

Marketing Strategy Implementation Success Factors: A Qualitative Empirical Investigation of Service Organizations in Jordan

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this empirical research was to gain a deeper understanding of Marketing Strategy Implementation (MSI) success factors in service organisations in Jordan. Drawing on a thorough examination of MSI literature review and using a qualitative methodology (in-depth interviews), the author presents an inductive descriptive model of MSI which extends our understanding of MSI literature. A qualitative methodology was employed in which 42 in-depth interviews were carried out with marketing managers and executives across service organisations to understand the MSI success factors as experienced by those managers. This exploratory research findings supported the MSI literature that advocated a broader conceptualisation and domain of MSI. This literature advocated that the success of MSI should move beyond the traditional marketing department boundaries to include the organisational context and culture in which the MSI is taking place. The inductive model suggested five major factors that affected the success of MSI from managers' experiences. These factors were superior marketing competencies, organisational culture, managing and coping with external business environment, practising internal marketing, and adapting organisational structure to newly formulated marketing strategy. The qualitative findings suggested that superior marketing competencies and organisational culture, as cited by the managers, were among the most important factors that exerted a strong influence on the success of MSI. The inductive model factors composite a set of complex activities that are intertwined in a way that affects the success of MSI, and managers need to understand their relationships and inter-related factors in order to implement a marketing strategy successfully and more effectively. Finally, this research offered managerial implications that managers may benefit from for MSI success factors and future research opportunities were also delineated in the field of MSI.

KEYWORDS: Marketing Strategy Implementation, In-Depth Interviews, Organizational Culture, Marketing Competencies, Service Organizations, Jordan.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most common difficulties companies face in marketing strategy is turning their developed marketing strategies into a reality. To transform an organization's marketing strategy into reality, organizations need to make the Marketing Strategy Implementation (MSI) as an integral part of the

organization. The MSI is all about getting the company to buy into the marketing strategy. The basic prerequisite for success in MSI is to have everyone in the organization supporting the strategy and buy into the underlying premise of the vision that sets the path for the marketing strategy. Empirical studies on MSI are few in number.

This research is an attempt to take into account the organizational context in which MSI processes and activities take place, as perceived by MSI implementers, to generate a holistic framework of factors that affect the process and activities of MSI enablers or success factors in

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service organizations. MSI is defined in this research as a detailed process that takes into account both of the marketing strategy contents and organizational contexts in which the strategy is being implemented through implementing a value-based marketing strategy. According to this definition, it is beneficial to examine not simply the analytical/technical aspects of the implementation process (information gathered and operations systems) but also the behavioural aspects of the MSI (i.e., abilities of individuals to interpret information and develop market understanding, and their motivation, commitment, and the behaviour in developing and delivering value to customers) and the organizational or contextual aspects of the process (i.e., the learning capabilities and responsiveness of the organization, and its management strategic orientation (Piercy, 1998)). This paper has employed a qualitative methodology in which 42 in-depth interviews were carried out in service organizations in Jordan to shed lights regarding the MSI success factors. The paper starts by outlining relevant literature of MSI and definition, research problem and objectives. The next section discusses the research design and methodology, and research findings and discussion. Then, an inductive descriptive model of MSI was presented and explained. The last section discusses managerial implications, conclusions, research limitations and future research opportunities.

2. MARKETING STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION: LITERATURE REVIEW

Experience and marketing strategy literature show that MSI is a difficult task in practice. The problems of MSI may include weak management role, misunderstanding of the strategy, lack of commitment to the strategy, unfeasibility of the strategy, unaligned organizational systems and resources, improper cross-functional integration, and inadequate capabilities. The MSI literature has shown that MSI is still an under-researched topic. Table (1) shows the MSI literature review that is relevant for this research context. The MSI literature review indicates that there are major issues that dominated its literature. These issues are: Organizational Culture (OC), Internal Marketing (IM), Marketing

Competencies (MC), Adapting the Organizational Structure (OS), and managing the External Business Environment (EBE).

As can be seen from the MSI literature in table (1), there have been several research attempts to understand factors that affect the success or failure of MSI and how it affects organizational performance. The MSI literature provides relatively insufficient insights for a holistic approach to implement marketing strategies successfully. Further, there is no attempt yet to understand MSI in business environments of the developing countries. Despite these shortcomings, the MSI literature, shown in table 1, has provided a rich conceptual material as well as a relatively some empirical work upon which theoretical propositions are summarized to be examined in future research endeavours. Generally speaking, the MSI literature can be divided into six major categories that dominated its literature review since the beginning of the 1980s decade. There might be other factors that affect MSI but the literature discussed in this research is the most cited work in conceptual and empirical papers. Based on table (1), these categories are:

- Organizational culture. This stream of research has concentrated on the organizational culture (e.g., customer orientation and management's strategic orientation) and context (e.g., responsiveness of an organization) that provide solid ground to help an organization to implement marketing strategies successfully. Customer concern is an integral part of organizational culture and is always prominent in the proposition of implementers. This stream of research has also focused on the commitment of an organization's top management to provide all the necessary resources in terms of time, budget, motivation and support to MSI success.
- Internal marketing. This stream of research has emphasized the vital role of practicing internal marketing for the MSI success. Integrating internal marketing with external marketing may enable organizations to implement marketing strategies successfully as well as improving performance.

Table.1. Summary of Marketing Strategy Implementation Literature Review.

Previous Research and Studies	Nature of the Study	Type of Methodology	OC	IM	MC	OS	EBE
Bonoma 1984	Empirical	Qualitative			X	X	
Bonoma and Crittenden 1988	Empirical	Qualitative	X		X	X	
Piercy 1989	Conceptual	Qualitative	X				X
Piercy and Morgan 1991	Conceptual	Qualitative		X			
Bharadwaj et al 1993	Empirical	Qualitative	X		X	X	
Day 1994	Conceptual	Qualitative			X		
Meldrum 1996	Conceptual	Qualitative			X		
Cespedes and Piercy 1996	Conceptual	Qualitative			X	X	
Doyle 1995	Conceptual	Qualitative	X				
Gilmore and Carson 1996	Conceptual/ Empirical	Qualitative			X		
Porter 1996	Conceptual	Qualitative			X		
Piercy 1998	Conceptual	Qualitative	X			X	X
Hooley et al 1998	Conceptual	Qualitative		X			X
Cravens 1998	Conceptual	Qualitative	X			X	
Varadarajan and Jayachandran 1999	Conceptual	Qualitative	X			X	X
Noble and Mokwa 1999	Conceptual	Qualitative	X				
Menon et al 1999	Empirical	Quantitative			X	X	
Piercy 1999	Conceptual	Qualitative	X	X			X
Berry 1999	Empirical	Qualitative			X		X
Cravens 2000	Conceptual	Qualitative			X	X	
Fahy et al 2000	Empirical	Quantitative			X		
Hooley et al 2001	Empirical	Quantitative	X		X		
*McClymont and Jocumsen 2003	Empirical	Qualitative	X				
White et al 2003	Empirical	Quantitative			X		
Dicknson and Ramaseshan 2004	Empirical	Quantitative	X		X		
Allio 2005	Conceptual / Empirical	Qualitative	X				
Lane 2005	Empirical	Qualitative					X
Akan et al 2006	Empirical	Quantitative / Qualitative			X		

Source: The Researcher depended on MSI Previous Empirical and Conceptual Studies.

* This study focused on using database approaches to implement marketing strategies.

- Marketing competencies. This stream of research has come primarily from the proponents of resource-based theory who argue that the availability of marketing capabilities, assets and resources is a major source of successful implementation of marketing strategies. They advocated that many organizations failed to implement marketing strategies due to insufficient marketing competencies and resources.
- Adapting the organizational structure. This stream of research has focused on adapting the organizational structure, design and characteristics; and that all of them should be flexible and adaptable to new changes in an organization's strategic orientation; as marketing strategy development and implementation is considered a major part of structure of the organization.

Table.2. Marketing Strategy Implementation Definitions.

Study	Definition or View of MSI
Wind and Roberston 1983	MSI is described as the final stage in the marketing strategy process. MSI is synonymous with control or monitoring.
Bonoma 1984 and Bonoma and Crittenden 1988	MSI is execution or implementation skills that include interacting, allocating, monitoring, and organizing as well as good implementer (manager) attributes such as goal-centred, highly interactive, controlled, in addition to his personal characteristics.
Piercy 1998	MSI is a detailed process that takes into account both of the marketing strategy contents and the organisational contexts in which the strategy is being implemented; through implementing a value-based marketing strategy. He argues that it is beneficial to examine not simply the analytical/technical aspects of the implementation process (information gathered and operations systems) but also the behavioural aspects of the marketing strategy implementation (in terms of the abilities of individuals to interpret information and develop market understanding, and their motivation, commitment, and behaviour in developing and delivering value to customers) and the organisational or contextual aspects of the process (the learning capabilities and responsiveness of the organisation, and it's management strategic orientation).
Varadarajan and Jayachandran 1999	MSI (how the marketing strategy is carried out) is described as the actions initiated within the organisation and its relationships with external constituencies to realise the strategy (e.g., organisation structure and coordination mechanisms).
Kotler 2003	MSI is the process that turns marketing plans into action with focus on customer relationships

- Coping with the changing business environment. This stream of research has focused on managing change and making organizational changes in the organization's context in which marketing strategy is being formulated and implemented. This explicitly indicates that the implementation process of marketing strategy must go beyond the boundaries of the marketing department but rather it is an organizational process not departmental. The literature reveals that managing change is an essential element of MSI success.

Based on the above discussion of MSI literature, the research propositions are:

Proposition 1: Marketing competencies is a fundamental factor for marketing strategy implementation success.

Proposition 2: Organizational culture is a fundamental factor for marketing strategy implementation success.

Proposition 3: Internal marketing is a fundamental factor for marketing strategy implementation success.

Proposition 4: Adapting the organizational structure is a fundamental factor for marketing strategy

implementation success.

Proposition 5: Coping with the changing corporate environment is a fundamental factor for marketing strategy implementation success.

Proposition 6: Adapting to external business environment is a fundamental factor for marketing strategy implementation success.

The MSI literature shows that there has been no consensus among marketing strategy authors on a specific definition of MSI (Noble and Mokwa, 1999). Table (2) presents some definitions of MSI. Table (2) shows that the definitions of MSI are congruent with its literature but some of them ignore the organizational context and managing the external business environment during MSI process. Consequently, it is argued that definitions of Piercy (1998) and Varadarajan and Jayachandran (1999) are the most comprehensive for MSI for two reasons: (1) the definitions move beyond the traditional marketing department for MSI and they take into account the fact that the organizational context in which a strategy is being implemented has a great role to play on the MSI success; (2) the definitions take into consideration the effect of managing external business environment on MSI during the implementation phase.

3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research problem has emerged from two perspectives, namely practical and academic. The practical perspective has emerged from the researcher's training and consulting experience in the field of marketing strategy within organizations inside and outside Jordan. The researcher noticed that many organizations have encountered problems and difficulties while implementing their marketing strategies. The major issue is that many marketing managers and directors who the researcher met have commented: we know what marketing is but we do not know how to do marketing!! A frequent question was asked to the researcher in many training and consulting sessions was: how could we achieve our developed or intended marketing strategy? How could we translate our marketing strategy into real actions to reach our goals? This indicates that the MSI is of great difficulty to many companies, and managers believed that the success or failure of implementation has a great effect on companies' performance; if integrated with the marketing strategy development. In addition, Miller (2000) found that organizations fail to implement 70% of their new strategic moves and initiatives (quoted in Lane, 2005).

The academic perspective has emerged from reviewing the literature in the field of marketing strategy. MSI literature indicated that there are theoretical gaps that require more investigation. The major gap that was found in the literature is that much of the marketing strategy literature focused on and paid attention to marketing strategy formulation rather than implementation (e.g., Bonoma, 1984; Bonoma and Crittenden, 1988; Cespedes and Piercy, 1996; Piercy, 1998; Noble and Mokwa, 1999; Menon et al., 1999; Varadarajan and Jayachandran, 1999; White et al., 2003; Dickinson and Ramaseshan, 2004; Lane, 2005; Akan et al., 2006). Given the significance of this argument, it is argued that little attention has been given to MSI in the marketing strategy research area and there is a critical need to investigate the "nature" and "reality" of MSI because it has a significant impact on organizations performance. This argument has received

support from the above marketing strategy researchers. For example, Piercy (1998, p. 223) states, "...implementation is rarely accorded its warranted significance in discussing marketing strategy, and there are particular issues now becoming apparent that justify renewed efforts in this area". Piercy (1998) argues that the ability of organizations to effectively implement marketing strategies is surprisingly poorly understood. Piercy (1999, p. 505) states that "there are no simple and easy-to-apply methods to deal with the implementation issue in marketing. ...the implementation issue remains one of the greatest practical and theoretical challenges for the marketing analysts, consultants, and practitioners in the future".

Noble and Mokwa (1999) argue that MSI research has suffered from at least three limitations. First, the sum of MSI research is small. Second, its research focussed exclusively on implementation issues at the organizational or functional level with little attention given to manager-level factors. Third, much of its research is not based on theoretical grounding. They argue that in contrast to the comprehensive body of research on marketing strategy formulation, little attention has been given to the MSI, or the actualization of that strategy. In the same vein, Berry (1999, p. 239) states that "a well-executed strategy diminishes opportunity for competitors". "A customer does not experience a strategy; a customer experiences the execution of the strategy-that is the "total product". "Unexecuted strategy spells failure". Cravens (2000, p. 436) supported the last views when he stated, "the ultimate performance of market-targeting and positioning decisions rests on how well the marketing strategy is implemented and managed on a continuing basis. Placing the strategy into action and adjusting it to eliminate performance gaps are essential success factors".

Research on the topic of MSI is still going on and debate among marketing strategy scholars is still growing. This is supported by a significant amount of research on MSI that is trying to understand the MSI process. Recent research (e.g., McClymont and Jocusen, 2003; White et al., 2003; Dickinson and Ramaseshan, 2004; Lane, 2005; Akan et al., 2006) has

been conducted to understand the effect of MSI on the success of marketing strategy development as well as on organizational performance. Examining the MSI literature has revealed that the unanswered question is what are the factors that affect the success or failure of MSI in organizations? The other question is: does MSI affect organizations performance? Although several research attempts have been made by marketing strategy authors to address the topic of MSI to answer these questions, there is still a need to comprehend the issue of MSI in a more comprehensive approach. Since these questions are still not fully answered and is overlooked by the marketing strategy literature, my research joins this debate and tries to bring new practical and academic insights to the MSI literature from a developing country business environment, Jordan. Further, a thorough examination that was carried out on the literature of marketing strategy in Jordan revealed that the MSI has not been addressed with any research efforts in the majority of business sectors. Consequently, this study is designed to address this under-researched subject and to extend our understanding of MSI by providing insights into the different factors that affect MSI success in service organizations. These practical and literature review gaps strengthen the grounds for conducting this research and make this research problem worthy to be investigated.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research has four major objectives:

1. To gain an understanding of the beliefs about and attitudes towards MSI success factors held by marketing managers and executives who had been involved in implementing marketing strategies.
2. To integrate multiple qualitative in-depth interviews with a broad literature search of MSI to describe the process and practice of implementing marketing strategies effectively.
3. To understand the important factors that have, from managers' experiences, a major role to play in MSI success.
4. To provide managers in the service organizations in Jordan with a broad framework that would help them get a better understanding in relation to "how" to implement marketing strategies from an organizational perspective rather than the departmental perspective.

5. THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The researcher has drawn the research design and primary data collection methods based on the phenomenological paradigm in which in-depth interviews were conducted with managers in service organisations in Jordan as a primary data collection method. The research methods and data collection procedures followed recommended guidelines for theory development in marketing (Deshpande, 1983). The researcher employed a qualitative in-depth interviews approach for gathering and analysing data from marketing decision makers' regarding the most implemented marketing strategy they had experienced. The service organisations that participated in the interviews were those that had "formal" or "written" marketing strategies which they implemented according to a predetermined set of marketing plans. Therefore, this research has greatly benefited from their experience in implementing marketing strategies. The main concern of the researcher was to examine the marketing managers' and executives perceptions, these managers are the ones involved in implementing marketing strategies, in relation to the players construction of "reality" and is "phenomenological" or "interpretivist" in nature, my aim is to better describe, understand and explain the issues involved in implementing marketing strategies in service organisations in Jordan. Although this research is reflective of an interpretivist paradigmatic approach to research, other researchers may acknowledge its contribution as being functionalist in nature in as much as its findings may suggest how practitioners may begin to discover how marketing strategies might be implemented and managed more effectively and efficiently.

Once the research design has been chosen, the choice of methodology is largely determined. Furthermore, the

type of methodology that is chosen by a researcher should reflect the assumptions of the research paradigm (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). There is no wrong or right methodology to be employed to conduct a research project. The research objectives are among the most important factors that affect the choice of a research methodology to achieve them. The qualitative methodology is adopted in this research since it achieves my research objectives (Oppenheim, 1992; Silverman, 2001; Easterby-Smith et al., 2002; Creswell, 2003). This methodology is congruent with the majority of MSI studies that have employed it for conducting future research.

The Research Population and Sample

The public shareholding service organizations that had “formal” or “written” marketing strategies were included in the research population. They were obtained from the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Jordan in 2006. There were 58 public shareholding organizations “working” in Jordan in 2005 (unpublished report in the Ministry). The researcher contacted and invited them to participate in the study. Only 32 of them agreed to participate in the study and confirmed that they had “formal” and “written” marketing strategies. The sample of the study was the marketing managers and some executives in service organizations who were involved in MSI phases. This methodology has been used by most of the MSI studies discussed in table (1). Consequently, the procedure used for accessing the sample was by contacting a key member of each company’s top management to facilitate access to the marketing manager and other executives who were involved in the MSI in an organization (e.g., Kohli et al., 1993; Doyle and Wong, 1998; Menon et al., 1999; Conant and White, 1999; Noble and Mokwa, 1999).

The researcher made a decision to access all the marketing managers, as well as one of the executives who are involved in running the marketing activities of service organizations in Jordan. The rationale for including one of the top management members in the research sample was to investigate the strategic orientation of marketing activities (Doyle, 1987; Varadarjan and Clark, 1994)

rather than just focusing on the functional aspects of marketing. In qualitative research, data collection is done to determine how literature and data compare. Consequently, it was thought that the best way of obtaining a list of marketing managers and executives was contacting each public shareholding service organization and investigating the organizational structure of each company to get contact details. As a result of this examination, a list of 32 marketing managers and 10 executives was prepared which included their companies’ names and all necessary contact details. The number of in-depth interviews that were carried out by the researcher was 42 in 32 service organizations.

Data Collection

The secondary data was collected by examining the relevant literature review on MSI. To achieve the research objectives, the researcher used in-depth interviews with managers as a primary data collection method. The type of interviews used in the research was structured in-depth interviews in which a set of predetermined questions about specific issues in the field of MSI was posed to the managers. The managers were asked about factors that affected the success or failure of marketing strategies implementation according to managers’ experiences in MSI over the past five years. The interviews are used to obtain more in-depth information about specific of interest in order to get insights that could help building body of literature on MSI. In-depth interviews were used in this research for the following reasons: (a) the in-depth interviews provide great in-depth insights, and rich data was obtained for the marketing research (e.g., Hussey and Hussey, 1997; Malhotra and Birks, 2000; Aaker et al., 2001; Churchill, 2001; Chisnall, 2001); (b) they generate a free exchange of information between the researcher and the managers; they have the highest degree of flexibility among the qualitative methods; (c) the in-depth interviews approach was able to reach the specified managers effectively and efficiently better than other methods; e.g., focus groups.

The main criteria upon which the managers were chosen were; first, the marketing managers were chosen

based on their titles and years of experience working in service organizations. Second, the executives were chosen because they were recommended by other managers in service organizations as “experts” to be interviewed for their knowledge and experience in the marketing of service businesses in Jordan. Third, the researcher’s judgment was used to assess the managers’ ability to provide insights and answers for the questions that need to be addressed for the research problem. In-depth interviews were held with marketing managers and executives in services organizations from which 33 interviews were tape recorded. Nine interviews were not tape-recorded because the managers did not give the researcher permission to record them. All the interviews were held at the managers’ official offices for their convenience. The 42 managers were interviewed across the services organizations during a five-month period. All the interviews lasted, on average, two hours and a half. Immediately after the interviews, the researcher recorded and crosschecked the interviews facts, as well as his personal perceptions and impressions. Then, the researcher detailed and wrote each interview notes and impressions within one day of the interview-the (24-hour rule). Each interview was then returned to the respondents to be checked for accuracy and validity purposes. Finally, when the managers approved their interviews contents, the interviews evidence was thought suitable for the analysis phase. Appropriate procedures to sustain validity and reliability of this research were used (Healy and Perry, 2000). The researcher established the collected data reliability through using an in-depth interviews protocol in which all the participated services organizations and managers were subjected to the same sequence of entry and exit procedures and interview questions. The interview protocol opened with a broad question asked to the managers to give the story of their experiences in relation to implementing marketing strategies. The construct validity was enhanced or improved by using multiple sources of evidence and by establishing a series of evidence as each interview was concluded. Field observations and providing the managers with an early draft of the interview text to

examine for inaccuracies and misunderstanding were also used to enhance validity. Further, external validity was supported by the research design itself, in which all services organizations interviews belong to service industries and were reasonably similar in type, management, resources and ownership (Oppenheim, 1992; Easterby-Smith et al., 2002; Creswell, 2003).

Interviews Methodology

- The researcher obtained support and publicity from leading service organizations to promote the research project and to get a proper access and co-operation during and after the interviews.
- Using telephone calls, the researcher contacted each manager to arrange a meeting at a time convenient to him for conducting the interview (Oppenheim, 1992).
- The researcher assured all the interviewed managers of complete confidentiality of the interviews and information provided before, during and after the interviews.
- Great attention was paid to time punctuality and conducting the interview in a reasonable atmosphere.
- The researcher opened up each interview by asking the manager general questions, which were related to the research topic in order to guide him to more specific questions for which the interview was conducted. Furthermore, during the interviews the managers were probed to obtain meaningful responses and asked for elaboration and clarification on some questions where this was necessary. These procedures were highly recommended by Malhotra and Birks (2000).
- Each manager was explicitly asked if he would give permission to record or tape the interview. The managers who gave permission to record were given the option of pausing the recorder if they would say anything off the record. This was an important action, which allowed the managers to have the freedom to express their views. For the managers who did not give permission, they would not feel free to express their views if there was recording, therefore, notes were taken immediately while they answered the questions.

Table 3: Research Propositions that Emerged from the Empirical Research Findings.

Study Propositions	Number of Managers who Cited Each Proposition	Managers' Terminology used to Describe A Proposition
Superior Marketing Competencies	40	Marketing skills and capabilities, resources, superior human capabilities, superior marketing experience, superior customer service, team works, and customer orientation
Organisational Culture	34	Top management adopt and defend marketing philosophy-customer orientated culture, supporting the marketing manager, providing necessary marketing resources, marketing is an investment not a cost, top management commitment during the MSI, and regular customer satisfaction measurement
Managing External Business Environment	30	Adapt to external forces, being flexible during MSI phase, tackling competition, facing unexpected threats, economic situations, tackling inflation, and social attitudes
Practising Internal Marketing	24	Internal marketing culture, internal customers, internal service quality, motivation, employees training, incentives and rewards, fair employees compensation, internal communications, and teamwork
Adapting the Organisational Structure	21	Changing organisational structure, people (employees) attitudes, assumptions and beliefs flexible structure, creating new positions, and change according to market needs

Source: The Researcher based on Empirical Analysis of the Data

- All the managers were asked the questions in the same way, tone and style, and were given complete freedom to express views and interpretations for the questions. Every interview was finished by thanking the manager and appreciation was expressed for his time, effort and co-operation.
- Incentives to the managers. The researcher gave all the interviewed managers a chance to have a copy of the research findings and results.

Content Analysis

The analysis stage used a three-step content analysis procedures and guidelines that are recommended by a number of researchers (Oppenheim, 1992; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Easterby-Smith et al., 2002; Creswell, 2003). The first step is a “unitizing step”, in which the transcripts were broken down to examine “shared thoughts or thought units” among all the interviews, which ranged from a phrase to sentences. Second, the categorizing step in which the shared thoughts or thought units were organized into emergent categories. Labels were given to categories to

facilitate grouping managers’ thoughts on each category and to reflect attempts to capture the perceived shared thoughts amongst the shared thoughts. A skilful external researcher (not familiar with MSI literature) was asked to check the research content, analysis, labels and categories to insure some objectivity and his views was then compared with the data. Third, the classifying step in which the categories emerged were organized into five major unifying “themes” or “fundamental categories” that provide a summary of the fundamental issues in the data. Some of the managers’ quotations were also provided to provide evidence for the research findings and arguments. Finally, each emergent category was discussed and compared with the MSI literature to find out if the research results received support in literature.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The patterns the researcher observed across all the interviews allowed him to draw inferences in relation to the MSI success factors from the perspectives and experiences

of marketing managers and executives in service organizations. Analysis of transcribed interviews produced several categories that were organized into five major propositions regarding MSI success factors. Table (3) demonstrates the study propositions, number of managers cited each proposition, and managers' terminology used to describe each proposition. The next step is to discuss the research findings with the MSI literature review.

Proposition One: Superior Marketing Competencies

This proposition refers to the extent to which superior marketing competencies could help an organization to implement marketing strategies successfully. Almost all the managers have greatly emphasized the strategic role of superior marketing competencies for MSI success. During MSI, the managers focused on having superior marketing assets and capabilities, marketing experience as well as people's marketing skills which played a crucial role on MSI success in service organizations. The managers explicitly said superior marketing competencies are key success factors for MSI and would influence performance. These key success factors would leverage marketing and non-marketing functions and activities that any organization must master in order to outperform rivals. Further, the managers have concentrated on the availability of marketing specialists who are able to use their knowledge and skills to perform superior marketing activities such as analytical skills, market research, designing the marketing mix, and interpreting market intelligence. The managers have also stressed the importance of finding and having the right people to perform the service right; it is a matter of quality of people who have values that fit organizational values that would create values for customers. The managers refer to superior marketing competencies as the most valuable organizational assets that the organization could have accumulated which would become a valuable source of achieving a competitive advantage in the marketplace. The researcher included some comments in managers' terms regarding this proposition. For example, a marketing director of a service company said:

"...we need a well-qualified marketing people for the

marketing strategy implementation success....they should be knowledgeable in all aspects of our business, marketing, technical stuff, to serve the customers professionally. We also need marketing assets and capabilities in terms of excellent service quality, good customer services, superior financial and human resources that are considered the most important assets".

A marketing manager of an insurance company said:

"The implementation of marketing strategies has a crucial role to play on the performance of our company....the marketing function must include everybody in the company from the tea boy to the chairman.....a well-qualified staff and doing marketing research correctly and properly will make a major positive shift in its performance forward".

The qualitative findings provide support for the literature that argues that superior marketing competencies have a crucial role to play on MSI success (Bonoma, 1984; Bonoma and Crittenden, 1988; Bharadwaj et al., 1993; Day, 1994; Meldrum, 1996; Cespedes and Piercy, 1996; Gilmore and Carson, 1996; Porter, 1996; Varadarajan and Jayachandran, 1999; Menon et al., 1999; Berry, 1999; Cravens, 2000; Fahy et al., 2000; Hooley et al., 2001; White et al., 2003; Dicknson and Ramaseshan, 2004; Akan et al., 2006). The research findings and literature review are very congruent in supporting the idea that the successful implementation of marketing strategies requires superior marketing competencies (soft and hard competencies) that would exert a strong influence on performance. Consequently, proposition one is supported.

Proposition Two: Organizational Culture

This proposition refers to the extent to which suitable organizational culture is available to enhance the process of MSI and improve performance. Surprisingly, 34 managers cited organizational culture as an imperative factor that contributed to the MSI success and enhanced performance. The managers have used several expressions to cite this important factor for the MSI success. They pointed out to customer orientation culture, how well the management coped with problems during

the implementation phase, and ability of management to link marketing strategy development and implementation. A major proposition which was highly linked with the organizational culture is the separation between marketing strategy formulation and implementation and seeing them as distinct parts. The managers thought, from their experience, that integrating the marketing strategy formulation and implementation is a key success factor for the MSI success and business performance. If such integration did not happen it would spell failure and result in weak performance. The issue here is that much of the marketing strategy literature has revealed that marketing strategy formulation and implementation are separate; an implicit assumption is assumed in which if a marketing strategy is developed its implementation would be easy. In other words, when an organization chooses a marketing strategy it must carefully examine availability of organizational capabilities and skills that would enable an organization to implement marketing strategies successfully. The MSI literature showed that the majority of organizations experienced failures during the MSI phase as a result of organizational culture that did not examine the ability of an organization to implement their intended marketing strategies during the marketing strategy development phase. The research findings are very consistent with the MSI literature concerning this matter. 34 managers cited that they experienced partial and full failure in achieving their intended marketing strategies because they did not take into consideration their ability to implement their intended marketing strategies. For example, a marketing director of a service company said:

“Our top management do not have the necessary organizational culture that comprehend the marketing process from a comprehensive perspective.....they think that developing a marketing strategy is the end of the road and MSI is a very tactical issue that is not of a major concern.....in addition, the majority of our companies have a problem in the process of strategic marketing planning, although they have got corporate and marketing strategies”.

There are other important issues that emerged from

the interviewees that are related to organizational culture. One of the keys for MSI success is the necessary investments to carry out the marketing strategy. The budget, and willingness and ability to spend, must be present in order for a new strategy to have a chance of success. The managers thought the customer satisfaction measurement, and defending the customer should be at the heart of top management strategic and operational decisions to achieve the desired performance. The managers heavily focused on maintaining the commitment and support of top management to implement the intended marketing strategies. They said that commitment to provide financial and nonfinancial resources and support during the implementation stage was a very vital success factor for MSI. A number of marketing managers have said that they failed in implementing some marketing strategies simply because the top management did not keep promises and were not committed to provide resources during the implementation stage. The managers believed that MSI success might rely on making investments in marketing, supporting the marketing manager and staff, and placing the marketing manager on the top level of organizational culture. An important finding in this context is that the interviewed managers did not see marketing as a separate function but it is highly related to the organizational context in which a marketing strategy is implemented. The rationale for this finding is that the majority of marketing activities are performed outside the marketing department and other departments are important players to satisfy customers in service businesses. Further, the managers concentrated on the ability of the organizational culture to create a culture of “synergy” between marketing and other organizational units during MSI to ensure success. The researcher included some comments in managers’ terms regarding this proposition. For example, a deputy general manager of a service company commented:

“.....in our business we totally reflect what our customers are saying and what their attitudes are on our management beliefs and actions”.

The research findings and literature are congruent in

supporting the fact that organizational culture is the cornerstone of MSI success and pervades the way to improve performance (Bonoma and Crittenden, 1988; Bharadwaj et al., 1993; Doyle, 1995; Piercy, 1998; Varadarajan and Jayachandran, 1999; Noble and Mokwa, 1999; Piercy, 1999; Hooley et al., 2001; McClymont and Jocumsen, 2003; Dickson and Ramaseshan, 2004; Allio, 2005). Consequently, proposition two is supported.

Proposition Three: Managing and Coping with the External Business Environment

This proposition refers to the extent to which an organisation is flexible and is able to adapt itself and tackle the external business environmental forces and changes while implementing a marketing strategy using an approach that ensures success. Unexpectedly and on contrary with the MSI literature, 30 managers have greatly emphasised the central role of being flexible and adaptable to the changes in the external business environmental forces as a prerequisite for MSI success. In this proposition, two interrelated categories were heavily emphasised by the managers for the success of MSI. The first category has emerged from managers who have experienced problems of managing the external business environment to suite a developed marketing strategy. An examination of MSI literature has revealed that this important factor has relatively been neglected and overlooked as a vital factor that contributes to the success of MSI. MSI literature has implicitly discussed the external business environment within the context of coping with the changing corporate environment and organisational changes needed to implement marketing strategies. However, managing the external business environmental forces have a great role to play on the success of MSI. The 30 managers said that one of the major failures they had experienced was because of neglecting the external business environmental forces that would affect the intended marketing strategy and would divert its intended destiny. The managers focused on tackling competition, economic situations, inflation rates, strategic alliances, and unexpected threats (e.g., regional wars). The managers believed that an organisation may

have a brilliant marketing strategy but its success lies in its ability to implement it accompanied with a clear vision of being flexible and adaptable to the external business environmental forces. The researcher included some comments in managers' terms regarding this proposition. For example, a CEO of a bank said:

“One of the greatest difficulties we are facing is handling external environmental forces...they include political, economical, technological and social external environmental forces in the local and regional environments that our company has no control over them. They all affect the ability of our company and other companies in the market to implement marketing strategies”.

A marketing and sales manager of an insurance company said:

“The marketing strategy should be logical, reasonable and compatible within both the company and market place conditions...suitable matching between MACRO and MICRO business environments is a critical factor for the success of marketing strategy implementation”.

The second category has emerged from managers who have experienced managing and coping with the changing corporate environment. Coping with the changing corporate environment activities included managing politics, promoting the intended marketing strategies, resolving conflicts, leaking change news, changing behaviours and values, implanting new beliefs and assumptions, and most importantly; defending customer-orientated culture across the organisation. All the managers who cited this category for the MSI success experienced problems with them because such structural and behavioural changes were highly intangible, complex and embedded in people's behaviour on different managerial levels. Supporting this proposition provided empirical support for the literature that advocated coping with changing corporate environment as a fundamental factor to implement marketing strategies successfully (Piercy, 1989, 1998; Hooley et al., 1998; Varadarajan and Jayachandran, 1999; Piercy, 1999; Berry, 1999; Lane, 2005). Consequently, proposition three is supported.

However, the research findings should be taken with caution for two reasons, first, the external environmental changes depend on the time horizon of MSI; the longer the time the MSI takes, the greater is the effect of external business environment since uncertainty tends to increase. Second, although Jordan has a great political stability and relatively good economic conditions, we live in an unstable area (the Middle East) where conflicts may spark at any time, as happened in the Lebanon and Israeli war during 2006, which would greatly affect the MSI success and even business performance.

Proposition Four: Practicing Internal Marketing

This proposition refers to the extent to which internal marketing is being practiced inside the organization to facilitate the MSI process and improve performance. The argument in practicing internal marketing inside the organization is that the internal market, building relationship with employees, and employees skills, commitment, capabilities and behaviours are vital bundles of behaviours and values for the MSI success. Further, the covert aspects of the organization and organizational context in which MSI takes place are major drivers for the MSI success.

The research findings indicated that 24 managers had cited that practicing internal marketing inside the organization especially on internal audience is a major issue that enables employees to perform their service roles and actualize the intended marketing strategy into reality. The managers used different terms to express their views on practicing internal marketing for the success of MSI. A stream of managers focused on the concepts of internal customer, internal marketing culture, and employees training. Another stream of managers focused on the concepts of employees' incentives, motivations, compensation as well as internal communications (e.g., rapid and accurate movement of information) and teamwork. The managers have strongly focused on dividing the internal audience into sub-segments based on their needs and wants, having training plans to increase people's capabilities, having strong internal communications systems as well as internal

customer service culture and excellent internal service quality levels. The researcher included some comments in managers' terms regarding this proposition. For example, a marketing and customer service manager of a service company said:

"The successful implementation of marketing strategies must include intensive training and motivation...our problem is lack of training and building marketing infrastructure...such actions create superior human capabilities that are of huge help for marketing strategy implementation success...it is the quality of people who interact with our customers properly".

An assistant general manager of a service company said:

"The internal communications are very important between units and functions inside the organisation to implement marketing strategies....internal service quality is very necessarythe units must satisfy each other in order to satisfy the external customer...every one and every unit must consider the other units and people as internal customers who should be satisfied...it is the learning company that is going to create excellent culture for marketing strategy implementation".

The research findings and internal marketing literature are consistent in supporting the fact that practicing internal marketing inside the organizations is a key facilitator that contributed to the success of MSI (Piercy and Morgan, 1991; Hooley et al., 1998; Piercy, 1998, 1999; Berry, 1999). Consequently, proposition four is supported.

Proposition Five: Adapting the Organizational Structure

This proposition refers to the extent to which an organization has flexible and adaptable organizational systems as well as its ability to make structural changes to support excellent execution of marketing strategy and serve customers. The findings indicate that 21 managers had emphasized the pivotal role of being a flexible organization as that could manage internal change as an imperative process for specific strategic directions. In this proposition, adapting the organizational structure to better

support the execution of any newly formulated marketing strategy was heavily emphasised by the managers for the success of MSI. The managers experienced making significant changes in their organizations' structures to suite a developed marketing strategy. These structural changes included merging departments, creating new positions, hiring new people, information technology infrastructure restructuring, and sometimes only making slight changes on the structure. All the managers who cited this category for the MSI success experienced problems with it because such structural and behavioural changes were highly intangible, complex and embedded in people's behaviour on different managerial levels. The researcher included some comments in managers' terms regarding this proposition. For example, a corporate business development manager of a service company said:

"When we established the marketing department, the top management was not convinced about marketing.....the main problem was adapting our organizational structure to get this task done....any marketing staff must be able to convince the top management about marketing strategies not sales plans, and to provide them with comprehensive marketing strategies and full mechanisms of implementation and evaluation".

A marketing and communications manager of a service company said:

"In modern service companies the marketing managers are not responsible for achieving only sales, the problem is that if the marketing manager has not achieved a certain sales volume within a short period of time the top management claims that this is a failure....marketing must start from the tea boy and finish in the chairman's office.....we have to change our way of doing things in our service organizations".

The research findings are supportive to the literature (Bonoma, 1984; Bonoma and Crittenden, 1988; Bharadwaj et al., 1993; Cespedes and Piercy, 1996; Piercy, 1998; Cravens, 1998; Noble and Mokwa, 1999; Cravens, 2000) that advocated that adapting the organizational structure to suite a newly formulated marketing strategy is a fundamental factor for the success

of this marketing strategy. Consequently, proposition five is supported.

An Inductive Model of Marketing Strategy Implementation

The researcher has conducted further analysis and synthesis of the qualitative research findings and literatures contributed to the development of an inductive descriptive model of MSI; describing and joining together the perceptions and insights of marketing managers and executives involved in the MSI activities and processes. This inductive model is based on joining the propositions that emerged from this research and factors identified from previous conceptual and empirical studies.

Figure (1) shows the inductive model of MSI. The conceptualisation and qualitative findings of MSI indicate that it is a complex activity, and a multi-dimensional approach is required to implement marketing strategies successfully. The conceptualisation and five propositions emerged from the interviews are not necessarily seen as steps in a process or sequential but as a set of interrelated and interpretive activities providing the multiple perspectives of managers allowing us to develop insights for the culture of the MSI in service organizations. The inductive model explains a set of complex factors that affect the success of MSI. The importance of the inductive model's factors is not equal but at the same time the managers ranked or cited that superior marketing competencies and organizational culture are imperative factors for the success of MSI. Although the findings of this study support this claim, the importance of the model's factors is still speculative since there is no quantitative evidence to prove this. The other factors are important but less than the first two factors.

The research findings have revealed very interesting insights concerning the model's factors. The managers described superior marketing competencies and organizational culture as "highly intangible and covert factors" that cannot be easily imitated by an organization's rivals. They encompass behaviour, values, social environment, beliefs and assumptions as critical

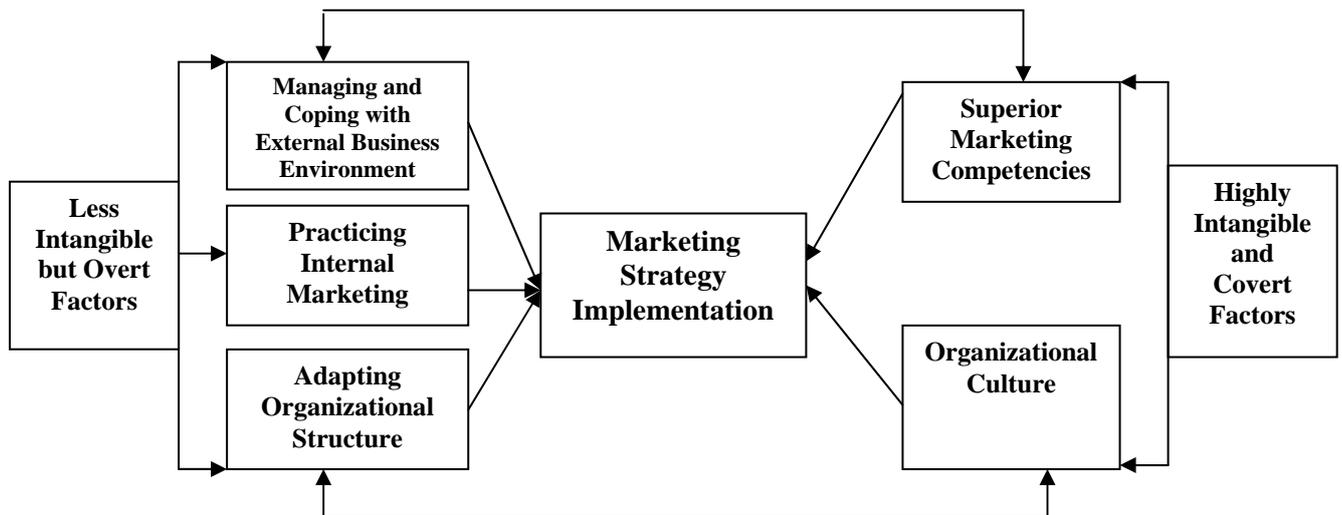


Figure 1: An Inductive Model of MSI.

activities which all have a central role on MSI success. This emerging insight provides a strong support for the resource-based theory literature (e.g., Barney, 1991; Bharadwaj et al., 1993; Day, 1994; Hooley et al., 1999; Fahy et al., 2000; Vorhies and Morgan, 2005) that advocates that superior marketing competencies and organizational culture are among the most valuable marketing assets, resources and capabilities that can exert a strong effect on the successful implementation of marketing strategies; and would eventually influence performance. The essence is that market and customer issues should dominate organizational culture for MSI success. The managers describe practicing internal marketing, external business environment, organizational structure and change management as “relatively less intangible and overt factors” that have an important role on the success of MSI. The managers insisted that these three factors are very crucial for MSI success if integrated with superior marketing competencies and a “healthy” organizational culture. Consequently, the inductive model is an integrated set of interrelated activities and processes that form a holistic approach that managers have experienced and employed for the successful implementation of marketing strategies.

Generally speaking, the inductive model describes a

series of complex relationships that link highly intangible marketing resources, organizational climate, management values, assumptions, strategic planning system (continuous examination of external business environment), internal marketing culture, and systems and procedures together as they all frame a multi-dimensional approach which assisted managers to implement marketing strategies successfully. Consequently, the tacit organizational and marketing knowledge processes are intertwined together through complex and covert activities that bring all departments and individuals inside an organization together with shared values and assumptions that underpin its ability to successfully implement marketing strategies.

The interviews with the managers have revealed very interesting insights regarding the managers’ perceptions and how they perceived the success of MSI. The majority of the interviewed managers had explicitly expressed different perceptions on how to consider a marketing strategy as a success or failure. There are five streams of managers regarding this issue. (a) Managers who think that if the “intended” marketing strategy was achieved then MSI was perceived as a success. (b) Managers who think that if a set of predetermined financial objectives were achieved then MSI was perceived as a success. (c)

Managers who think that if the organization changes itself and manages change well as a prerequisite to implement a specific strategic initiative then it was perceived as a success. (d) Managers who think that if the MSI team actualizes top management vision into reality then it was perceived as a success. (e) Managers who think that if the organization satisfies customers then it was perceived as a success. These streams reveal that the managers held different perspectives concerning recognizing the success or failure of MSI. These different perspectives motivated the researcher to ask the majority of the managers why such different perspectives exist among service organizations? The majority of the managers replied simply "it is a matter of organizational culture and climate" as well as the "organization's capabilities" that would make a difference during the MSI processes and activities. Further, the managers had explicitly stated that the "organizational culture and capabilities" are unique in each organization's context and rely heavily on the top management philosophy. This provides evidence related to the strategic influence of organizational factors affecting MSI and marketing processes; most of which are performed outside the traditional marketing department. In other words, it is the organizational climate, values and assumptions as well as its architecture that have affected MSI success from managers' experiences and practices.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research objectives and MSI literature review, in-depth interviews were carried out in response to important calls found in the MSI literature that revealed perceived gaps that require empirical investigation. The major gap found in the MSI literature is the lacking of empirical research pertaining to managerial perceptions of MSI success factors from managers' perspectives and experiences. Other Problems regarding MSI are still an under-researched topic and there is insufficient research regarding the MSI success factors in the developing countries business environments. Based on a thorough investigation of MSI

literature and empirical findings of the in-depth interviews, this research has suggested a framework to capture and conceptualize the MSI process and activities that provided a detailed understanding of those marketing and organizational activities through which marketing strategy is implemented effectively. The inductive model described the factors that, from marketing managers and executives experiences, had a profound role to play on the successful implementation of marketing strategies. Further, the research model and findings have delineated MSI success factors and provided a solid understanding of the interrelated and complex relationships between them compositing a holistic approach for MSI while taking into account the organizational context in which MSI takes place. Consequently, this research has complemented the contributions made by MSI authors who advocated, as in this research, that MSI is a strategic not tactical management activity that would greatly contribute to organizational performance and may achieve a competitive advantage since MSI actualizes a strategic intent into reality.

The major purpose of this research was to seek an understanding of beliefs about, experiences of, and attitudes towards MSI from the side of those marketing managers and executives involved in MSI, and then, to develop a broader organizational perspective of the MSI processes and activities. Further, this research has carefully integrated previous conceptual and empirical work of MSI and in-depth interviews findings to understand the process and activities of MSI success factors in service organizations in Jordan. More specific conclusions of this qualitative research are:

1. MSI is a strategic issue in service organizations that may affect business performance since it is responsible of turning a marketing strategy into reality and of achieving desired performance levels.
2. MSI is a set of complex and interrelated activities that interact together, that the strategic relationships among them may exist to have an effect on the success of MSI in service organizations.
3. The successful implementation of marketing strategies relies heavily on the organizational

context, values and assumptions in which MSI is being taking place since many of the MSI activities are performed outside the marketing department.

4. The interviewed marketing managers and executives and MSI literature revealed that superior marketing competencies and organizational culture are among the most crucial factors that affected the success of MSI. The rationale behind this conclusion is that MSI relies on “covert or hidden” not “overt” processes and activities; most of which are complex and embedded in people’s behaviour and values. Such competencies and culture are very difficult for the organization’s rivals to imitate or duplicate since they are invisible to them.
5. Managing and coping with the external business environment is another factor affecting MSI success. An interesting conclusion is that marketing managers and executives thought and experienced that coping with the external business environment’s changes and forces during the MSI phase was seen as a critical success factor, and adapting the organization to them was considered an important success factor since the organization is inseparable of its external environment as it affects achieving the intended goals.
6. Practicing internal marketing, organizational structure and design, and managing change were perceived as important factors that affected the success of MSI and their effect would be greater and higher if they were integrated with the other factors indicated in the MSI inductive model.
7. The success of MSI relies heavily on the integration of the MSI success factors and on the ability to understand the complexities and mutual effects of such factors on the MSI success and how they can translate an intended marketing strategy into reality.
8. An organizational and comprehensive approach is very much needed for the MSI success since MSI requires various parts of the organization to get involved in the MSI process, and cross-functional integration is necessary to achieve a success in the marketplace especially in the customers’ eyes.

Managerial Implications

The inductive model of MSI synthesized from the research findings and from a thorough examination of MSI literature explains that MSI activities and processes are a set of experienced perspectives, culture, values, beliefs and assumptions that are an integral part of the whole process of marketing strategy formulation and implementation. The process of understanding the origins and meanings of these interrelated processes and activities, how they intertwined together and how managers experienced them is problematic in itself. The majority of these activities and processes are tacit and intangible and embedded in the fabric of people’s behaviour and values in the organization. Understanding such behaviour and values requires a deep analysis of culture, values and social codes that are embedded in the day-by-day operations during the MSI process. In addition, the tangible aspects of superior marketing competencies (i.e. IT), coping with the external business environment, practicing internal marketing philosophy, designing a proper organizational structure and managing change carefully are of great help to assist today’s marketing managers to understand the MSI process and make them able to achieve predetermined objectives. If marketing managers, practitioners and executives can understand the factors of the inductive model of MSI, and their interrelated and complex relationships, organizational culture, values, assumptions, and utilize superior marketing and organizational competencies then they can start to comprehend how these factors can individually and collectively affect the successful implementation of marketing strategies, and eventually may achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. More specifically, marketing managers and executives should search for a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between the model’s factors and should carefully comprehend covert and overt complexities and relationships within and across the model’s factors for the success of MSI in today’s competitive business environment. This would give marketing managers and executives better insights of how the MSI process can be managed more effectively and achieve a superior position

in the marketplace-the customer experiences only the MS implantation not its formulation. Indeed, in service organizations, managers should be able to combine different aspects of marketing and organizational knowledge in such an approach that can increase their ability to successfully implement marketing strategies and achieve strategic objectives.

Limitations and Future Research Opportunities

When evaluating the research findings, some limitations of the study should be taken into account as a result of trade-offs in research design. This research has investigated the topic of MSI to address perceived gaps in MSI literature that need more investigation. Future research may address the issues of marketing strategy formulation and implementation, and performance through developing an integrated model of marketing strategy and performance that includes the three parts. A good area of research is to investigate the marketing strategy implementation success aspects if they differ according to the marketing strategies that are advocated by Porter (Porter, 1980). The research idea is to investigate the marketing strategy implementation success aspects that are required with each strategy of Porter's generic strategies, namely; cost leadership, differentiation and focus strategies. The emergent propositions were described as important factors that contributed to MSI success from managers' experiences in service organizations. An important area of future research is to investigate the MSI success factors from different managerial perspectives and units to get deeper insights of the MSI success factors. Although this research has developed an inductive model of MSI success factors which is drawn based on previous literature and empirical findings, the in-depth interviews method used in this research has limitations recognized by many of its proponents. Further, a fruitful area of research is to conduct a quantitative study that can be devoted to confirm the research inductive model and adds to its validity and reliability.

The researcher makes no claim about the comprehensiveness of MSI inductive model developed in this study. A fruitful area of research is to examine if there are other factors that may affect the success of MSI

in service organizations. Therefore, elaborating the model may be valuable, and may bring new important insights to the MSI success factors. Future research may also examine the relationships between the model's factors and organizational performance as well as examining the most influential factors of the model on MSI and performance. Further, future researches are also encouraged to replicate the inductive model using qualitative and quantitative methodologies as well as conducting comparative studies within the developing and the developed countries across different business environments. Such studies would provide a broader and deeper understanding of the MSI success factors across the developed and the developing countries. The research findings indicated that superior marketing competencies, organizational culture and external business environment are among the powerful factors that affected the success of MSI in service organizations. An interesting area of research is to investigate what are and types of marketing competencies that affect the MSI success? How they affect MSI success? What is the best type of organizational culture that affects the MSI success? What are the most important external business environmental forces that may affect the MSI success?

Contribution to Marketing Strategy Literature

The researcher believes that this paper contributes to the marketing strategy literature from different perspectives. This study has addressed perceived gaps in the MSI literature review and responded to important calls from marketing strategy authors who advocated that MSI is under-researched and empirical research is required to understand the factors that affect the success or failure of MSI. Further, MSI in the developing countries business environment is very rare; therefore this paper is one of the few attempts that is devoted to understand the MSI success factors in a non-Western business environment, Jordan. This is the first study carried out in Jordan that addressed the topic of MSI success factors especially in service organizations. This topic has not been researched in Jordan and the researcher hopes that this paper would open up several quantitative

and qualitative research avenues in the field of marketing strategy formulation and implementation in Jordan and other developing countries. From a methodological perspective, this is the first study that has employed a qualitative methodology, in-depth interviews, to understand and explore the factors that affect the success of MSI in service organizations from marketing managers and executives' perceptions and experiences. Consequently, this paper may have established solid theoretical and empirical grounds for elaborated qualitative and quantitative research papers to be carried out in the future in the field of MSI.

From a theoretical perspective, this study may have contributed to the marketing strategy literature through exploring and confirming some arguments of MSI literature that advocated that superior marketing competencies and organizational culture are powerful factors that affect the success of MSI. Another important theoretical contribution is that managing and coping with

external business environment changes and forces during the MSI process was seen as an important success factor. The majority of MSI literature did not pay much attention to this factor during the MSI process meanwhile this factor was found important, from the managers' experiences, in service organizations in Jordan. Consequently, MSI literature and future studies may consider managing and coping with the external business environment as one of the crucial factors that may affect the success of MSI. From a practical perspective, this study has offered marketing managers and executives guidelines and a relatively comprehensive approach that can be used for MSI processes in service organizations, which did not exist before in Jordan. However, the success of managers to use the MSI success factors emerged from this research depends on their ability to understand them and to recognize their complex and interrelated relationships.

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عوامل نجاح تطبيق استراتيجية التسويق: دراسة نوعية ميدانية في المنظمات الخدمية في الأردن

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ملخص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى التعرف على عوامل نجاح تطبيق استراتيجيات التسويق في المنظمات الخدمية في الأردن. وبناءً على بحث دقيق لأدبيات تطبيق استراتيجيات التسويق ومنهجية نوعية صممت خصيصاً لهذه الدراسة فقد تمكن الباحث من تطوير نموذج استقرائي حول عوامل نجاح تطبيق استراتيجيات التسويق في المنظمات الخدمية. لقد تم تصميم منهجية البحث باستخدام النموذج النوعي وذلك من خلال اجراء 42 مقابلة فردية معمقة مع مديري التسويق والمديرين التنفيذيين في المنظمات الخدمية في الأردن. وتشير نتائج هذه الدراسة الاستكشافية النوعية إلى دعم ما جاء في أدبيات تطبيق استراتيجيات التسويق ودراساتها السابقة حول مدى أهمية توسيع نطاق تطبيق استراتيجيات التسويق ليشمل معظم أجزاء المنظمة، أي أن مهمة تطبيق استراتيجيات التسويق لا تتعلق بدائرة التسويق فقط وإنما تشمل كافة دوائر المنظمة الخدمية إضافة إلى الثقافة التنظيمية السائدة فيها. وبناءً على نتائج هذه الدراسة النوعية فقد طور الباحث نموذجاً استقرائياً يتكون من خمسة عوامل رئيسية هامة لنجاح تطبيق استراتيجيات التسويق. وهذه العوامل هي الإمكانيات والقدرات التسويقية المميزة، الثقافة التنظيمية، إدارة قوى وعوامل بيئة المنظمة الخارجية والتعامل معها، ممارسة التسويق الداخلي، وتكييف الهيكل التنظيمي للمنظمة مع استراتيجية التسويق المطورة. وتشير نتائج الدراسة إلى أن الإمكانيات والقدرات التسويقية المميزة والثقافة المؤسسية، من وجهة نظر مديري التسويق والمديرين التنفيذيين وخبراتهم، هي أهم العوامل المؤثرة في نجاح تطبيق استراتيجيات التسويق. إن العوامل التي يتكون منها نموذج البحث الاستقرائي تشكل مجموعة معقدة من الأنشطة التي تتداخل وتتكامل بطريقة معقدة لتؤثر في نجاح تطبيق استراتيجية التسويق. أضف إلى ذلك، إن على المديرين فهم العلاقة المتداخلة والمتبادلة بين عوامل النموذج الاستقرائي والعلاقات المعقدة بين عوامله من أجل نجاح تطبيق استراتيجيات التسويق لديهم. وأخيراً، فقد تم توضيح المضامين الإدارية والتسويقية التي يمكن أن يستفيد منها المديرين لنجاح تطبيق استراتيجياتهم التسويقية، إضافة إلى فرص بحث مستقبلية في حقل استراتيجيات التسويق ومساهمة البحث في هذا الحقل.

الكلمات الدالة: تطبيق استراتيجية التسويق، مقابلات فردية معمقة، الثقافة المؤسسية، الإمكانيات والقدرات التسويقية، المنظمات الخدمية، الأردن.

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