

The Impact of Competitive Intelligence on Sustainable Competitive Advantage through Marketing Innovation in the Light of Resource-based View of Strategic Management

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Abstract:

Resource-based view as a cornerstone of strategic management was examined in the current study investigating one key source of sustainable competitive advantage, which is competitive intelligence as supported by marketing innovation. Structural equation modeling was carried out to process data collected for the purpose of the current study on the basis of a quantitative descriptive analytical research design.

Competitive intelligence results exert significant effects on marketing innovation activities and sustainable competitive advantage drivers in a structural model where marketing innovation is positioned in the eye of that effect.

Keywords: Resource-based View, Competitive Intelligence, Marketing Innovation, Sustainable Competitive Advantage, Strategic Management.

I. INTRODUCTION

A resource-based view presumes that organizational resources are a consequence of internal and external factors. The first factor refers to managerial choices within the company, which are determined by economic rationality, while the second one describes the strategic factors that have effects on the company, e.g., buyer, supplier or competitor power (Oliver, 1997). Oliver elaborated that managerial choices, which lead to resource selection as proceeding to a competitive advantage, come across market imperfections. The author defined these imperfections as barriers that obstruct competitors' ability to acquire or imitate these resources. Consequently, long-term differences between the company and its competitors emerged, namely company heterogeneity that results in a sustainable competitive advantage.

Dyer and Singh (1998) indicated that the competitive advantage can be recognized through industry structure view, in which resources are extended over the organizational boundaries in a relationship with other organizations. They identified two types of organizational critical resources: resources within the organizational

boundaries and resources that pass over these boundaries. According to Madhani (2009), resources are regarded as strategic and result in a competitive advantage only when these resources are heterogeneous and immobile. Barney et al. (2001) delineated four attributes of company resources and capabilities that guided the company to a sustained competitive advantage, which are inimitable, irreplaceable, scarce and valuable resources. For them, resources can be tangible and intangible assets like managerial skills, organizational processes as well as information and knowledge under the company control.

Reviewing Fahy's (2003) resource-based modified model portrayed by Clulow et al. (2003), it was noted that strategic management plays a significant role via key resources identification, development and protection and deployment in terms of resource value, barriers to duplicate and resource appropriability contribute to sustainable competitive advantage, which, in turn, motivates superior performance. One of the most principal strategic resources of a company is its knowledge and information (Al-Hawary & Aldaihani, 2016; Al-Hawary & Hadad, 2016; Cao et al., 2019).

Respectively, competitor information is no less important than other forms of organizational performance. It helps a company to be awoken as to

competitors' activities such as innovations (Al-Hawary & Ismael, 2010). Paraphrasing collecting competitor information into competitive intelligence, the literature reveals that scholars studies this term with respect to several constructs. For example, Dishman and Calof (2008) used competitive intelligence as an antecedent of marketing strategy formulation. Bose (2008) studied the process of competitive advantage implementation. Xu et al. (2011) regarded competitive intelligence as a critical factor of risk management decision support system. Teo et al. (2001) assessed the effect of the Internet on competitive intelligence.

Scholars suggested a number of ways that can be followed to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage, such as acquiring and using knowledge (Mahdi et al., 2019, Al-Hawary & Alwan, 2016; Quartey, 2019), investment in key intangible resources and capabilities such as human capital, financial capability and corporate social responsibility (Khan et al., 2019), green entrepreneurial orientation and market orientation (Pratono et al., 2019; Al-Hawary et al., 2011), human resource management practices (Latukha et al., 2019), customer experience (Ali, 2019), marketing innovation (Na et al., 2019), service quality (Al-Hawary and Al-Hamwan, 2017), as well as competitive intelligence (Salguero et al., 2019).

Organizations are looking for applicable sources that can be used to attain sustainable competitive advantage. Recent works in this regard identified two key strategies to inaugurate this desired goal, which are competitive intelligence (Salguero et al., 2019; Al-Nady et al., 2013) and marketing strategy (Biswas, 2019). Competitive intelligence is justified through several drivers like knowledge-based modern business environment, in which competitor information has become a vital source for strategic decision-making process (Gračanin et al., 2015) and marketing strategy, which includes firm's innovation orientation, is also very important to gain a competitive advantage (Biswas, 2019).

Following Salguero, Gámez, Fernández and Palomo (2019) who investigated the impact of competitive intelligence on the sustainable competitive advantage in hotel industry, this research paper examined the same constructs to explore the effect of competitive intelligence on the sustainable competitive advantage in food industry. On the other hand, Na et al. (2019) examined relationships between market orientation

marketing innovation, sustainable competitive advantage, and performance and found significant effects of marketing innovation on sustainable competitive advantage. Pursuing the authors, this paper explored the effect of marketing innovation on the sustainable competitive advantage in food industry. Analyzing manufacturing small and medium enterprises (SMEs), Naidoo (2010) found a significant link between marketing innovation and sustainable competitive advantage. Ren et al. (2009) named marketing innovation as a remarkable source of sustainable competitive advantage. Similar results were presented by some authors (e.g., Gupta et al., 2016, Brem et al., 2016).

Thanks to scholars who enrich the literature on strategic management, resource-based view, competitive intelligence, marketing innovation and sustainable competitive advantage. This study aims at exploring the impact of competitive intelligence on sustainable competitive advantage in the presence of marketing innovation as a mediator.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Competitive intelligence and sustainable competitive advantage

Competitive intelligence has its roots in strategic management and environmental scanning. It has been defined as a strategic business tool that helps organization to gain a sustainable competitive advantage (Salguero et al., 2019). The scholars added that this tool can be used by organizations to discover, process and convert external information extracted from the organizational environment into a competitive-driven knowledge, which can be utilized to enhance the organizational performance. Another definition of competitive intelligence described it as a process of collecting information on competitors and using this information in firms' strategic planning in order to achieve a competitive advantage (Teo and Choo, 2001).

Competitive advantage was first coined by Michael Porter. Historically, the competitive advantage had been linked to competencies, which give the organization a distinctive position in the marketplace. It can be derived from numerous sources like business ambiguity, and sustained by several ways such as highest imitation barriers (Reed and DeFillippi, 1990). Barney et al. (2001) indicated that a competitive advantage can be sustained if

the company possesses a value creating strategy while its competitors have no such strategy or at least don't implement it concurrently with rivals (O'Shannassy, 2008). Other sources of sustainable competitive advantage include marketing benchmarking (Vorhies et al., 2005), knowledge and intellectual capital (Lubit, 2001).

Regarding the effects of competitive intelligence on the organizational outcomes, one line in the literature unfolds positive effects of this construct. It has a positive significant effect on the company's strategic benefits, i.e., cost reduction, managerial effectiveness and revenue generation (Teo and Choo, 2001) as well as sustainable competitive advantage (Salguero et al., 2019). The current study seeks to examine the impact of competitive intelligence on sustainable competitive advantage using respondents' estimations on items related to competitor information, intelligence associated practices and competitive intelligence benefits (items 1-8), and respondents' estimations on the items of sustainable competitive advantage that evaluate the extent to which competitive resources add positive value, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable (items 15-18). Therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H1: Higher competitive intelligence leads to higher sustainable competitive advantage

2.2 Competitive intelligence, marketing innovation and sustainable competitive advantage

Marketing innovation has been defined as adopting new marketing methods that include significant changes in the elements of marketing mix in order to achieve considerable goals like meeting customer needs and wants, entering new markets, or positioning a new product (Aldebert et al., 2011). The term has been operationalized in terms of a number of indicators such as: acquiring customer information effectively and reducing customer transaction costs (Chen, 2006), organizations ability to modify products, promoting recognized brands, pricing flexibility, improving managerial processes, participating in strategic marketing partnerships (Halpern, 2010), and improving the marketing mix (Naidoo, 2010), radical changes and non-radical or improvements in the marketing mix (Shergill and Nargundkar, 2005). For the purpose of the current study, which links marketing innovation to competitive intelligence and sustainable competitive advantage, marketing innovation was conceptualized as regards

changes in the marketing mix, development of strategic marketing partnerships and market analysis.

Worthwhile outcomes of marketing innovation were cited in the literature. Some examples include improvement of business performance of tourism SMEs (Martínez-Román et al., 2015) and market performance (Aksoy, 2017, Maier and Dan, 2018). In a survey conducted in 2017 by Pyplacz et al. (2018) on companies selected from different industries in the Polish market, the results on the reasons behind the introduction of marketing innovation revealed that the most common reason was to increase or to sustain companies market share. The second reason was to introduce products to new groups of customers, while the third one was to introduce products to new geographical markets.

On the relationship between marketing innovation and sustainable competitive advantage, Ren et al. (2009) identified marketing innovation as a key source of sustainable competitive advantage. Naidoo (2010) investigated relationships between marketing orientation, marketing innovation, competitive advantage and organization survival in Chinese manufacturing SMEs and found that marketing innovation supported the enterprises to develop a sustainable competitive advantage, on the basis of differentiation and strategies of cost leadership. Using the current data, this study aimed at exploring if marketing innovation plays a significant mediating role in the effect of competitive intelligence on sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, the following hypothesis was suggested:

H2: Marketing innovation significantly mediates the effect of competitive intelligence on sustainable competitive advantage

III. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Research sample and data collection

A simple random sampling technique was used to select the study participants. The sample of the study consisted of managers selected from companies that operate in food processing industry. A questionnaire was developed based on the literature. It includes 36 items distributed between the three main constructs in the study; competitive intelligence (16 items), marketing innovation (12 items), and sustainable competitive advantage (8 items). The questionnaire was administered to 150 managers selected from different management levels. A total of 114 questionnaires were returned

complete and usable for analysis, with a response rate of 76%.

3.2 Research instrument

Table 1 shows scale items used to measure research

constructs that developed with reference to relevant literature on competitive intelligence, marketing innovation and sustainable competitive advantage.

Table 1. Scale items

Latent variables	Scale items	Sources
Competitive intelligence	1. Collection of competitor information	Dishman and Calof (2008) , Adidam et al. (2012), Wright et al. (2012), Mariadoss et al. (2014), Köseoglu et al. (2016), Calof et al. (2018), Salguero et al. (2019)
	2. Environmental scanning	
	3. Information analysis	
	4. Intelligence communication	
	5. Intelligence infrastructure	
	6. Intelligence effective utilization	
	7. Competitive benchmarking	
	8. Benefits of Competitive intelligence	
Marketing innovation	9. Strategic marketing partnerships	Chen (2006), Ren et al. (2009), Naidoo (2010), Halpern (2010), Finoti et al. (2017)
	10. Joint promotions	
	11. Pricing flexibility	
	12. Modify products modification	
	13. Recognized brands promotions	
	14. Marketing analysis	
Sustainable competitive advantage (Resource-based view)	15. Resources add positive value	Reed and DeFillippi (1990), Oliver, (1997), Barney et al. (2001), Clulow et al. (2003), O'Shannassy (2008), Madhani (2009), Vinayan et al. (2012)
	16. Resources are rare	
	17. Resources are inimitable	
	18. Resources are non-substitutable	

3.3 Research conceptual model

The conceptual model of the study, as displayed in Figure 1, shows the three latent variables of the study and the potential effects between these variables. Two main hypotheses were assumed in the model, i.e., competitive intelligence was assumed to exert a significant effect on sustainable competitive advantage and marketing innovation was presumed to mediate the relationship between these two constructs. As can be noted, competitive intelligence was measured using three

dimensions, marketing innovation was rated based on three dimensions, and sustainable competitive advantage was estimated by four dimensions.

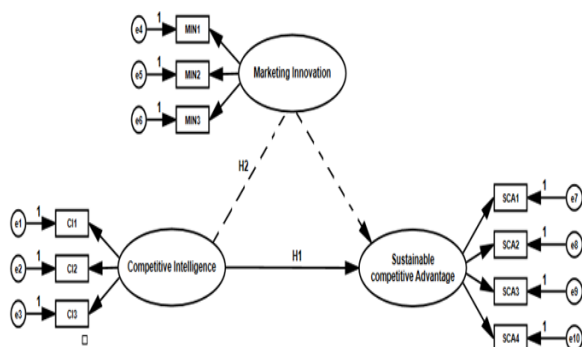


Figure 1. Research conceptual model

Validity and reliability

Average variance extracted (AVE) was used to judge validity while Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability was used to rate reliability, following some authors (e.g., Al-Lozi et al., 2017, Al-Hawary and Al-Kumait, 2017, Sweis et al., 2013, Alnaser et al., 2018, Pop

and Khampirat, 2019). The results, as reported in Table 2, indicate that all standardized factor loadings of competitive intelligence items are between 0.68 and 0.93, marketing innovation items were between 0.71 and 0.92 and sustainable competitive advantage were between 0.74 and 0.94. AVEs that computed based on these loadings were higher than 0.5 and regarded acceptable as suggested by Lai and Chen (2011). On the other hand, composite reliability (CR) for competitive intelligence, marketing innovation and sustainable competitive advantage were 0.964, 0.957 and 0.937, respectively. AVE and CR were extracted on the basis of factor loadings. Coefficients of Cronbach's alpha (α) were also greater than 0.70 (Ho et al., 2018, Harrigan et al., 2018, Affran et al., 2019, Proserpi et al., 2019). Therefore, reliability and validity figures were sufficient

Table 2. Validity and reliability measures

Variables	Items	SFL	AVE	CR	α
Competitive intelligence	CI1	0.72	0.628	0.964	0.947
	CI2	0.76			
	CI3	0.75			
	CI4	0.81			
	CI5	0.93			
	CI6	0.76			
	CI7	0.82			
	CI8	0.84			
	CI9	0.88			
	CI10	0.76			
	CI11	0.75			
	CI12	0.76			
	CI13	0.68			
	CI14	0.75			
	CI15	0.84			
	CI16	0.83			
Marketing innovation	MI17	0.82	0.650	0.957	0.938
	MI18	0.83			
	MI19	0.71			
	MI20	0.76			
	MI21	0.72			
	MI22	0.84			
	MI23	0.92			
	MI24	0.92			
	MI25	0.74			
	MI26	0.78			
	MI27	0.79			

	MI28	0.81			
	SCA29	0.88			
	SCA30	0.94			
	SCA31	0.76			
Sustainable competitive advantage	SCA32	0.68	0.652	0.937	0.918
	SCA33	0.74			
	SCA34	0.83			
	SCA35	0.84			
	SCA36	0.76			

3.4 Goodness-of-fit indices

Chi-square-degree of freedom ratio (χ^2/df), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted for Degrees of Freedom (AGFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square

Error of Approximation (RMSEA) were used to measure models' goodness-of-fit indices, i.e., measurement and structural models. The results recorded in Table 3 show that thresholds of fit indices were met.

Table 3. Measurement and structural models fit indices

Index	Measurement model	Structural model	Criterion	References
χ^2/df	1.471	1.368	<2.00	Mohammad(2017), Verma
GFI	0.914	0.931	> 0.90	andRajendran(2017), Hani et al. (2018),
AGFI	0.938	0.912	> 0.90	Darin-Mattsson et al. (2018), Alolayyanet
CFI	0.933	0.923	> 0.90	al. (2018), Ramadan et al. (2019)
RMSEA	0.057	0.041	< 0.05	

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 3, by which the research hypotheses were tested, illustrates the structural model of the study. Supported by the results in Table 4, competitive intelligence has a direct significant impact on sustainable competitive advantage ($\beta_{direct} = 0.54, P < 0.05$), and on marketing innovation ($\beta_{direct} = 0.46, P < 0.05$), which in turn significantly affect sustainable competitive advantage ($\beta_{direct} = 0.37, P < 0.05$)

The results in Table 4 assert that innovation marketing significantly mediated the effect of competitive intelligence on sustainable competitive advantage ($\beta_{indirect} = 0.17, P < 0.05$). These results are in agreement with previous studies. Referring to the definitions of competitive advantage, it was noted that the key objective of competitive advantage is to attain a competitive advantage (Teo and Choo, 2001, Salguero et al., 2019).The main idea behind this finding is that the organizational resources accumulated by the organization such as competitor information (Adidam et al., 2012, Wright et al., 2012, Mariadoss et al., 2014, Köseoglu et al., 2016, Calof et al., 2018, Salguero et al., 2019) enhance the organization's ability to provide its customers with an ongoing positive value (O'Shannassy, 2008).

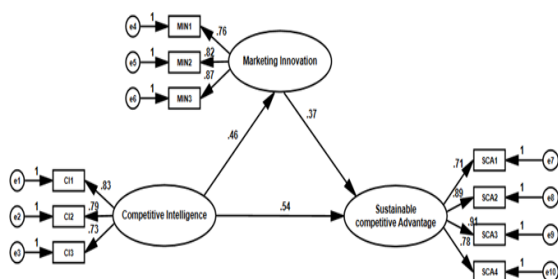


Figure 2. Research structural model

Table 4. Effects of competitive intelligence on sustainable competitive advantage

Default Paths			Direct effects		Indirect effects		Total effects	
			β *	P **	β *	P **	β *	P **
CI	→	MI	0.46	0.002	-	-	0.46	0.002
MI	→	SCA	0.37	0.001	-	-	0.37	0.001
CI	→	SCA	0.54	0.002	0.170	0.002	0.71	0.003

* Standardized effects. ** Significant at (α) = 0.05

Other attributes of resources that engender sustainable competitive advantage are also reflected in competitive intelligence. Rare, inimitable and non-substitutable resources are key pillars of sustainable competitive advantage (Reed and DeFillippi, 1990, Oliver, 1997, Barney et al., 2001, Clulow et al., 2003, O'Shannassy, 2008, Madhani, 2009, Vinayan et al., 2012). In this study, competitive intelligence was found to implant these attributes. Furthermore, information and intelligence related practices such as intelligence communication, utilization and benefits (Adidam et al., 2012, Mariadoss et al., 2014, Köseoglu et al., 2016, Calof et al., 2018) result in changes or improvements in marketing mix (Shergill and Nargundkar, 2005). No identical findings were found, to the best of our knowledge, in the literature. Yet, Salguero et al. (2019) detected a positive effect of competitive intelligence sustainable competitive advantage.

V. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES

The aim of the current study was to identify the impact of competitive intelligence on sustainable competitive advantage through marketing innovation. Logically, competitive advantage should be significantly related to both marketing innovation and sustainable competitive advantage, and marketing innovation should be significantly linked to sustainable competitive advantage for mediation criteria to be established. Our results confirmed that these criteria were fulfilled. Namely, marketing innovation significantly mediated the effect of competitive intelligence on sustainable competitive advantage.

A number of implications based on these findings have emerged. Organizations are required to pay more attention to strategic factors. Hence, resource-based view should be revisited. The theory embraces the idea that the success of any organization is highly depending on its valuable resources (Dyer and Singh, 1998). Heterogeneous resources are strategic due to the fact that they steer the organization on its way to the competitive

edge (Cao et al., 2019).

Suitably, sustainable competitive advantage can be achieved through competitive intelligence, which means that organizations are requested to put into effect the use of this type of intelligence to ensure a long-term superiority. Organizations can enhance this by marketing innovation practices, in which not only marketing mix is innovatively changed but also a new strategic marketing partnerships and joint promotions are established. Researchers, at the same time are called for new papers on antecedents that lodge a sustainable competitive advantage.

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