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Market Orientation in Agribusiness: A Review of Key Drivers and Boundaries

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ABSTRACT

Conditions changing with time; environmental constraints, institutional framework, technical breakthroughs, and consumer demands are all involved in shaping the dynamic conditions under which agribusiness operates. This review identifies the theoretical perspectives, dimensions, theoretical background, and boundary drivers of market orientation because it enquires into the role played by market orientation in agriculture. It is unanimously held that its competitiveness, innovation and even the long run of the company are influenced by its market orientation, which is the ability to sense and respond to market changes. This review summarizes the studies on the topics of market orientation, customer orientation, competitor orientation, and inter-functional coordination; it demonstrates the effects of the three elements on the various organizations and environment. It extends the discussion to cover value chains and the perspective of resources in order to show how value processing skills, institutional frameworks, and governance affects outcomes. Moreover, it is established that the significance of the digitalization, sustainability demands, and policy frameworks as boundary drivers can have a significant effect on the application of the market orientation strategies by the agricultural enterprises. The agribusiness decision-making paper introduces market orientation as a cultural and process hybrid construct that is strategically valuable to agribusiness decision-making processes through the combination of diverse perspectives. To enhance competitiveness, adaptability, and sustainability in the continuously evolving global food systems, it concludes with the argument that there is need to do additional research on market orientation.

INTRODUCTION

Enhancing market-sensing and reaction, particularly in hostile contexts, as well as clarifying performance disparities, are all components of market orientation, a marketing concept with the effects of which in the strategy and environmental statuses. According to Osuagwu (2019), the marketing orientation may take various definitions, with some of those pigmenting on the sensitivity to the marketing data and environment, whereas others focus on inter functional cooperation and customer needs and wants. This underlines the need to engage in further research to ensure that clear insights have been given in different contexts including agriculture.

Agricultural competitiveness in the global environment, where the agribusiness industry operates, is greatly affected by sustainability issues, digitization, evolving customer preferences, and regulatory frameworks issues, which are increasingly complex and unpredictable. Market orientation, innovation, and intensive planning are some of the strategies that will ensure that agribusiness strategies prosper in the long run. Agriculture marketing, by way of example, requires the management of risks, where individual needs to address external uncertainties, and a structured system of management and an extended tool such as the 7P tool where producer objectives align with the expectation of the customer (Ustik, 2024). Systemic and situational methods that incorporate environmental analysis, mission creation, and step-by-step strategy

development are used to ensure adaptive marketing processes (methodological frameworks focus on these approaches to achieve them) (Bahorka *et al.*, 2024). In larger agribusiness discussions, digitalization, socio-ethical marketing, and cross-cultural approaches are emphasized as essential in satisfying the global markets and helping to resolve the environmental challenges (Samakaeva *et al.*, 2024). To the overall extent, these perspectives define agricultural marketing as not a functional process but a strategic innovative and resource-aligning process.

Further studies indicate that the corporate orientation to the market is correlated with the financial performance of a company. The same organizational focus, market competition, and customer orientation have always brought more performance to market-based enterprises, as Narver and Slater (1990) and Kohli and Jaworski (1990) have demonstrated. On one hand, client orientation is the most significant factor of happiness and loyalty, on the other hand, competing orientation and inter-functional coordination serve supplementary roles, but only in certain situations (Crick *et al.*, 2022; Schulze *et al.*, 2022). Ebrahimi and Mirbargkar (2017) show how producer associations and cooperatives affect the effectiveness of market orientated factors in agribusiness.

Despite the well-documented importance of market orientation in the area of general business, it has actually been given little attention concerning its potential of application in the area of agriculture although it would have been a good fit to the challenges of increased consumer

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demands, digital disruption, and the global sustainability crusade. Agricultural enterprises, comprising of family business, cooperatives as well as giant international supply chains, can raise their own structural and governance challenge that affect how market orientation is conceptualized and implemented. There is need to examine market orientation within agriculture market situation due to the dynamic impact of boundary drivers including government frameworks, institutional and socio-cultural pressures. As this literature not only adds to the academic knowledge but also provides valuable information to use in strategic decision making, careful review of the same is very critical. Such scrutiny comes in handy in ensuring that, agribusiness firms are able to withstand the clouds of the new economy and adjust to the demands of sustainability and novelty.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Market orientation in agribusiness

Enhancement of market-sensing and response, particularly in the hostile situation and describing performance differentials are also some aspects of market orientation which is a marketing concept whose effects are subject to the strategy and environmental condition. Osuagwu (2019) has posted various definitions of what market orientation is, which focuses on consumer desires and needs, cross-functional cooperation, and marketing data and context awareness. Further studies are necessary in determining these concepts under different circumstances including in the case of agriculture.

The three pillars that the state of successful agriculture marketing strategies are founded on include systematic planning, innovation, and a market orientation, as dictated by the research. The three things are the driving force in the long-term of the industry and guarantee its competitiveness and sustainability. As an illustration, another article states that risk management is required in marketing agriculture due to the desire to address external uncertainties, as well as both developed management systems and extended tools, such as the 7P model to align the goals of producers with customer expectations (Ustik, 2024). Methodological frameworks address systemic and situational approaches requiring the analysis of the environment, development of a mission, and a step-by-step strategy development to ensure adaptive marketing processes (Bahorka *et al.*, 2024). In more general agribusiness discussions, digitalization, socio-ethical marketing, and cross-cultural approaches are emphasised as the key to fulfilling the demands of global markets and mitigating environmental problems (Samakaeva *et al.*, 2024). Collectively, these perspectives can offer an academic and managerial practice value because they conceptualize agribusiness marketing as a fresh and strategic process of resource harmonization.

Numerous definitions of the nature of the market orientation have narrowed down to the importance of being highly attentive and responsive to the needs of the target audience as a fundamental part of the effective

business strategies. Kohli and Jaworski (1990) considered market orientation as behavioral process entailing the creation, spreading as well as responsiveness to market intelligence; Narver and Slater (1990) defined market orientation as the organizational culture which is based on customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination. Both paradigms still influence the paradigm. These formative views have been validated in recent scholarship. The studies that were published after 2015 have confirmed the notion of market orientation as a dynamic process that is steered by the influence of the boundary drivers such as digitalization, globalization and sustainability pressures. These framework extensions should include behavioral science (Ferguson, 2024) and focus on the capability to be a boundary-spanner (Manohar and Wise, 2023) to be competitive. Taken altogether, all these findings indicate that market orientation remains a cultural and processual fusion that is transferred to modern-day agriculture and further on.

Dimension of market orientation

It has been demonstrated that the important dimensions of market orientation are customer orientation, competitor orientation, and interfunctional coordination. A market-oriented strategy is the topic of great importance in the context of companies operating in constantly changing environments due to the fact, that these aspects have a significant influence on organizational success (Bodea, 2016).

Recent study establishes the significance of market orientation, customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination to the performance of the company. To enlarge the area of the discussion, Schulze, Townsend and Talay (2022) distinguish between proactive and responsive competitor orientation. They show that the former paves the way to the performance of innovations and the latter enhances the performance of the firm via learning processes. On the same note, as Crick *et al.* (2022) note, external variables such as competition and industry experience are capable of lowering the performance of market orientation, which has a positive impact on the customer satisfaction performance. Hubtriyani and Tamrin (2021) publish data on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia, which proves that customer focusing and functional coordination has a significantly greater effect on the marketing performance, whereas competitor focusing does not. When combined, these findings demonstrate that the approach introduced by Narver and Slater (1990) is applicable to numerous industries and environments, and they also point to the fact that the proportion of the relative relevance of each of the dimensions may vary depending on external and internal organizational processes.

The latest data indicate that the three aspects of market orientation do not equally contribute to the performance outcomes. Even though inter-functional cooperation and

competitor orientation are indirectly related with service performance in the travel and tourism sector, customer orientation is the only instrument that has direct impact on service performance. It is another indication of the existence of a synergetic mechanism between the elements of market orientation and the importance of considering each of them separately to understand their individual and interactive implications. Theodosiou *et al.* (2012) identified a literature gap and desired to address it by applying the market orientation theory to the service sector. By doing this, they formulated a conceptual model that spells out the relationship between the dimensions and the effect they have on service performance.

It has also been established that elements of market orientation influence the character of relationship between brand orientation and performance. Speaking more precisely, according to the research conducted by Llonch-Andreu *et al.* (2016), brand orientation may serve the purpose of compensating for the deficit of customer attention to a greater degree than when the latter is elevated. Alternatively, the article established that there was no statistically significant difference in influence of brand orientation between the low- and high-competitor orientation companies meaning that the dimension is not a definite dampener of brand orientation and performance association. The importance of the departmental integration and organizational alignment is demonstrated by the findings which indicate that brand orientation produces a better influence on brand performance in the contexts of inter-functional coordination. Combined, the results of the present research emphasize the necessity to deconstruct market orientation into its constituent dimensions to be able to understand how diverse they can influence the performance of companies (Llonch-Andreu *et al.*, 2016).

A study indicates that corporate governance has a significant impact on the three areas of market orientation. A study on the Iranian hotels revealed that the market orientation was enhanced by the good corporate governance through enhancements of customer orientation, competitor orientation, and inter-functional cooperation. Moreover, the findings demonstrate that the market orientation has a great influence on both monetary and social results. Competitor orientation continued to play a weaker, but significant role of influencing financial performance, whereas the mediating value of market orientation was reinforced by customer orientation as well as the inter-functional coordination between the relationship between the governance and the performance. We rely on survey data of executives of four- and five-star hotels throughout Mashhad in this paper to undertake partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings indicate that there is a high relationship between the governance orientation and the performance. Even though this research was conducted within the sector of the hotel industry, it can be extended to the agribusiness industry. In the agribusiness industry, the governance system, such as cooperatives, producer organizations,

and family businesses, have an enormous impact on the financial and social performance that market orientation dimensions affect (Ebrahimi & Mirbargkar, 2017).

Theoretical foundation of market orientation

Market-oriented value chains go one step further and identify market orientation by emphasizing how chain dynamics influence reactivity to market signals instead of limiting it to the level of the business. The level of market orientation in value chains is dependent on such factors as heterogeneity and dynamism of end-users, the nature of relationships between the chain, regulatory frameworks, and mental models used by decision-makers, based on Verlegh *et al.* (2009). Most importantly, they postulate that shorter and balanced chains facilitate the flow of information, which enhances the upstream market orientation. The research that came later builds on the basis that this framework has provided. Indicatively, the concept of predictive analytics, supply chain transparency, and regulation is underlined by Maseng *et al.* (2025) as the means of improving the food systems to meet the market demands. Likewise, Lazarte-Aguirre (2024) demonstrates that in the interdependence between the entrepreneurial and market orientation, there is an increase in supply chain agility and this makes it possible to note the strategic importance of chain-level orientation. After Verlegh *et al.* introduced the significance of a governance process and end-user dynamics, Esteban-Amaro *et al.* (2024) also stress on relevancy of value chains in building sustainability and circularity. On an agribusiness and related industries, Verlegh *et al.* (2009), Masengu *et al.* (2025), Lazarte-Aguirre (2024), and Esteban-Amaro *et al.* (2024) all harbor the view that market orientation should be performed through a value chain orientation of understanding performance, adaptability and sustainability.

The current research still relies on the paradigm proposed by Raju, Lonial, and Crum (2011) that regarded market orientation as a device to process information and strategic asset. It is able to be utilized in other settings because of new research. Boyer (2025) employed a mixed method approach to investigate the role of innovation ecosystems in facilitating the implementation of Industry 4.0 in the manufacturing industry, a methodological approach that is similar to the rigour of methodology used by Raju *et al.* Consistent with the adaptive skills emphasized by the model created by Raju *et al.*, Liu, Phawitpiriyakliti, Pattanayanon, and Terason (2025) examined the mediating role of digital transformation, organizational learning, and agility in establishing the correlation between market orientation and performance. Also basing on past industrial knowledge into the realm of sustainability, Phongphanich *et al.* (2025) revealed that green economy policies can adjust the influence of the market orientation on the performance of companies in the manufacturing industry. In an attempt to further demonstrate the significance of combining both the qualitative and quantitative methods to discover extensive implications of strategic orientations, Elbanna and

Elsharnouby (2025) carried out mixed-method field research within the hotel industry. The market orientation argument, in an uncertain setting with significance of sustainability as well as technological change, is based on the theoretical and methodological efforts of Raju *et al.* (2011). Research works like Raju *et al.* (2011), Boyer (2025), Liu *et al.* (2025), Phongphanich, Chimpleewat, and Lalaeng (2025), and Elbanna and Elsharnouby (2025) are in line with this.

Recent theoretical developments and measures have been made in the study of market orientation in the industrial setting by Jitta and Annamdevula (2025). The authors developed a new scale to measure market orientation efficiency due to the semi-structured interviews as an exploratory, sequential mixed-method design and further validated their results by a survey. The six measures that defined the market orientation of steel companies were customer focus, competitive intelligence, internal communication, responsiveness, and development of knowledge assessed on the scale. Excluding the information sharing, the research stated that demographic factors like age, education, designation, and experience have significant effects that define judgements about most of these factors. Besides emphasizing the significance of market orientation as a process, which increases performance, the findings indicate that the market-oriented company can more easily introduce the new goods even when dealing with uncertainty. Related to contributing to the current literature of MARKOR and MKTOR scales, this work brings new knowledge to the Indian steel industry on how market orientation can be measured (Jitta & Annamdevula, 2025).

Boundary drivers in agribusiness

The research indicates that the agricultural industry has numerous varieties of border drivers among which are the ones that influence the environment, institutions, markets, and organizations. Changes in regulation, environmental issues, and the changing market situations are cited by many academics who explain their work as one that is heavily affected by external pressures. As Tkachuk *et al.* (2023) focus on the availability of internal resources and the external economic environment as the determinant of the sustainability of agricultural firms, Xavier and Periera (2023) focus on the effect of market dynamics and regulatory changes on the development of a business model. In the same fashion, Elhabib (2025) highlighted the challenges of climate change, lack of arable land, and water scarcity in the United Arab Emirates, but connected these problems to the concerns about food security; however, Rushchitskaya *et al.* (2024) extend the scale of the discussion with references to the global agro-industrial integration as one of the means to become resilient.

However, there is one more school of thought, which is more institutional and structural in its approach to border factors investigation. Bachev (2016) includes in his definition of the governance structure in farming

systems such considerations as technical, institutional and traction cost but in Mukhametgaliev *et al.* (2021), the author focuses more on political and organizational economic pressures, such as the agricultural awareness and landholding optimization. A similar bottom-up pattern is presented in Wong (2023) in which the author defines boundary drivers as PESTLE megatrends that transform the structures of an industry by altering politics, economics, society, technology, law, and the environment. Another important factor is governance systems and the design of the organization. Steiner (2017) identifies constraints as obstacles to the coordinated value creation, such as unbalanced market power, the absence of trust, and the absence of sufficient certification procedures. Similarly, Gazdecki (2018) identifies the transformations of consolidation of the structure and terms of the contract on the nature of the relationship in the channels of input used by agribusiness. Rama (2017) suggests that MNEs in developed nations would rely on the contract farming, but their developing market counterparts were more apt to seek land ownership. All these studies lead in the same direction, which is that the aspects of boundary drivers are closely connected with organizational design decisions.

Also, researchers explore community-based and resources-oriented perspectives. Smith *et al.* (2024) also support these assertions by noting that community infrastructure, the availability of labor, and local land-use are critical to small rural agribusiness in New Zealand and that access to critical resources, vertical integration, and prior experience are the determinants of firm strategies (Chan & Renier, 2019). The other reasons of border drivers, according to Harris and James (2016), are the conflicting values and stakeholder relationships.

Finally, we have writers that lay stress on innovation and technology as driving forces. At the same time that facilitators such as open innovation are tapped, Baierle *et al.* (2023) also point out barriers such as underinvestment in technical personnel and reliance on expensive technologies. On the one hand, Elliot (2023) points to the technological disruption, urbanization, and supply chain volatility, on the other hand, the authors of Kyaruzi *et al.* (2019) relate the boundary factors to the access to the environmental information and the achievement of KPI. Pantoja *et al.* (2019) demonstrate the influence on production, capital, investment, and institutional support, and the arrangement of agribusiness ventures in the Philippines, whereas Achiques Milla *et al.* (2024) focus on the costs of inputs, climatic shocks, and market fluctuations as constant limitations.

According to Lang and Heasman (2015), the four key forces that precipitate changes in the food and agriculture industry are technological advancements, consumer demand, government and international organizations and industry structure. The food industry has an interdependence system that is mirrored by its highly complex structure, involving an international retailer and a small farmer. Despite the fact that the research cautions

against the over-powering of the role that technology may play in find solutions to entrenched issues, it does admit that technology has been a revolution in the field of food production. The increase in incomes and food literacy has changed consumer trends of demand by changing their expectations and habits. Finally, the work is also an indication of the paradigm shift in agricultural policies as it emphasizes the importance of the holistic approach to the food chain that integrates the issue of health and the environment, as well as general welfare (Lang & Heasman, 2015).

Among the numerous ways that value chain actors learn and innovate agri-food systems, Leendertse, Runhaar, and Arts (2021) reveal three forms of the boundary work: (1) finding knowledge in order to promote shared understanding; (2) creating and applying the domain knowledge to improve the practices; and (3) negotiating the shared strategy in order to create value. The paper gives importance to the role of configurational boundary work, a form of higher-order boundary work that can be used to generate value through deliberate transformation of relationships. Findings indicate that the value chain actors of the agri-food system can re-invent organizational and sectoral boundaries through learning and collaboration in the process of performing a boundary work. This study contributes to the comprehension of how inter-organization collaboration provides space within change because it illustrates feasible implementation of such methods of boundary work using micro-scale agri-food systems. Overall, the study contributes to the existing knowledge about the potential usefulness of the concept of agri-food value chains in relation to boundary work as the means of promoting innovation, learning, and sustainability (Leendertse *et al.*, 2021).

As they explore sustainability transitions in agri-food systems, Braun *et al.* (2022) illuminate the possibilities of change processes in value chains depending on the actions of different driver of change in the border. To start with, joint value creation opportunities and tensions emerge because of the plurality of the stakeholders who consist of producers and merchants. Second, the authors emphasize the importance of governance and institutional arrangements, which can foster or bring challenges to a market oriented towards sustainability. Third, they show how the business has to reconsider its approach with the influence of changes in the customer demand of environmentally and socially responsible goods as strong external forces. Finally, and not the least, the research confirms that fragmentation can be overcome and innovation promoted throughout the chain only with the help of multi-actor border work, i.e., distribution of knowledge and coordination of actions. These findings give the notion that the agribusiness border drivers are not merely company-level orientations as proposed by Braun, Bitsch and Hae ring (2022), but they encompass more: bigger societal, institutional, and environmental levels.

Altogether, the study proves that border drivers operate

at three different levels: the external (weather, markets, regulations), the organizational (resource, innovation ability), and the governmental (contracts, integration, governance) ones. Various authors have maintained that the long-term viability of agribusiness is dependent more on agency, community relations or technology adoption than structural and environmental factors.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This review used a systematic literature review approach to examine and synthesis the agribusiness boarder drivers and market orientation. The authors managed to examine the studies that had been conducted on the issue of market orientation and its impact on competitiveness, innovation, and sustainability of agricultural businesses. Relevant literature was gathered from a good academic database such as ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, ResearchGate, and Google Scholar. To provide a strong theoretical foundation, the review contained the foundational literature work by other authors such as Narver and Slater (1990) and Kohli and Jaworski (1990) along with the research published between 2015 and 2025.

The studies which examined sustainability and competitiveness either empirically or theoretically or those that evaluated the boundary drivers that influenced the performance of the agribusiness were included in the review. The findings were by means of a written synthesis through qualitative integrative literature review performed in a manner of recurring themes. These themes were the following: theoretical, value chain perspectives, external boundary drivers, which are environmental, institutional, and technological forces, the dimensions market orientation, which are customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination. The ability to identify trends and divergences among studies by comparing and developing themes ensured that comfort was made to understand better how Agribusiness enterprises responded to internal and external problems. The interdependence of environmental forces, the system of governance, resources of the company, and potential of innovation is observed. Within a multi-level analytic model, the findings are grouped into three categories that are exterior, organizational and internal drivers of the boundary.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The customer orientation is a component of market orientation that involves customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination, and the analysis indicates that such market orientation plays a pivotal role in ensuring agribusinesses improve their performance. Recent researches show that a focus on customers drives innovation and competitiveness, that the awareness of competitors and control inside the company enhances flexibility to changing market conditions and this corresponds with earlier studies by Narver and Slater (1990) and Kohli and Jaworski (1990). Market orientation is not only a form of thinking with a cultural context,

but is also a form of strategy in the agricultural industry; however, its efficacy depends on the form of governance, market conditions and organizational potentials.

The findings also reveal that boundary forces have a potent influence on how agribusiness enterprises undertake the process of market orientation. Examples of external factors are market forces, regulations, and environmental stress (Xavier & Pereira, 2023; Elhabib, 2025). Internal factors include organizational factors, namely governance and contractual systems (Steiner, 2017; Gazdecki, 2018). Lastly, internal factors are also included, including innovation capability and resource access, which are some examples of the factors (Chan & Renier, 2019; Baierle *et al.*, 2023). These drivers are keys to the management of relationships, coping with unpredictability, and seeking sustainability in competitive markets.

The technological revolution and the increasing need to have environmentally friendly products are changing the borders of the agricultural industry (Lang & Heasman, 2015; Braun *et al.*, 2022). Studies point out that the increases in performance and resilience are due to the cross-value-chain cooperation, information exchange, and innovation (Leendertse *et al.*, 2021). The study establishes that agribusinesses can be competitive as well as resilient to the long run provided a market orientation is coupled with adaptive governance and the innovation of technologies.

CONCLUSION

As per this analysis, the market-focus is the determinant of agricultural performance. Business organizations are more likely to adapt to the changes in the market as long as they focus on the desires and needs of clients, stay on top of the competition and strive at enhancing collaboration between functions. Additionally, as we have seen, the market orientation of agribusiness is largely subject to market forces beyond their control such as tastes of consumers, systems of governance and sustainability goals. All these, the internal and the external, settle on the fact that market orientation is a state of mind as well as an approach of guiding day-to-day activities.

In its pure form, market orientation helps the agribusiness firms to stay competitive, innovate, and remain sustainable in the dynamic and unpredictable global market. Future research must elaborate on the effect of emerging technology, global sustainability requirement and a cross-value chain partnership. Consequently, the agriculture sector will be in a position to withstand any storm and still manage to serve both consumers and farmers, leading to greater growth in the future.

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