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Thomas L. Powers

University of Alabama at Birmingham

Dawn B. Valentine

William Carey University

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Market Orientation across Firm Performance Levels; Manager, Salesperson, and Customer Viewpoints

Thomas L. Powers

University of Alabama at Birmingham

Dawn B. Valentine

William Carey University

ABSTRACT

Market orientation and its impact on firm performance has been a topic of research interest for many years, yet research is still needed to extend this stream of literature in two important areas. Previous research has largely examined a company management perspective of market orientation, excluding the perspective of front line personnel, and that of customers. In addition, performance has been primarily assessed using subjective perceptions as opposed to objective measures. This study is intended to extend the literature beyond these traditional perspectives by examining market orientation from three different viewpoints including managers, salespeople, and customers as it relates to firm performance. Using these differing viewpoints, the research presented in this paper examines the difference in the level of market orientation across quartiles of actual branch performance, as well as the difference in level of perceived performance compared to actual performance. The research is based on data obtained from 111 business units of a Fortune 500 company.

The results indicate that managers and salespeople had no perceived differences in the level of cultural market orientation across objective performance quartiles. Managers and salespeople had no perceived differences in any of the three measures of operational market orientation, and no perceived differences in their assessment of branch performance across actual performance quartiles. In contrast however, customers had a significant difference in their perception of cultural market orientation, but did not have a significant difference in their perception of the measures of operational market orientation. These results indicate that customers have a differing, and perhaps more accurate perception of market orientation than do company personnel.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Thomas L. Powers received a Ph.D. in Marketing and Transportation Administration from Michigan State University. He is currently a Professor of Marketing at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Dawn B. Valentine received a Ph.D. in Administration-Health Services from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She is currently a Professor of Marketing at William Carey University.