.

The role of marketing orientation was critical as it worked as a supportive environment (Day, 2011), and stimulated firms' capacity to renew competencies, as well as to achieve congruence with the changing business environment; the idea which corroborates the main assumptions of DCV (Teece, 2009; Newbert, 2007; Teece et al., 1997). As a result, a marketing-oriented firm could perform better relative to its competitors with regard to *how* to manage key factors of customer satisfaction and customer retention in a way that increases its perceived value by the customer within the long-term view.

High marketing-orientation firms are more capable of translating their attitudes into practice on the ground

Findings of this research clearly showed a discrepancy between the adopted attitudes and practical behaviours of low marketing-orientation service providers. Hence, for these firms, it seems there is a missing link between firms' attitudes and behaviour as firms' organisational practices and activities were inconsistent with what the firm expressed towards relevant issues. An explanation for this paradox may be attributed to the lack of a clear and coherent internal culture which is supposed to lead organisational behaviour and activities in these firms.

On the other hand, internal culture of marketing-oriented firms represents a key success factor for all sub-marketing strategies. A firm's culture that encompasses the values of customer emphasising, spirit of challenge and coordination, among others, constitutes a solid base and starting point for other functional activities and procedures. The efficient

deployment of the firm's values — that shape internal organisational culture at all managerial levels — provided an implicit guidebook instructing the implementations of the firm's marketing strategies, and leading all functional activities in line with one dominant vision - i.e. the firm's internal culture.

This interpretation is in accordance with the research carried out on the influence of a firm's strategic orientation within tech-based markets by Gatignon and Xuereb (1995) who highlighted the critical role of the firm's strategic orientation choice in *guiding* the actions which lead to superior performance.

Furthermore, marketing-oriented firms were more capable of understanding customers' needs and wants. In these firms, processes related to identifying the real needs and preferences of customers then the response to these needs (i.e. product strategy) were all based on the outcomes of the firm's dynamic data management system. Such a system reflects *what the customer needs rather than what the business thinks is right for the customer* - the notion which concluded the attitudinal aspect of marketing orientation philosophy.

To conclude, both of the attitudinal and behavioural aspects of marketing orientation work together, mutually reinforcing the overall performance of the firm. Accordingly, marketing-oriented firms were better able to translate their attitudes and visions into executable programmes because of the distinct capabilities they were able to develop and manage.

Furthermore, marketing orientation offers an advantage that allows a clearer understanding of firms' vision and mission, which in turn enabled them to accomplish the planned programmes on the ground efficiently, and in a way to be guided by the firm's internal culture. Hence, marketing-oriented firms were more able to understand customers' needs, and also were more able to develop and implement the most appropriate marketing mix to fulfil these needs of the customers efficiently.

7.4 Contribution to knowledge

[WHAT] is the influence of marketing orientation on a firm's organisational performance was the implicit question that has been heavily investigated by the bulk body of marketing orientation research. However, *[HOW]* the adoption of marketing

orientation influences the patterns and mechanisms by which a firm achieves this performance, represented a considerable gap, and neglected area, in literature that deserved to be pursued. In that vein, the majority of research carried out on marketing orientation aimed at gauging the causal relationship between firms' marketing orientation and business performance (e.g. Mokhtar et al., 2009; Dikmen et al., 2005; Panayides, 2004; Vorhies & Harker, 2000; Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1997, 1999; Greenley, 1995; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993).

Contrary to many previous studies, this research by adopting the interpretive qualitative approach gives great attention to gaining further insight into the relationship of marketing orientation and competitive advantage [not the causal relationship]. Thus, it extends the marketing orientation literature by investigating the mechanisms and interrelationships that underlie the relationship between this strategic vision and each of customer satisfaction and customer retention, the two prominent marketing performance indicators in the telecommunications industry.

According to the research framework, to maintain a long-term value-based relationship with the customer is a key issue in today's volatile and dynamic market. Simultaneously, the value-driven relationship marketing (V-dRM) perspective presents customer retention (CR) as substantial component reflecting the firm's capability to develop and sustain its market base in the long run.

Meanwhile, sustainability of competitive advantage has not been explored sufficiently and many relevant studies were often carried out from quantitative approach, with focus on selecting short-run financial or marketing indicators (Gebhardt et al., 2006). Accordingly, this research is an attempt to contribute to knowledge by highlighting the influences of marketing orientation on the patterns and related mechanisms by which firms manage customer retention which is viewed as a long-term marketing indicator that represents a firm's competitive position.

Different patterns, approaches, and techniques were followed by the marketing-oriented operators aimed at managing the rewards (i.e. utilitarian and informational reinforcements) and aversive outcomes (i.e. utilitarian and informational punishments) (Foxall & Greenley, 2000) of consumer retention behaviour. Consequently, each of value network perception, the interactive and dynamic communication system, and

value-based firm-customer relationship (i.e. the positive approach) were suggested as critical and long-term retention key factors associated with marketing-oriented TSPs within the fast changing and fierce competitive environment. Accordingly, a model of 'corporate reputation management' was provided as a strategic approach to enable the enhancing of the informational reinforcements and controlling the informational punishments consequences of customer retention behaviour.

Consequently, this research contributes to relevant knowledge while focusing the attention towards investigating the influence of marketing orientation on firms' organisational performance within a long-term setting through tracking the patterns and mechanisms by which customer retention is built to enable evaluation of the influence of marketing orientation in related settings.

A firm's strategic orientation is main determinant that affects its capabilities (Qureshi & Mian, 2010) while building competitive advantage. Some strategic orientations are constraining while others are considered as a supportive setting for a firm's capabilities to be more dynamic (Day, 2011) in responding to customer needs as well as environment changes.

The Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV) represents a value creation theory (Tywoniak, 2007) examining how a firm integrates and reconfigures its resources and capabilities to *attain* and *sustain* competitive advantage (Newbert, 2007; Wang & Ahmed, 2007; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Teece et al., 1997). It is a logical extension of the Resource-based View (RBV) in response to the criticisms it attracts as being 'static' and ignoring factors surrounding resources; instead assuming that they simply 'exist' (Rajala, 2009). Considering the criticisms levelled at RBV, this research adopts the Dynamic Capabilities View as an analytical tool to evaluate the influence of marketing orientation on the mechanisms of building customer satisfaction and customer retention based on the extent of innovation, integration and adaptation (Teece et al., 1997) achieved by firms.

Results of research highlighted marketing orientation as a supportive environment for developing dynamic capabilities. Hence, marketing-oriented firms were more able to 'innovate', 'integrate' and renew their internal and external capabilities into new

competencies, in a way enhancing the firms' value creation capability (reflected positively in customer satisfaction capability).

By the same token, marketing-oriented firms were more able to develop and manage capabilities that enabled them to 'adapt' to a changing surrounding environment, the capability which enhanced these firms' ability to react efficiently to the reinforcements and punishments consequences of consumer behaviour (reflected positively in customer retention capability).

While innovation and integration (coordination) offered the marketing-oriented firms a valuable and inimitable advantage in enhancing their value creation capability (i.e. source of competitive advantage), adaptation capability contributed in neutralising the aversive effects of environmental factors that may threaten the continuity of this desirable situation. Thus, it served in extending the period of superiority (Reeves & Deimeler, 2011) that firms enjoy (i.e. sustainability of competitive advantage) in a dynamic and turbulent environment.

Consequently, this research contributes to knowledge by enriching the Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV) with regard to illustrating its applications from the 'marketing orientation' perspective as the adopted strategic alternative through investigating firms' performance regarding innovation, integration and adaptation in changing and competitive environments.

Furthermore, although this research was not intended to re-examine the causal association between marketing orientation and organisational performance, the context of findings of this research represents another contribution to marketing orientation literature. In detail, although several studies have been conducted in the context of assessing firms' orientations' effects on building an inimitable competitive position for manufacturers (e.g. Mokhtar et al., 2009; Panayides, 2004; Vorhies & Harker, 2000; Avlonitis & Gounaris, 1997; Kohli, et al., 1993; Narver & Slater, 1990), there has been limited studies that focused on service providers. In addition, many of the relevant marketing orientation studies "report results from samples of heterogeneous firms across industrial sectors, and not industry-specific", and "there has been limited research outside of Western cultures" (Panayides, 2004, p. 43). Also, marketing orientation research has not been given the importance it deserves in developing

countries (Ismail et al., 2009) where differences between both Western countries and developing countries should be considered from different angles (e.g. economic environment, culture and structure of the industry) as Mokhtar et al. (2009) emphasised.

The initial findings of the present research clearly confirmed the positive relationship between marketing orientation and organisational performance, represented in market share and year-on-year (YOY) market growth indicators. Accordingly, another contribution this research has made to marketing orientation literature is the validation of its propositions in developing (i.e. non Western cultures) markets and within the services context.

However, the main contribution this research attained is not limited to validating the relationship between marketing orientation and the achievement of organisational performance in services within developing culture context. It also adds other issues to marketing orientation literature through gaining more insight into this relationship and evaluating — in-depth — how the different levels of marketing orientation affect the patterns, approaches, and mechanisms by which firms manage their capabilities within the long-term view, to ensure customer satisfaction and customer retention within a dynamic and changing environment.

7.5 Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

There is no perfect research; various limitations may exist because of unexpected, unavoidable, human or circumstantial factors even when the maximum effort is made. Such methodological or practical restrictive aspects should be disclosed in order to be considered in future research.

In methodology literature, external validity in qualitative research indicates the degree to which the results can be generalised or transferred to other cases and other situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To a large extent this aspect constitutes the most frequent challenge for many researchers.

In qualitative research, sampling represents a common challenge restricting the external validity of results. Although this study has provided valuable insight, the primary limitation of the research relates to its domain. As a case study research, conducted in a single market, the provision of telecommunications service in Jordan represented the research study field where sample composition and data collection processes were

confined to service providers in this particular market. Thus, the ability to generalise the findings was limited to the telecommunications sector in Jordan. Consequently, in order to extend the scope of generalisation for the research findings, further research is recommended to encompass different markets, different contexts or even different Arab regional countries.

Another potential limitation of research is related to research perspective. Both the qualitative and quantitative data of this research were based on managers' perceptions. It can be argued that an experienced managers' viewpoint is critical for identifying in detail how firms manage each component and sub-dimensions of customer satisfaction and customer retention. However, on the other hand, customer satisfaction and retention are based primarily on consumers' judgment of the firm's performance. Thus, the mechanisms of building customer satisfaction should also take into consideration customer perceptions of the different dimensions of the research framework in order to achieve balanced findings.

Relevant marketing-orientation literature indicated the lack of research carried out into the long-term context [the sustainability of competitive advantage] the issue that - to date -has not been given the attention it deserves by scholars (Kumar et al., 2011; Gebhardt et al., 2006).

During the fieldwork that took place in Jordan in 2010, the researcher has already accomplished an initial part of the customer satisfaction survey research as a part of longitudinal consumer research design to be conducted within two phases. In the first phase, the researcher used a 55-item customer satisfaction questionnaire which was divided into three main sections comprising general demographic variables, customer satisfaction and retention aspects and classifying capabilities related to customer key requirements. The targeted size for the required sample was determined as not less than 400 valid questionnaires: 655 questionnaires were distributed taking into account various demographic variables (e.g. age, gender, educational level, marital status, employment status, monthly household income and participants' service providers) in order to achieve a representative sample. Data collection process for this phase of research took place in Jordan from 15 February 2010 to 15 April 2010. During this, 430 valid questionnaires were collected resulting in a 65% response rate. In further work, the researcher plans to conduct a second phase of research to evaluate the same

aspects investigated previously, and then to link findings of both phases with firms' marketing orientation levels.

One further limitation in this research is attributed to the nature of competition and structure of the market in which the data collection was carried out. Globally, the telecommunications industry is known to be highly competitive with a limited number of telecommunications operators. Hence, participants often seem to be reticent with regard to sharing any information (Wright, 1996) deemed to be sensitive to their competitive strategies which may restrict the data collection process.

To summarise, the highly interpretive nature of the qualitative research, the research domain, and the structure of the telecommunications market in Jordan has caused limitations, most notably restrictions of generalisation of research findings, which emphasises further research in other contexts is called for.

7.6 Reflections on Fieldwork

Looking back on my research journey so far, although on one hand I had to cope with different and unexpected difficulties on the other hand, considerable changes have been achieved regarding my perspective of different phenomena, in terms of expanding my horizon, critical thinking and lessons that I learnt during the different phases of my research.

One of the most important challenges facing me was to translate the research from a theoretical diagram and plan into practice on the ground. Despite the apparent support for research promoted by the different operators in Jordan's telecommunications market, in action, research field-work included several constraints that posed a threat to the accomplishment of the primary data collection process, which represents an indispensable pillar that all subsequent phases are based on.

Actually I was aware of research difficulties related to the fact that telecommunications - whether at the regional or national level - is associated with the intense competition that exists, resulting in reticence to disclose information, the concerns of marketing intelligence and difficulties relevant to the limited offered time by managers and their full schedules. I have followed different procedures such as the early communicating with the top management of the main firms and sending them

formal letters from the University of Hertfordshire explaining the aims of the research and the strict adherence to research ethical standards in terms of the confidentiality of collected data and participants. However, in practice, real challenges remain.

In the present study, I managed to carry out 18 interviews included the key persons from the four main operators in Jordan market from a variety of backgrounds. The interviewed senior managers, executive directors, supervisors, or experts from the four main telecommunications services providers represented higher involvement status and participation in their organisations. However, the process of getting the acceptance then conducting the planned interviews consumed more time and effort than I expected.

Strategic alliances and partnerships are common in the telecommunications market. Theoretically, it is expected for national telecommunications operators to follow a style of management consistent with their parent companies and international partners. However, my practical experience showed that, in Jordan — similar to other peer developing countries — routine procedures with roots in the traditional bureaucratic management in such cultures continue to restrict the adoption of spirit contemporary thoughts of marketing and social responsibility. Consequently, concerning decisions regarding issues that are not highly relevant to their usual operations such as becoming involved in research or recommending specific participants, rejection seems to be the easier and less risky option for such kinds of decisions. Hence, I had to resort to my previous business relationships in Jordan's market to enable get the needed approval for the planned interviews.

One of the main lessons I learnt from my research is the critical importance of the thorough preparation for the data collecting process in the fieldwork, particularly in qualitative research that is based on interviews or focus groups. The solution of the above research challenges goes beyond the paper work as suggested by Caine et al. (2009), who call for a preliminary stage for such kind of research to take place prior to proceeding with the actual fieldwork. Such preparatory early-stage fieldwork includes the establishment of relationships with 'gatekeepers' who have the power to assist in facilitating the research process and gaining access to targeted key persons in the study field. Moreover, the preliminary fieldwork will allow for any needed development of the research diagram, protocols and ethics applications consistent with the real

determinants or requirements of the environment in which the research is to be conducted.

From my Master degree experience, in the Middle East region and Jordan in particular, researchers have a tendency towards adopting the quantitative model research. To a large extent, surveys and relevant statistical analysis methods constitute the common adopted techniques for collecting and interpreting data by different researchers at the universities or research centres.

Because of the aim of my research that intends to gain further insight into the mechanisms that link marketing orientation and organisational performance, I adopted a qualitative approach based on semi-structured interviews and other qualitative analysis techniques as the main choice for collecting and interpreting data.

Despite the difficulties that I faced in collecting the needed data, my methodological choice gave me a unique opportunity to acquire a new research skill and practice step by step with this kind of research. During all practical phases of the research starting from the early stage of collecting data, interview transcription, open coding then finding out the main themes; each represents a new research skill that I learnt with direct guidance from my supervisors. Such techniques and skills of research are uncommon in Jordan's study field, I hope I am able to share them with other researchers or students as my next job position is as a lecturer at Al- Zaytoonah University in Jordan.

Another distinguished experience in my research was sharing my ideas and my early findings with other international researchers. I attended a conference in Turkey during the period from 15-17 April 2011. It was very helpful and supportive experience. It was a distinct opportunity to present my work, to defend my methodological choice and to get very useful feedback from different participants who have different backgrounds and perspectives.

Another challenge for me during my research was the depression and health difficulties I faced because of stress and time constraints. This stress was caused by my family leaving the UK in 2012. My wife Dania who completed her PhD from the University of Leicester, and also my children Liyan, Omar and Rand returned to Jordan. According to my wife and my children, Jordan is a changed and not very easy environment to live in; new language, new relationships and school system for my children, and also a

new job with no experience in teaching for my wife. However, despite all the challenges I faced during my research journey, I gained new research skills, and I am now better prepared to manage further research in my practical life.

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Appendices

Appendix (A)

Letter of invitation to participate in the research

University of
Hertfordshire



Jordan Telecom Group/Orange
Amman
Jordan

University of Hertfordshire
Hatfield, Hertfordshire
AL10 9AB
UK

Switchboard 01707 284000
Fax 01707 284115
www.herts.ac.uk

16th July 2009

Dear Sirs

Re: Mr Mohammed Ashour – PhD Student - Research

Since you are known to be one of the leading service providers in the provision of telecommunication services in Jordan, we would appreciate your cooperation with Mr Mohammed Ashour in his research (**Services marketing capabilities as a source of competitive advantage in the telecommunication provision in Jordan**). We hope that you would support this researcher in conducting his interviews and providing relative data. We ensure that Mr Ashour, who is currently a PhD student at the University of Hertfordshire, will consider the UH research ethics in all research phases.

We hope that research findings will contribute in supporting telecommunication provision in Jordan and, by the time the research is completed, will be happy to provide you with a copy of research outcomes if you are interested.

Yours faithfully

Julie Newlan
Dean of The Business School
Director of Business Partnerships
de Havilland Campus

Tel: +44 (0) 1707 285401
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e-mail: j.a.newlan@herts.ac.uk
JAN/mm/l



A Charity Exempt from Registration
under the Second Schedule
to the Charities Act 1993

Appendix (B)

Interview Protocol

Participant	
Interview reference	
TSP	
Place of interview, Amman, Jordan
Date of interview	/ /201....

1. Introduction

- The interview is planned to start with a general introduction to make the respondents feel completely at ease in order to express his thoughts and ideas and aware of the interview`s purpose and agenda.
- Introducing the researcher.
- Reminding of study purpose and research progress.
- Re-permission for recording the interview.
- Emphasising confidentiality, and that the respondent has the right not to answer any question, and that the interview will be stopped if he wishes.

2. Interviewing

- The interview will be directed by researcher in the way that allows participant to express his thoughts by adopting specific techniques; the interviewer can start with questions about external objects, then proceed to internal attitudes and feelings.
- Stimulating respondent to elaborate on critical points, and researcher has to use probes as needed.
- Factual questions will be asked before opinion questions, and the questions are structured to achieve the overall study questions.
- Interview will begin with general and less sensitive issues, then it will move to focused and specific issues.
- Questions should be open-ended rather than closed-ended.

3. Wrapping-Up

- The interview should be concluded by thanking the respondent and reminding him that he will be provided with a summary of the research findings.
- Permission for further interview if needed.

Appendix (C)

Description of participants were interviewed in the main data collection stage (In-depth Interview)

(Note: names are pseudonyms)

Participant	Telecommunication Service Provider (TSP)	Managerial Position	Date of interview	Place of interview
Mr Moner Kettaneh	Jordan Telecom Group (Orange)	Strategic Accounts Manager	8 March 2010	Grand Palace Hotel/Amman
Mr Basheer Al Khaire	Jordan Telecom Group (Orange)	International Carrier Services and Sales Director	10 March 2010	At his office / Jordan Telecom Group /Amman
Mr Malik Maqboul	Jordan Telecom Group (Orange)	Product Leader Enterprise	12 April 2010	At his office / Jordan Telecom Group/Amman
Mrs Reem Sabbagh	Umniah Mobile Company	Communications Manager	3 March 2010	At her office / Umniah Mobile Company Group/Amman
Mrs Nancy Mahadin	Umniah Mobile Company	Pricing & Planning Specialist	4 March 2010	At her office / Umniah Mobile Company Group/Amman
Mr Anwer Ajlouni	Umniah Mobile Company	Pricing &Market Research Manager	9 March 2010	At his office / Umniah Mobile Company Group/Amman
Mr Abdulnaser Marwan	Zain Group /Jordan	Mass Segmentation Manager-Marketing	25 March 2010	At his office / Zain Group/ Amman
Mr Fadi Masoudi	Zain Group /Jordan	Corporate Sales Manager	25 March 2010	At his office / Zain Group/ Amman
Mrs Nisreen Al Ameen	Zain Group /Jordan	Marketing Planning Manager	25 March 2010	At her office / Zain Group/ Amman
Mr Talal Al Sulaiman	XPress Telecommunications	Marketing & Sales Supervisor	8 March 2010	At his office / XPress/ Amman
Mr Qasem Baseem	XPress Telecommunications	Operations Executive	10 March 2010	At his office / XPress/ Amman
Mr Sohail Ala Addein	XPress Telecommunications	Call center Supervisor (Customer Service)	15 March 2010	At his office / XPress/ Amman

Mr Khader Sawalha	Umniah Mobile Company	Planning and Loyalty Manager	20 February 2013	At his office / Umniah Mobile Company Group/Amman
Miss Susan Manasrah	Umniah Mobile Company	Senior Market Research Officer	20 February 2013	At her office / Umniah Mobile Company Group/Amman
Miss Nermin Shawqi	Umniah Mobile Company	Corporate Communications Specialist	25 February 2013	At her office / Umniah Mobile Company Group/Amman
Mr Saeed Tareefi	Jordan Telecom Group (Orange)	Marketing Manager Orange Money Marketing and Communication	4 March 2013	At his office / Orange Mobile Company Group/Amman
Mr Moner Kettaneh	Jordan Telecom Group (Orange)	Strategic Account Manager	13 March 2013	Four Seasons Hotel Amman
Mr Talal Al Sulaiman	XPress Telecommunications	Marketing & Sales Supervisor	24 March 2013	Taj Mall Amman

Appendix (D)

Managers In-depth Interview Guidelines Data Collection Phase II / English version

Interview reference	
Participant	
TPS (Operator)	
Participant Position	
Date of interview	
Place of interview	

- As a part of Middle East and North Africa telecommunications market, how do you consider telecommunications market performance (e.g. ARPU, penetration rate, etc) and the level of provided telecommunication services in Jordan?
- In general, how do you evaluate the general image of the market with regard to TSPs strategic positions: leader, follower or challenger? (*i.e. Market dominance strategy for each TSP*)
- How do you consider customer satisfaction? how do you measure it? is it being measured periodically? what are the main components of the measurement?
- How do you rate your company with regard to other TSPs in the following areas (Dimensions of customer satisfaction)?
 - *Delivering value to your customers*
 - *Retaining valued customers*
 - *Overall Customer satisfaction*
- In which functional areas firm can add more value to customer, and what are the critical related capabilities? How do you manage it? (*value chain*)
- To which degree the quality of telecommunications service ensure customer satisfaction and how do you manage it?
- How do you evaluate the role of value/price in achieving CS and how do you manage it?
- How do you consider “communications” and do you manage it in order to ensure CS? (*expectations*)
- Taking into account the difficulties pertaining to telecommunication service characteristics, how do you manage your *employees, processes and physical evidence* elements in order to achieve CS?

- How do you manage customer complaints in order to support CS?
- Do you face conflict between marketing and operation where marketing-operation interaction is common in such industry? How do you manage this interaction in a way enhancing perceived value by customers?
- What are the main telecom products (services) offered by different telecommunication providers in Jordan market and why do you think your offers (products) are different from others with regard to perceived benefits?
(What are the benefits provided by your company that distinguish you from competitors?) UR & IR
- How do you consider the role of communication and customer learning in maintaining customers? And how do you manage it?
- According to your opinion what are the main reasons for switching (in Jordan market generally not for a particular operator) and how do you manage it?
- In general, how do you consider the importance of customer feedback in retaining good customers?
- How do you manage customer complaints in order to support CR?
- How do you think your Brand Name in Jordan market is perceived by customers? Why? And how do you avoid the negative image?
- To which degree do you think that customer retention is a 'history and learning based behaviour' and how do you deal with this? (e.g. communication, customer service)
- How do you deal with the challenge of the continual evolving of technology and customers' needs and tastes? *(market dynamicity)*
- From your experience, how can particular TSP maintain superior customer satisfaction level, market growth rate, or sales (maintaining superiority for long terms) in Jordan telecom market? how do you manage it?
(Taking into account the maturity phase of the market)

Appendix (E)

Measuring Marketing Orientation/ Data Collection Phase I

Participant: TSP:

Position:.....

Date:.....Time:.....

Part one:

Attitudinal aspects

Dear participant,

Please, could you indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each of the next following statements by choosing one of the Seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = “strongly disagree” to 7 = “strongly agree”).

Marketing is:

A1) Primarily a sales-support function.

strongly disagree	Neutral			Strongly Agree		
						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

A2) About promoting our services.

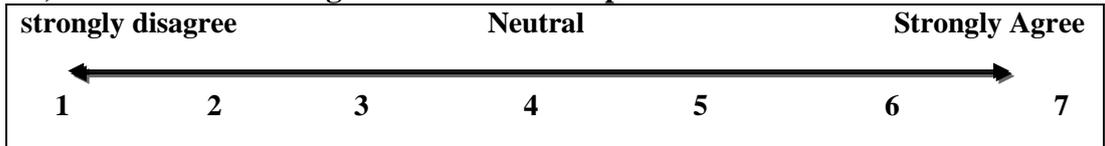
strongly disagree	Neutral			Strongly Agree		
						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

A3) About identifying our customers' needs and satisfying them.

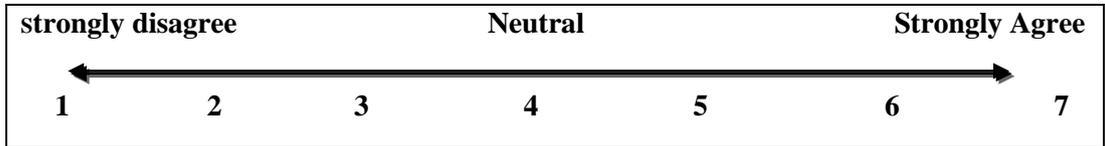
strongly disagree	Neutral			Strongly Agree		
						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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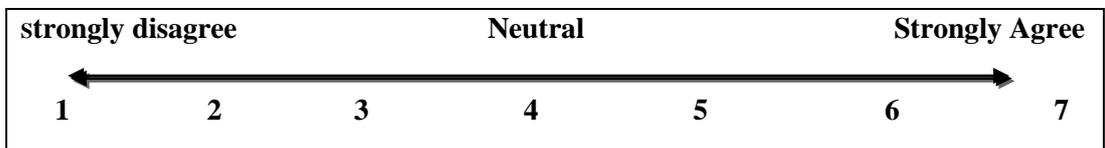
A4) What the marketing and/or the sales departments do.



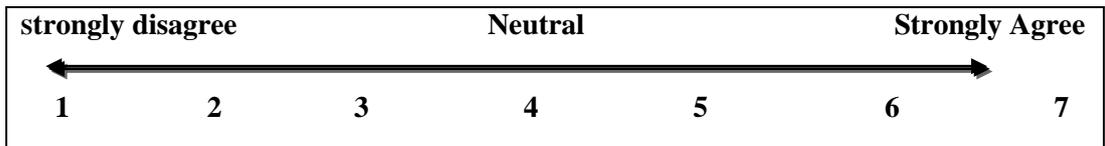
A5) The effort to analyse market conditions.



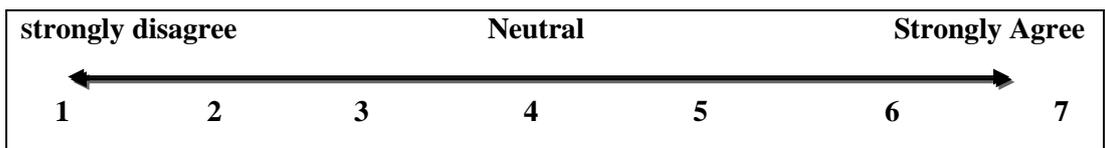
A6) Literally non-existent to our company.



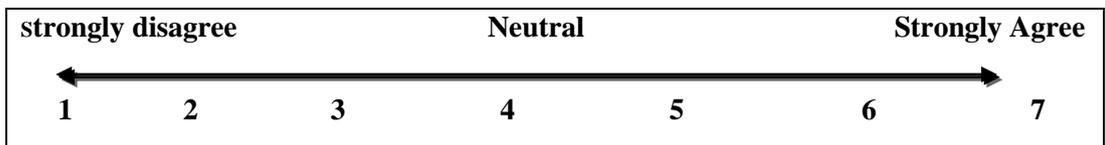
A7) The philosophy/ leading our company business objectives are driven by customer satisfaction.



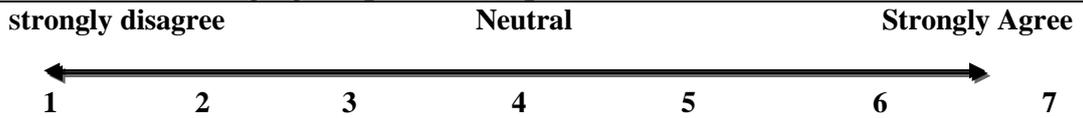
A8) It is an organisation culture /about how we can create greater value for customers.



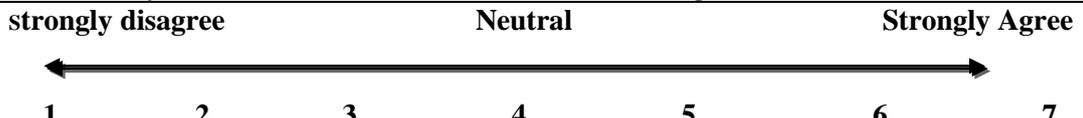
A9) A way to handle decisions concerning the quality and quantity of the production process.



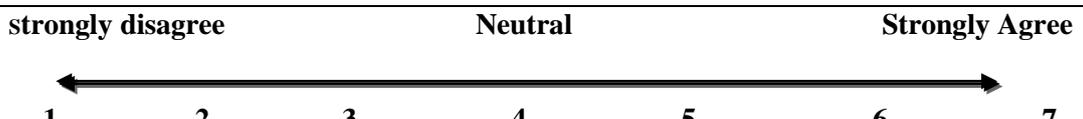
A10) About managing the production process.



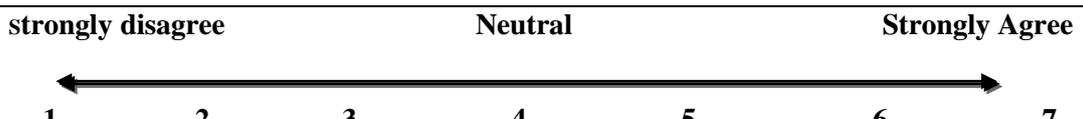
A11) A way to create customer contacts and closing deals



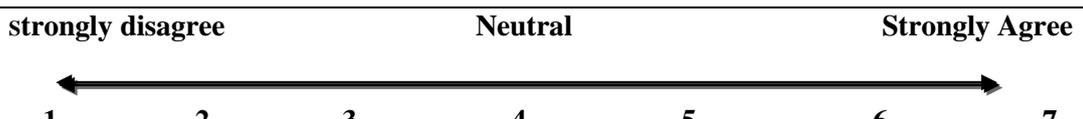
A12) The effort to collect intelligence on competition



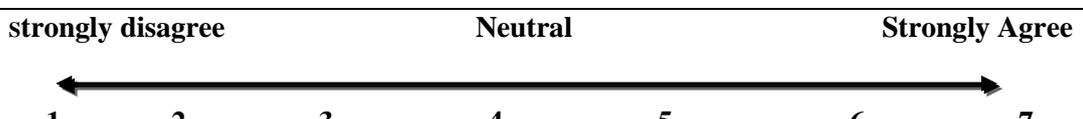
A13) Adapting to changing market conditions



A14) Building customer relationships



A15) A confusing concept



Part two:

Measuring Marketing Orientation as a behaviour

Please, could you indicate to which degree each of the next following statements present your company, by choosing one of the Seven -point Likert-type scale (1 = "it does not represent our company at all" to 7 = "it fully represents us").

*** In our company:**

(Items 1-4: Intelligence generation, 5-9: Intelligence dissemination and 10-13: Responsiveness)

B1) We meet with our customers at least once a year to find out what prods/services they will need in future

strongly disagree	Neutral			Strongly Agree		
←	→					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B2) We are slow to detect changes in customer preference(R).

strongly disagree	Neutral			Strongly Agree		
←	→					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

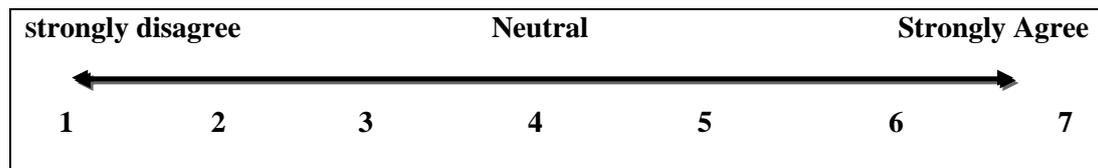
B3) We poll end users at least once a year to assess the quality of our products/services.

strongly disagree	Neutral			Strongly Agree		
←	→					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

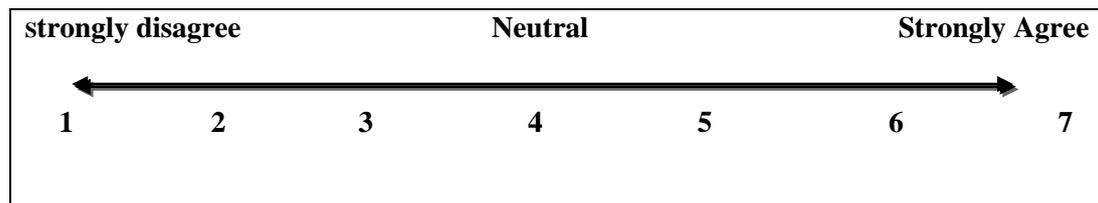
B4) We periodically review the likely effect of changes in our business environment (e.g. regulations) on customers.

strongly disagree	Neutral			Strongly Agree		
←	→					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

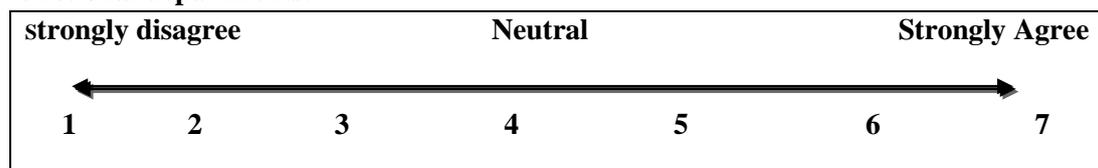
B5) Information on customer satisfaction is disseminated at all levels in this business unit on a regular basis.



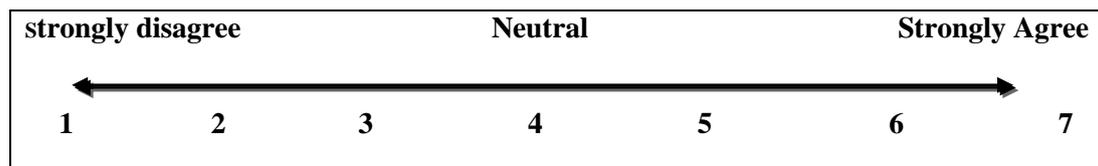
B6) We have interdepartmental meetings at least once a quarter to discuss market trends and developments.



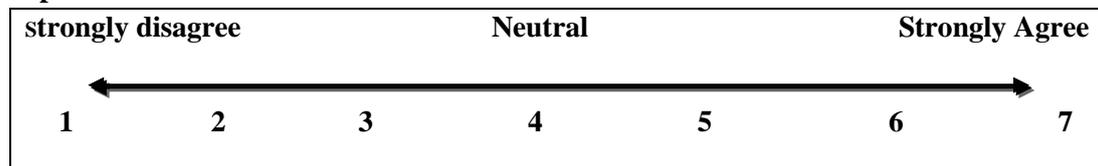
B7) Marketing personnel spend time discussing customer's future needs with other functional departments.



B8) Documents are circulated periodically (e.g. reports, newsletters) that provide information on our customers.



B9) When something important happens to a major customer or market, all related departments knows about it in a short time



B10) We periodically review our provided service development efforts to ensure they are in line with customer's want.

strongly disagree	Neutral			Strongly Agree		
←	→					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B11) If a major competitor were to launch an intensive campaign targeted at our customers, we would implement an immediate response.

strongly disagree	Neutral			Strongly Agree		
←	→					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B12) Even if we came up with a great marketing plan, we probably would not be able to implement it in a timely fashion. (R)

strongly disagree	Neutral			Strongly Agree		
←	→					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B13) We are quick to respond to significant changes in our competitors` pricing structure.

strongly disagree	Neutral			Strongly Agree		
←	→					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Thank you very much for your response.

*(R) denotes reverse coded item.