فصلنامه مدیریت شهری
(ضمیمه لاتین)
Urban management
No.**44** Automn **2016**
67 - 80
Received 29 Aug 2015; Accepted 2 Feb 2016

Investigating the Impact of Organizational Learning and Marketing Metrics on the Performance of Marketing (Case Study: Elon Plast Company)

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Abstract
The aim of this study was to analyze the impact of organizational learning and marketing metrics on the marketing performance in the Elon Plast Company of Kermanshah province. It is a functional purpose study with descriptive – survey method. The statistical population includes 100 employees of Elon Plast Company in Kermanshah province. A sample of 80 people was chosen using Cochran formula. Data were collected through organizational learning questionnaire of Nife (2001); marketing metrics of Nazari and Akbari (2015) and marketing performance questionnaire of Nazari and Akbari (2015). The validity (content, convergent, divergent) and reliability (factor loading, composite Reliability coefficient, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient) of questionnaires indicated that the measurement tools are of good reliability and validity. The results of the research by SMART-PLS software and using t test statistics and path coefficients (β) showed that organizational learning has strong, direct and significant impact on marketing metrics and marketing metrics have strong, direct and significant impact on the marketing performance. Also, organizational learning has strong, direct, indirect and significant impact on the marketing performance. On the other hand, marketing metrics can play the mediating role in the relationship between organizational learning on marketing performance. On the other hand, organizational learning can improve the positive effect that marketing metrics have on the marketing performance as a moderating variable.

Key Words: *Organizational Learning, Marketing Metrics, Marketing Performance.*

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Introduction

The beginning of organizational learning is due to the cumulative development in various theories of management such as Adam Smith, Taylor, learning curve and so on. However, Richard Sirt and James March were the first character who connected two words of learning and organization to each other in 1963 and introduce learning as an organizational phenomenon in the literature. Several research streams were created for clarification of the concept of organizational learning over the past 40 years. These researches mainly focused on conceptualizing, management, development and deployment of these concepts in the organization. However, there is not still a general agreement about the concept, definition and theories of organizational learning and knowledge needs to expand in this area. Altman knows organizational learning depends on sharing knowledge, beliefs and assumptions among the teams. Bashel and Probast define organizational learning as the ability of an organization as a whole in detecting errors and correcting them as well as changing knowledge and values of the organization so that new problem-solving skills and new capacity create to do work. Bob Gans defined organizational learning such as: the acquisition and application of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and improvement attitudes in the maintenance, growth and development of the organization. Dolan and Schuler write:

"Learning is a training-based experience, which is done in order to create relatively permanent changes in a person to improve their ability to do the job. Organizational learning is a complex multi-dimensional structure, which includes several sub-processes (Templeton et al., 2002). In fact, organizational learning is a process that makes passible to learn from past experiences and facilitates the organizational maturity and ensures the survival of the organization by linking them to the future. Simon has defined organizational learning as the growth of insight and renewal of construction and successful review of the organizational problems by the people that its results to be reflected in structural factors and the results of the organization".

Peter Senge knows learning organization as the ability to increase the individual's capacity to do what he/she really wants. Garvin suggests that "the learning organization is the skill and ability of the organization to create, acquire and transfer knowledge and improve behavior of the individual to reflect new knowledge and insights". In a word, the learning organization is the result of organizational learning (Hamidi, 2004).

Templeton, in the quest for a unique description of organizational learning, after study and classification of more than 150 articles that were used in the organizational learning, concludes that there are three paradigms in describing learning, which include demographic paradigm, social activities paradigm and conclusion paradigm. In the demographic paradigm, organizational learning is described from individual and organizational angle. Within the paradigm of social activities, there are issues such as training, information distribution, information interpretation and organizational memory. And finally, in the conclusion paradigm, there are topics such shaped differences, learning, knowledge acquisition, validation of information content, controlling organizational consequences that can be controlled (Tohidi, 2011). Organizational learning is the organization's ability to process knowledge; in other words, it is the ability to create, train, transfer and create integration knowledge and this organization corrects its behavior and improves its performance.

Garvin and some other experts developed this theory by spreading examples of open systems model to the organization and considering the feature including the ability of human brain to that model. Garvin believes that organizational learning has three steps just like human learning:

1. Recognition (learning new concepts);

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2. Behavior (development of new skills and abilities);
3. Performance (actually to do work).

Achievement the above three steps requires that the gap between theory and practice is eliminated (Rezaeian, 2008). There are two main typology in the learning processes: one type of it focuses on the single and double-loop learning and the other one emphasized on the cognitive and behavioral dimensions of learning.

Behavioral theorists assume that learning is the result of measures change in the organization's structures, systems and processes. The leading theorists of cognitive approach assume that the byproduct learning is the change in processing the information of organizations and individuals that develops the common concepts and interprets the events (Aragón-Correa et al, 2007).

Organizational Learning Capabilities stressed the importance of facilitating factors related to organizational learning and organizational desire to learn (Alegre and Chiva, 2008). On the other hand, in recent years, professionals and academics have shown great passion for marketing performance evaluation. In this regard, the Marketing Science Institute has raised Marketing Metrics to become a pioneer in capitals research projects. However, despite the importance of evaluating business performance, little research has been done on measuring the evaluation of marketing effectiveness. Metric is the system of measurement that determines process quantity, the dynamics and characteristics. Metrics are used to explain the phenomenon, identify the causes, sharing findings and results of future events and projects. Today, the numerical control is a critical skill for business leaders.

Managers must determine the quantity of market opportunities and competitive threats to be able to justify the financial risks and benefits of decisions, so they need metrics. Marketing metrics are considered one of the important tools that can be used to measure marketing performance. Also, they are possible key metrics that should be used for evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing efforts (Solcansky et al, 2011). Marketing Metrics are strategic milestones by which progress can be assessed. Of course they are not the only milestones and they have been transferred as indicators of future cash flows at the market as well as current cash flows to the company, which is vital to understand the business of each company. Marketing metrics are raised to evaluate past performance, improvement, implementation and better evaluation of future strategies, recalculating the allocation of resources, etc (Li, 2011).

In the other definition, it can be considered as evidences that strengthen the company's functional management (Ambler et al., 2001). Other experts believe that Marketing Metrics are considered marketing sensors that increase the effectiveness of relations with the customer (Lehman, 2002). Marketing metrics are the tools that help to the quantity, comparison, and interpretation of companies' performance from the marketing activities (Halachmi, 2002). In fact, the creation and effective use of metrics is beyond a simple definition and interact with the new measurement. Creation of metrics requires a disciplined and strategic approach that starts with the growth and waterfall investment strategy across all business units, segments and the group's structure. Some of the principles that can be used in the measurement process are that: if something cannot be measured then it cannot be understandable. If something cannot be understandable then it cannot be controlled. If something cannot be controlled then it cannot be improved (Guan & Chen, 2012).

On the other hand, evaluation systems of marketing performance provides feedback according to the results of marketing efforts and inputs for decision-making and planning for the future. During the past decades, evaluation systems of marketing performance have

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been developed considerably. One of the early efforts was the development of the comprehensive audit concept of the marketing according to the health of the organization's marketing activities that is in accordance with financial audits in the accounting.

In the 1960s, in parallel, the concept of marketing audit and the concept of analyzing marketing efficiency that focused on the effectiveness of marketing activities have been developed. Traditionally, analysis of marketing productivity (from the perspective of performance) and the concept of marketing audit (from the perspective of effectiveness) are predominant approaches to the evaluation of marketing performance, but none of these two approaches do not provide complete framework for integrated assessment because of conceptual and administrative constraints. In the wake of these two approaches, the initial work in evaluating the marketing performance in the organizational level focused only on the financial indicators and measures such as profit, sales and cash.

However, during the period 1970 to 1980, common practice of using one or more volume, financial or numerical-based indicators was extended to a multi-dimensional view of marketing performance in which internal and external models were used to evaluate marketing performance. In addition, the concentration in evaluation systems of marketing performance was changed into non-financial measures, such as market share, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and brand value, as mediators between the marketing input and financial results. The historical review of marketing performance evaluation suggests that marketing metrics have evolved in three compatible directions in recent years:

1. from financial criteria to non-financial criteria;
2. from output criteria to input criteria;
3. From one-dimensional criteria to multidimensional criteria.

Market share index has attracted much attention by the Boston Consulting Group in the early 1970s. Since late 1980, four non-financial output benchmarks of service quality, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and brand value has attracted the attention of organizations and researchers. The emphasis on these criteria forms a public movement that organizations consider financial criteria with other standards which are occurred earlier in the input-output process.

Marketing activities and processes lead to the mediation results (non-financial criteria) and finally, these results lead to the financial results. Measures and indicators of marketing performance have advantages and disadvantages. Our criteria present a snapshot of the status of the organization but they do not predict the future. Non-financial indicators may not be accurate due to the lack of detailed information and perception discussion. Various advantages and disadvantages associated with different types of measures suggest that there are not any perfect criteria for marketing. In other words, evaluation literature of marketing performance suggests that the mere expression of respect to a particular dimension in the evaluation of the marketing performance cannot provide accurate and complete information about the marketing performance and reveal its strengths and weaknesses. As a result, it should be noted with holistic and systemic vision to the multiple dimensions to evaluate marketing performance in order to obtain accurate and complete information on the status of the marketing performance (Haji Heydari et al., 2014).

Given the above, it must be said that the rapid growth of organizational learning somehow affects all aspects of the organization. Rapid changes in organizational learning dramatically change the organization's works and this has created drastic changes in the type of skills needed by individuals and members of organizations.

Also, on the other hand, professionals and academics have shown a strong interest in

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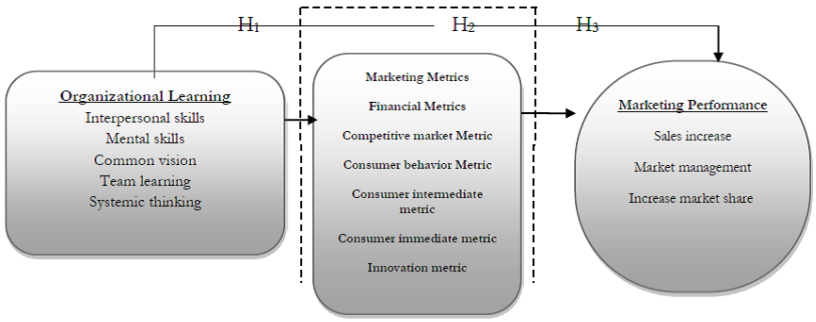


Figure 1. Conceptual Model Research

marketing performance evaluation in recent years; In this regard, the academic community marketing metrics in research projects.

Metric is a measurement system that determines the process quantity, the dynamics and characteristics. Metric are used to explain the phenomenon, identify the causes, sharing findings and results of future events and projects. Managers must determine the quantity of market opportunities and competitive threats in order to be able to justify financial risks and benefits of decisions that's why they need metrics.

The main question is whether organizational learning and marketing metrics affect marketing performance in the Elon Plast Company in Kermanshah Province?

Kharidar and Samirapoor (1390) investigate the organizational learning on the performance of the market through axial entrepreneurship in variable environments (an experimental study in the food industry in Mashhad). The results indicate the attention to the organizational learning process on the tendency of people to entrepreneurship and as a result, market performance improvement.

Iran Manesh et al (1391) examined the relationship between market orientation, learning orientation and innovation with market performance of small and medium-sized manufacturing companies in the Isfahan province. The results of the research showed that the market orientation can increase the market performance of companies acceptably but there will be serious discussions about the strategy of innovation and learning orientation. Deloy et al (2013) design and test a conceptual model of organizational learning and marketing metrics in terms of innovation of Case Study named Zamzam Company in Esfahan.

The results showed that organizational learning directly affects marketing metrics. The three factors of organizational learning (recognition, behavior, performance) directly affect marketing metrics in terms of innovation.

Deloy and Darabi Brujeni (2013) investigate the impact of organizational learning on the company's flexibility, competitiveness strategy and performance: the case study (Esfahan's Mobarakeh Steel Company). The results showed that organizational learning can provide customers' criteria as an important tool in modern markets and improve organizational performance by designing efficient competitive strategy and flexible adaptation against rapid evolution of market. Tahate Kamya (2012) investigates organizational learning and market performance: the mutual effects of market orientation.

The results of the study showed that organizational learning has an impact on the market performance.

According to the literature as well as conceptual model, five assumptions are considered:

1.The first hypothesis: Organizational Learning has an impact on the Marketing Metrics.

2.The second hypothesis: Marketing Metrics Marketing has an impact on the marketing performance.

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3.The third hypothesis: Organizational learning has an impact on the marketing performance.
4.The fourth hypothesis: Marketing metrics have a mediator role in the influence of organizational learning on the marketing performance.
5.The fifth hypothesis: Organizational learning has a moderating role in influencing marketing metrics on the marketing performance.

Research method

This is an "applied research" study and it is a "descriptive research" in terms of data collection. Since researchers sought to determine the relationship between variables, this is a "solidarity research". The statistical population in this study, according to the research variables, is all employees of Elon Plast Company in Kermanshah with 100 people. The sample size was 80 people that were obtained through Morgan table and people are selected by random. The main tools of data collection were as follows:

1. Organizational learning questionnaire of Niehoff and Moorman (2001) that consists of 24 questions.
2. Marketing metrics questionnaire of Akbari and Nazari (2015) that consists of 17 questions.
3. Marketing performance questionnaire of Akbari and Nazari (2015) that consists of 14 questions.

The measurement scale of the ideas was based on the five-item Likert scale that starts from "strongly disagree" and ends with "strongly agree". The scoring of questions is calculated from score 1 to score 5. To confirm the validity of the measurement tool, three types of assessment validity were used: content validity, convergent validity and divergent validity.

The content validity is created by ensuring compatibility between the measured parameters and the existing literature, this validity was obtained by a survey of teachers.

Convergent validity refers to this principle that indicators of each structure have moderate correlation with each other. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), the convergent validity criteria is that Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is greater than 0.05. Divergent Validity is also measured by comparing the square root of AVE with the correlation between latent variables (Table 2). And for each reflective constructs, the square root of AVE should be more than the correlation of that structure with the other structures in the model (Chua and Chen, 2009). Also in this study, two criteria (Coefficient of Cronbach's alpha and Coefficient of Composite Reliability) were used according to the Fornell and Larcker (1981) to determine the Reliability of the questionnaire. Coefficients of Cronbach's alpha for all variables in this study are greater than the minimum amount of (0.70). The composite reliability is based on the real loadings factors of each structure unlike Cronbach's alpha which implicitly assumes that each index has the same weight; so, it presents better criteria for reliability. The composite reliability should be a value greater than 0.70 to represent the internal stability of the structure. In table 1 and 2, the reliable and validity results of the measurement tool are given completely.

The results of the SMART-PLS software outputs in Tables 1 and 2 indicate that the measurement tool of validity (content, convergent, divergent) and reliability (loading factor, composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient) are appropriate.

Research Findings

To analysis and evaluation of the model for this study, the data analysis was used by structural equation model. Structural equation modeling is a statistical model for linear relationships between latent variables (unobserved) and manifest variables (observed). In other words, structural equation modeling is a powerful statistical technique that combines measurement model (confirmatory factor analysis) and structural model (regression or path analysis) with a statistical test at the same

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Research variables	Coefficient of Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Loading factors	CR $P_c > 0.7$	Reliability Coefficient of Cronbach's alpha
Organizational learning OL	0.57	-	0.84	0.78
Individual skills	-	0.75	-	-
Mental skills	-	0.59	-	-
Common vision	-	0.79	-	-
Team learning	-	0.73	-	-
Systemic thinking	-	0.71		
Marketing Metrics MM	0.55	-	0.71	0.71
Financial Metrics	-	0.72	-	-
Competitive market metric	-	0.72	-	-
Consumer behavior metric	-	0.67	-	-
Consumer intermediate Metric	-	0.65	-	-
Immediate consumer metric	-	0.60	-	-
Innovation metric	-	0.75	-	-
Marketing Performance MP	0.59	-	0.83	0.74
Increase sale	-	0.72	-	-
Market management	-	0.71	-	-
Increase market share	-	0.57	-	-

Table 1. Convergent validity and reliability of measurement tool

Variable	Emotional Intelligence (EI)	Organizational Confliction (OC)	Citizenship behavior (OCB)	Square root (AVE)
Organizational learning (OL)	1			0.75
Marketing metrics (MM)	0.71	1		0.74
Marketing performance (MP)	0.70	0.75	1	0.76

Table 2. The correlation matrix and divergent validity analysis

time. Through these techniques, researchers can reject hypothetical structures (models) or approve their compliance with data. In this research, SMARTPLS software was used for analysis.

This software analyzes structural equation models that include multiple variables and direct, indirect and interactivity effects, this software are appropriate for Testing Moderating Effects (Bagozi and Fornell, 1982). Esposito Vinzi et al (2010) reported that the path models of PLS are estimated in two stages. The

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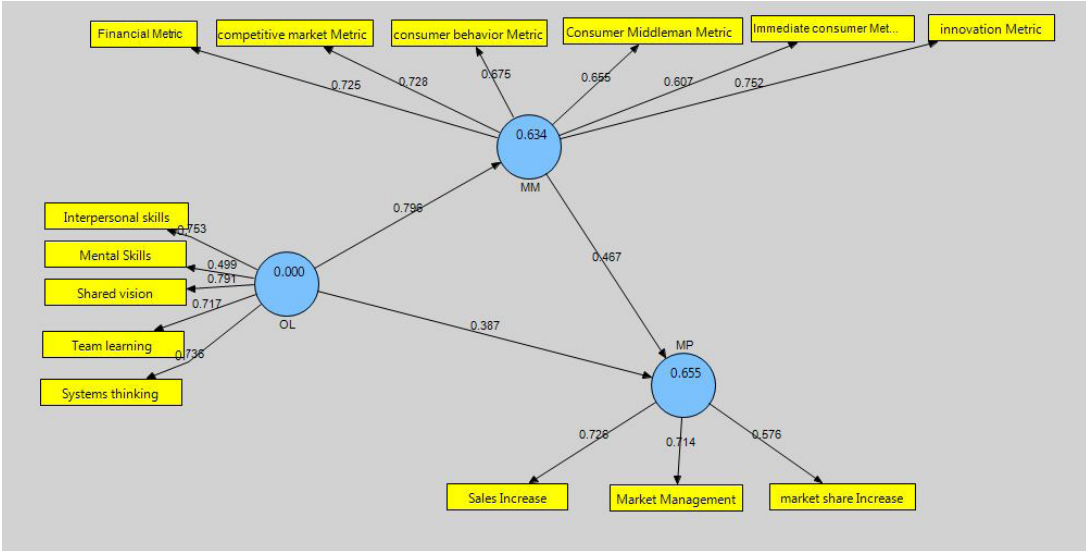


Figure 2. Model structural coefficients

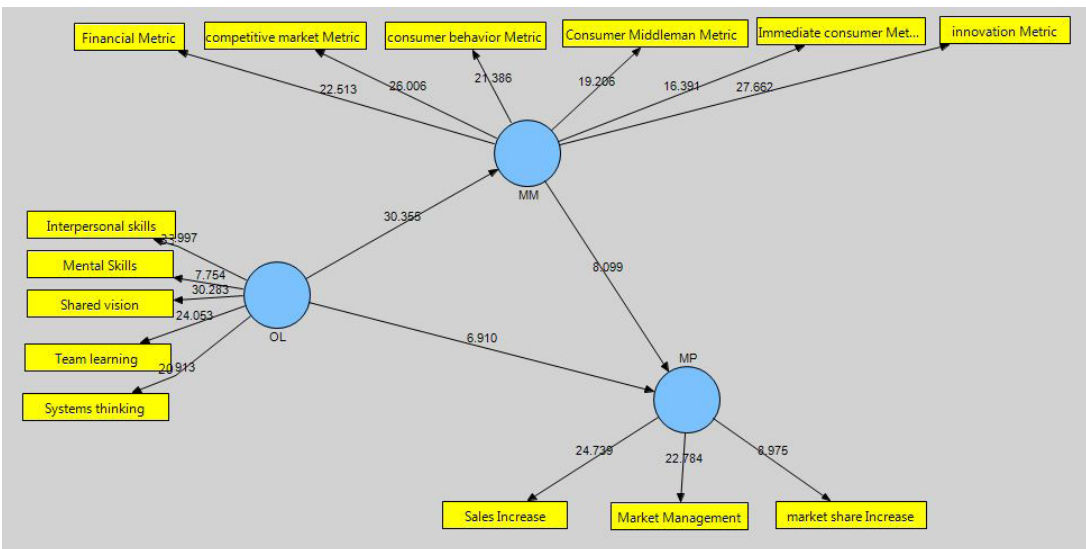


Figure 3. T-test results

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first stage estimates the score of the hidden variables for each latent variable. And in the second stage, the moderating role of latent variables is studied depending on their status in the path model.

Due to the nature of the second stage, many of the recommendations for the Testing Moderating Effects of multiple regressions are through SMART-PLS software. Then, the outputs software and their analysis are given.

Notably, the t-value or significant interaction effect of variables are shown. If t-value is greater than 1.96 then there is a positive and significant effect. If t-value is between +1.96 and -1.96 then there is not significant effect and if it is lower than -1.96 then there is negative and significant effect (Chen, 2003).

Data obtained from field research were conducted in SMART PLS software and the above results were obtained in accordance with Figures 2 and 3. Analysis of each of the relationships that actually represent useful and concise hypotheses is shown in Table 3.

According to Table 3 that is obtained based

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Path	Coefficient	t-test value	Significant level	Impact rate
organizational learning (OL)				
marketing; metrics (MM)	0.796	30.358	Significant	Strong
marketing metrics (MM); marketing performance (MP)	0.467	8.099	Significant	Strong
Organizational learning(OL) marketing; performance (MP)	0.387	6.910	Significant	Strong

Table 3. Results summary of the hypotheses test

Relationships	Direct effects	Indirect effects	Total effects
OL ---- MM	0.796	-	0.796
MM ----MP	0.467	-	0.467
OL ----MP	0.387	0.371	0.758

Table 4. Separation of total, direct and indirect effects

Significant level	Standard deviation error	Test statistics	Type of test	Input
0.000	0.04288259	8.66859859	Sobel test	a=0.796
0.000	0.04290075	8.66492991	Arowan test	b= 0.467
0.000	0.04286443	8.67227194	Goodman test	
0.000				

Table 5. Sobel, Arowan and Goodman's tests

on the results of the test hypotheses, it can be concluded that: the result of first hypothesis test according to the path coefficient of 0.796 and t-test of 30.358 shows that organizational learning has significant and strong impact on the marketing metrics. In the second hypothesis with path coefficient of 0.467 and t-test of 8.099, the result was that the marketing metrics have positive and significant impact on the marketing performance. The results of the third hypothesis test with path coefficient of 0.387 and t-test of 6.910 shows that organizational learning has positive and significant impact on the marketing performance. It is necessary to present the total, direct and indirect effects for endogenous variables of the model to investigate the rate of direct and indirect effect of independent variables on the dependent variables (table 4).

Table 4 shows that organizational learning has positive and significant impact on marketing metrics and marketing metrics also have direct and significant impact on the marketing performance. As a result, the mediating role of marketing metrics was supported in the organizational learning and marketing performance relationship. In addition, the t-values and p-value were assessed for mediating variable through Sobel test in which T=8.66 and p-value=0.000 were obtained that confirmed our result. Also, as shown in table 5, the results of Arowan and Goodman's tests are confirming like Sobel test.

Therefore, fourth hypothesis of this study was also confirmed. In the fifth hypothesis test that the mediating role of the organizational learning was assessed in the relationship between marketing metrics and marketing performance, the results are shown in the figures 4 and 5.

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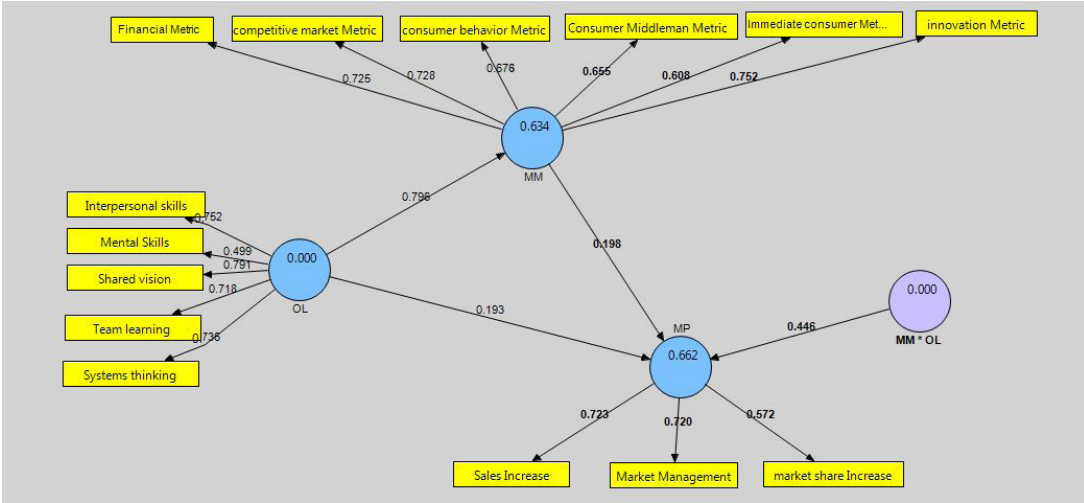


Figure 4. The mediating role test of organizational learning in the relationship between marketing metrics and marketing performance (path coefficients)

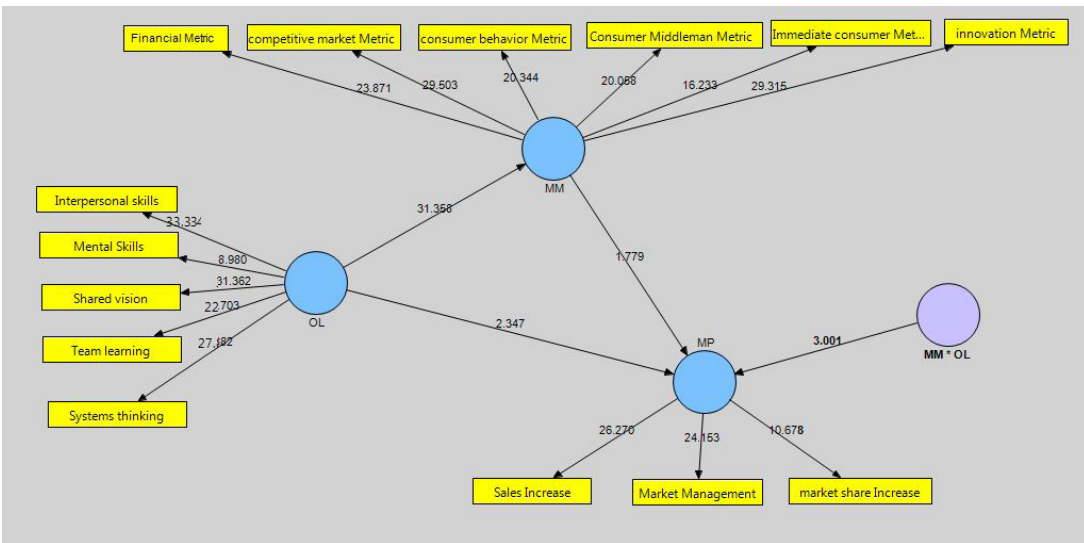


Figure 5. The test of moderating role of organizational learning in the relationship between marketing metrics and marketing performance (t- values)

Given the amount of T=3.001 and path coefficient = 0.446, it can be concluded that organizational learning has moderating role in the relationship between two variables of marketing metrics and marketing performance and fifth hypothesis is confirmed. Also, it can be concluded considering the path coefficient that by presence of organizational learning, the positive impact of marketing metrics on the marketing performance is improved.

Model Fitting

Two models were tested in PLS models. Outer model that is equivalent to the measurement model and inner model that is equivalent to the structural model in other software models (LISREL, EQS, AMOS); The Communality mean was used to measure the fitting of the outer model and was used to fit the structural model. The value of communality mean indicates the percentage of indices changes that is justified by the corresponding structure. Researchers reported the acceptable level for the statistical communality more than 0.05 (Lee et al; 2008).

As seen in Table 6, statistical communality that shows the fitness of the model is more than 0.05. The value of that indicates the model ability for describing the structure are

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Variable	Communality mean	
Organizational learning (OL)	0.573	-
Marketing metrics (MM)	0.587	0.634
Marketing metrics (MM) in the presence of mediating variable	0.599	0.634
Marketing performance (MP)	0.592	0.655

Table 6. Model fitting

0.634 and 0.655 for marketing metrics and marketing performance, respectively. Also, the value is 0.634 for marketing metrics when the mediating role of organizational learning is assessed. Finally, these results show that the presented model is an appropriate fit.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study the researchers sought this question that whether organizational learning and marketing metrics affects the marketing performance in the Elon Plast Company in Kermanshah province? It should be noted that in all of the research hypotheses, marketing metrics and marketing performance are considered as a dependent variable for organizational learning and also marketing performance is considered as a dependent variable for marketing metrics. The results of the study hypotheses showed that:

One of the hypotheses of this study is that organizational learning has an impact on marketing metrics: So, the confirmation of this finding is in parallel with the researches of Deloy et al (2013). Also, the other finding of this research is that marketing metrics affects the marketing performance. The confirmation of this finding is also in parallel with the researches of Deloy et al (2013). Also, the other finding of this research is that organizational learning influences the marketing performance, the confirmation of this finding is parallel with the researches of Deloy and Darabi Broujeni (2013), Iran Manesh et al (2012), Kharidar and Samirapour (2011) ND Tahat Kamya (2012). Also, the other finding of this research is that marketing metrics play mediator role in the effectiveness of organizational learning on the marketing performance. Finally, the other finding of this research is that organizational learning play moderating role in the effectiveness of marketing metrics on the marketing performance. This confirmation is in parallel with the researches of Deloy et al (2013), Deloy and Darabi Brojeni (2013), Iranmanesh et al (2012), Kharidar and Samirapour (2011) and Tahat Kamya (2012). The results of this study showed that organizational learning and marketing metrics have significant effect on the marketing performance among employees of Elon Plast Company in Kermanshah province.

Practical recommendations of the research

Practical recommendations related to the first hypothesis:

The first hypothesis is that organizational learning affects marketing metrics. Since this hypothesis was confirmed so it is suggested that:

1. The studies company should focus on the creation of organizational learning to upgrade and expand marketing metrics. Because marketing metrics can be improved using organizational learning in the company.
2. The studies company should pay attention to upgrade and expand marketing metrics that are strategic milestones in the progress in order to achieve good progress. This will not be possible except through attention to the organizational learning.

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Practical recommendations related to the second hypothesis: The second hypothesis: Marketing Metrics affects marketing performance. Since this hypothesis was confirmed so it was suggested that:

1. The studied company should emphasize on creating customer value to increase marketing performance. Because we can continually create superior values for them by correct understanding of the attitudes and behavior of target customers.
2. The studied company should review the competitors' performance in order to enhance its marketing performance. Because a company should completely understand the short-term strengths and weaknesses, long term capabilities and strategies of the competitors. So it can react against their strategies.
3. The studied company should pay more attention to customer retention in order to increase its marketing performance. So, it can improve its market performance. Because customer retention has an important impact on the profitability of the company.
4. The studied companies should offer new products in order to increase its marketing performance. Also, it should pay attention to its operational, administrative and process innovation metric in order to continually use innovation strategy.

Practical recommendations about the third hypothesis:

The third hypothesis: Organizational learning affects marketing performance. Since this hypothesis was confirmed so it is suggested that:

1. The studied company can pay attention to the organizational learning to increase its marketing performance. Because this variable increase the knowledge of employees and this will affects the marketing performance.
2. The studied company should hold training courses to increase its marketing performance and provide the groundwork for the development of organizational learning and then be able to use it to enhance its marketing performance.

Suggestions for Future Research

1. It is recommended that researchers do this research as a provincial relation or comparison between the executive devices of the country using the variables of this research and compare its results with the results of this research.
2. It is recommended that researchers do this research as a provincial relation or comparison between two organizations of the country using the variables of this research and compare its results with the results of this research.
3. It is recommended that researchers do this research in the future with more organizations using the variables of this research and to the more studied courses using methodological of this research in order to add to the validity and reliability of this estimated model in this research.
4. It is recommended that researchers investigate the following items relationally or as comparison according to the other variables in the other organizations: Organizational size, organizational climate, organizational culture, leadership styles

Acknowledgement

This article derives from a research project that has been funded by Payame Noor University and the executors are Mr. Kamran Nazari and Mr. Peyman Akbari.

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