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Article

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MARKETING | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The role of B2B marketing strategy, ICT B2B marketing support, and service quality in market orientation – Performance relationship: evidence from three European countries

Gregor Jagodič¹ and Borut Milfelner^{2*}

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to evaluate the role of marketing strategy, information communication technology (ICT) marketing support, and service quality in the market orientation–performance relationship. Even though there are many studies considering the market orientation–performance relationship they rarely take into consideration ICT marketing support and marketing strategy, especially concerning the companies operating in B2B markets. Additionally, this study compares the impacts of the constructs between two emerging economies (Slovenia and Serbia) and one developed economy (Austria) on a random sample of 636 companies. Results were obtained based on the set hypotheses using the covariance-based structural equation modeling (SEM) and invariance testing procedure to make comparisons between the three countries. Market orientation strongly influenced the successful development and implementation of marketing strategies, ICT support, and service quality. The impact of service quality on company performance was statistically insignificant and only the indirect impact of market orientation on company performance through service quality was determined. ICT marketing support and successful development and implementation of B2B marketing strategy were also positively related to company performance. This study can help managers in B2B companies in emerging and developed markets to learn how to use specific marketing resources in order to achieve higher company performance.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Subjects: Marketing Research; Marketing Management; Organizational Studies

Keywords: marketing strategy; information-communication technology; service quality; market orientation; firm performance

1. Introduction

Given their history, companies want to ensure successful operation, competitive advantage, and the desired market share (Jagodič & Dermal, 2012). As a result, they need to increase marketing activities to persuade customers to buy (Mele et al., 2015). Therefore, performance can be assessed in terms of sales and market share growth. At the same time, financial performance is also evaluated in terms of profitability and return on investment, which, according to Weerawardena (2003), can be combined into one-dimensional measured performance. According to Vorhies and Morgan (2005), marketing and financial performance are assessed separately, within common performance criteria.

For this reason, it is important for companies on B2B markets to develop appropriate marketing resources. According to the resource-based theory (RBV) company can use its resources to effectively produce a market offering that has value for some market segment(s) (Hunt, 2000). Resources that hold a high potential for the development of competencies lead to competitive advantages (Jüttner & Wehrli, 1994). In this study, we identify four such resources, namely market orientation, Marketing Strategy, ICT Marketing Support, and Service Quality.

Dobni and Luffman (2003) have proposed a theoretical model showing the importance of market orientation for the development and implementation of marketing strategy. Together with the other prominent authors in the field (e.g., Lusch & Lacznia, 1987; Miles & Snow, 1978; Walker & Ruekert, 1987) they argue that coalignment profiles between the culture and strategy should be considered, since this can have significant implications for company performance. Alrousan and Jones (2016) research shows that market orientation positively influences innovation strategy, which is in line with the wide market orientation innovation relationship research stream (e.g., Atuahene-Gima et al., 2005; Han et al., 1998). Lee et al. (2015) and Iyer et al. (2019) both empirically proved that market orientation can facilitate a firm's business strategy, which then positively influences its business and brand performance. Homburg et al. (2004), trying to identify the possible antecedents of market orientation, showed that market orientation is an important organizational resource for the successful implementation of long-term strategic orientation. However, except for Iyer et al. (2019), none of the studies have examined the relationships in the context of the companies operating in the B2B markets. Also, those studies showed only how market orientation is related to different kinds of marketing strategies (e.g., differentiation strategy, cost leadership strategy, undifferentiation strategy) and did not address what is the role of market orientation in strategy development and implication, which is one of the main goals of our study.

In inter-organizational (B2B) markets, it is crucial to deploy an appropriate marketing strategy, and various authors agree that companies should use modern information and communication techniques (ICT). An appropriate marketing strategy and support of market orientation in B2B markets should provide quality customer service (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012; Ostrom et al., 2010). Modern ICT is an essential support for marketing strategies that reduce costs, streamline processes, improve overall quality, enable faster flow of information, and ease adaptation to market changes (Hutt & Speh, 2013). Through this ICT creates a competitive advantage, which is frequently one of the company's strategic goals (Hult et al., 2014). Together with the company's market orientation, implementing strategically planned activities reflects employees' focus on customers and offers solutions that bring value and satisfaction to both parties involved in the exchange processes (Ho et al., 2017). ICT support development for the marketing function should therefore be one of the key resources to develop digital marketing capabilities (Homburg &

Wielgos, 2022; Kannan & Li, 2017; Verhoef & Bijmolt, 2019). Previous studies have shown that single digital marketing capabilities can be important in achieving higher market and company performance. But it is surprising that academics have rarely considered how market orientation can influence the establishment of the necessary ICT marketing support, since this is one of the main preconditions for digital marketing capabilities development, especially in B2B markets (e.g., Masa'deh et al., 2018; Tseng & Liao, 2015). In this context, we could not identify studies examining how market orientation can contribute to the development of ICT support for the implementation of marketing activities in B2B markets, which is the second gap we addressed in this study.

From the relationship point of view, adequate service delivery is one of the most important capabilities of B2B companies. Up to now, the studies addressing the relationship between market orientation and service quality were mainly limited to the services sector (e.g., Pattanayak et al., 2017; Ramayah et al., 2011; Sampaio et al., 2018). With the exception of some rare studies (e.g., Hamzah et al., 2020; Pantouvakis & Karakasnakis, 2021) the topic has not achieved much attention concerning the company's operating on B2B markets.

Considering this, despite the importance of the four discussed marketing resources, according to our knowledge, studies by various authors up to now (Cruz, 2008; Jagodič & Milfelner, 2020; Ostrom et al., 2010) have only partially relationships between them, and there is a lack of studies addressing their overall impact on company performance considering companies operating in B2B markets. This study empirically investigates the relationships between four marketing resources and company performance on a sample of companies operating in B2B markets from two emerging economies (Slovenia and Serbia) and one developed economy (Austria). Research of emerging economies is relevant to understand the possible challenges, opportunities, and concerns within companies operating in such markets. (Burgess & Steenkamp, 2006; Cortez & Johnston, 2018). Also, through the comparison with the companies from emerging economies, investors from developing countries can learn how to use their marketing resources in order to achieve competitive advantages in emerging markets.

Despite the fact that some research into B2B markets can be found in Slovenia (Biemans et al., 2010; Čater & Čater, 2010; Iršič, 2011; Qu et al., 2015), Serbia (Asipi & Duraković, 2020; Barac et al., 2017; Szabo et al., 2020), and Austria (Bakhtieva, 2017; Diaz et al., 2021; Qu et al., 2015), the comparisons of business processes and resources in such companies from those three countries are extremely rare (Qu et al., 2015).

According to the proposed research gap, this study tends to address the following research questions: (a) What is the impact of market orientation on Marketing Strategy, ICT Marketing Support, and Service Quality for B2B companies, (b) What is the role of such marketing resources in the market orientation–performance relationship, and (c) what are the differences in proposed relationships between three European countries from developed and emerging economies.

We begin with the literature review to conceptualize four marketing resources and company performance, next according to research questions and previous empirical evidences we define hypotheses and build conceptual framework, and control variables of the model. In section four we describe the methodology of data collection and data analysis, and in section five we present results of the study including between country comparisons. Finally, theoretical and managerial implications together with limitations are presented in the discussion section.

2. Literature review

Resource-based view theory (RBV) is the supporting theory for concepts included in our research as well as for conceptual model that is developed in section 3. RBV emphasizes the fact that organizations gain and maintain their competitive advantages by developing valuable resources and capabilities, the supply of which is inelastic (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984). Marketing researchers have been using the RBV theory as one of the bases for the development of marketing

theory and practice for decades. An organization creates and maintains a comparative advantage over other organizations by making the best use of its heterogeneous resources (Hunt & in Morgan, 1995). They can be defined as any tangible or intangible, physical or human, intellectual or associative characteristics, which the organization can develop and enable it to successfully and/or effectively create such a market offer, which has value for an individual segment or several market segments. Market orientation, marketing strategy, and ICT marketing support has been recognized as valuable marketing resource in several studies, since they enable the development of competitive advantages and enhance company performance (e.g., Cavusgil & Zou, 1994; Homburg & Wielgos, 2022; Kirca et al., 2005).

2.1. B2B marketing strategies

Companies' marketing activities begin with strategic planning (Nobre & Silva, 2014). Different analyses, integration of various sources of information, and promotion of cooperation between employees and partners of the company are often used to prepare strategies (Homburg et al., 2015). A company's marketing strategy is essential to create a long-term competitive and comparative advantage by developing new products, differentiating, expanding into new markets, improving the company's image, and achieving desired profits. The most important goal of a marketing strategy is to satisfy the interests of target customer groups (Zahay & Griffin, 2010).

In B2B markets, purchasing decisions are more complex, so transactions are based on good long-term relationships that partners build with trust and reliability. However, building a long-term competitive advantage is increasingly complex, so the provider must adapt its marketing strategies, invest in infrastructure, and develop marketing channels and employees to manage them well and combine them optimally (Lagat & Frankwick, 2017).

Development of the B2B marketing strategy depends on several external and internal factors, on adapting to customers' needs (Theodosiou & Leonidou, 2003), the ability of company management, the ability to adapt internal processes (Chang et al., 2003), quality assurance, and stakeholder involvement (Lagat & Frankwick, 2017). With the help of various marketing strategies and channels, the provider achieves a more significant number of target customers, improving its performance and competitive position (Sharma et al., 2010).

In this study, we assess marketing strategies from the point of developing and implementing. Development component is reflected in the ability of the company's management to assess the actual situations on B2B markets and the ability of setting the strategic goals that are in line with the current situation. Implementation component considers the use of various strategic tools for the implementation of the strategy, the involvement, and the understanding of the strategy goals by all business functions and employees.

2.2. ICT B2B marketing support

The definition of ICT comes from software and applications that can process large amounts of data that improve business performance (Visser et al., 2015). Changes in the field of ICT require adaptation and training of employees to new technologies (Huy et al., 2012) and enable innovation (Hameed & Counsell, 2014). In addition, the use of ICT in B2B markets has become a strategic tool for business and marketing strategies (Gorla et al., 2017).

The Internet and the development of ICT have changed the way information is obtained and exchanged (Ifinedo, 2012), enabling the expansion of lower-cost enterprises (Alrousan & Jones, 2016) and improving their performance (Ahmad et al., 2015). ICT is an aid to management because it enables the implementation of information processes and activities related to customers and increases competition in the market (Adamczewski, 2015). Advanced ICT tools reduce costs, improve customer relationships (Edvardsson et al., 2010), and provide dynamic support for marketing activities and processes (Setiowati et al., 2015), thus affecting business performance.

ICT is also a crucial part of the company's information system. Therefore, it should provide adequate support and development of new products, services, information processing, and business processes, and help sales staff with the support necessary to meet customers' needs, interests, and expectations (Kim & Ko, 2012; Setiowati et al., 2015).

Businesses are reaping the benefits of ICT to improve their organizational structure, production, marketing activities, and approach to customers (Berné et al., 2012). In addition, ICT enables the improvement of quality, customer satisfaction, and cooperation with partners, reducing costs and increasing the efficiency of providers, which affects the company's performance (Rodriguez et al., 2015). That defines ICT as an essential element in creating a company's competitive advantage and could be a marketing resource (Berné et al., 2015). According to that, in this study ICT is defined as the understanding, use and adoption of technology that supports and facilitates various marketing activities.

2.3. Service quality

Quality is important for market positioning and mainly directly impacts customer value perception, and customer satisfaction (Ibharim, 2014). The precondition for quality is the technical perfection of the product or process perfection of the service operation, and appropriately trained employees (Karimi Mazidi et al., 2014). To ensure quality, many companies set performance standards (Gummesson, 2014) and concrete criteria for distinguishing between expected (subjectively perceived) and technical (flawless operation) quality (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012).

The most crucial element of service quality assurance is the human factor, affecting customers' overall satisfaction (Ganesh et al., 2000). However, the provider cannot control all of the factors that affect the quality of services, mainly because some activities occur in the interaction between employees and customers (Gummesson, 2014). Therefore, it depends on a subjective assessment of the customers' expectations. Employees have a significant influence on service-quality delivery because they can positively impact the perception of service quality from the point of view of customers and subsequently also company performance (Rogo et al., 2017). However, the quality of services is important in the B2B market for service providers. That is because they offer the implementation of activities targeted directly to the customers in B2B markets where the service must be tailored.

The offer of services in B2B markets is more complex and specialized than in end-user markets (Rogo et al., 2017). For services in B2B markets, it is necessary to highlight intangible characteristics and the inseparability between performance and consumption (Gounaris, 2005; Rahman et al., 2012).

In this study, we conceptualize service quality as internal and external service quality. Internal quality consists of well-defined internal quality standards, the existence of internal quality control, standardized quality procedures and actions, and internal employee training for employees to improve quality standards. The external quality is defined by perceived quality from the customer's viewpoint, and the provider's market power, especially from the perspective of switching providers and influencing provider performance (Jagodič, 2018). Measuring the quality of services focuses on customers' evaluation of the quality before and after the purchase or evaluating individual elements of offering and performing the service (Rogo et al., 2017).

2.4. Market orientation

With a customer focus, the provider seeks to meet customers' needs, build long-term relationships, connect with customers, and solve their problems by offering existing or new products/services (Bagozzi et al., 2012). It has been established that responsive market orientation focuses on expressed needs, and proactive market orientation focuses on customers' hidden needs. Both types of market orientation work through innovative approaches and improve competitiveness, provider advantage, and performance (Narver et al., 2004).

The market orientation of the provider is influenced by the environment in which it operates, as well as managers and business owners (Amin et al., 2016). The organizational culture of a company can have positive (innovative) and negative (strong hierarchical organization) influences on the market orientation (Gao, 2017). Providers with a well-developed market orientation create a long-term competitive advantage and higher revenues and profits in their markets (Kumar et al., 2011).

Market orientation represents a factor in implementing marketing strategies and following activities as companies strive to improve their efficiency and capacity development. Companies in the B2B market develop B2B marketing strategies in a way that should enhance company results (Amin et al., 2016). In B2B markets, market-oriented providers focus primarily on collecting, disseminating, and using acquired information to identify customer desires and expectations of customers (Kohli et al., 1993).

In B2B markets, market orientation aims to develop long-term customer relationships and adapt strategic activities to customer interests. The concept of market orientation in this study is defined in line with the mainstream literature, namely as: (1) customer orientation, (2) competitor orientation, and (3) cross-functional coordination and covers activities of collecting, disseminating, and using market information in companies (Hau et al., 2013; Narver & Slater, 1990).

2.5. Company performance

The definition of performance is complex and rather vague because researchers do not use a uniform structure and number of parameters involved in their studies (Lagat & Frankwick, 2017; Surroca et al., 2010). Instead, we most often define economic performance as a performance where the criterion exceeds competitors or industry averages. In addition, it compares current and past results and performance (Heirati et al., 2013).

The company's performance should be based on the company's mission and strategic goals, so companies are viewed as successful if they succeed in satisfying the interests of all stakeholders (customers, employees, owners, suppliers, partners, and government institutions; Surroca et al., 2010). Performance monitoring is thus the most comprehensive process of measuring, evaluating, and judging a company's performance based on financial and/or non-financial criteria. Furthermore, it enables timely and appropriate changes in activities (Melnyk et al., 2014).

In this study company performance is conceptualized as market (e.g., market share and sales volume) and financial performance (e.g., EBIT) in comparison with companies' main competitors, as well as internal performance such as employee productivity.

3. Conceptual framework, hypothesis development, and control variables

3.1. Conceptual framework and hypothesis development

It depends on the marketing culture of employees and how they will be able to adapt to customers' expectations and offer solutions that bring value and satisfaction to both parties (Ho et al., 2017; Line & Runyan, 2014). The company's market orientation depends on many factors arising from the environment and the company itself (Murray et al., 2011). It also reflects the speed of response to customer expectations and interests and the ability to adapt employees, processes, and related activities (Amin et al., 2016), which is the essence of marketing strategies. Therefore, market orientation has been found as an essential component of a company's business performance and should be evidence of the effectiveness of marketing strategy development implementation (Murray et al., 2011). Homburg et al. (2004) proposed a positive relationship between market orientation and premium product differentiation strategy. Also, empirical evidence from other studies (e.g., Newman et al., 2016) suggests that market orientation is positively related to innovation strategy implementation. Additionally, market orientation has been found to positively influence differentiation and cost strategies. Iyer et al. (2019) study was the only one

investigating this relationship on B2B markets, and the evidence suggests that responsive market orientation has a positive impact on differentiation strategy implementation. Based on that, we can set the following hypothesis:

H1: The company's market orientation positively impacts the successful development and implementation of B2B marketing strategies.

The customer perception of service quality strongly depends on the quality of the relationship between sales staff and customers, so companies define standards, procedures, and implementation activities (Gummesson, 2014; Rogo et al., 2017). Therefore, the most crucial factor in achieving service quality is the human factor, which stems from the market orientation behaviour (Line & Runyan, 2014). Service quality has been defined in the marketing literature as the difference between customers' value perceptions and their expectations regarding the service (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Market orientation should provide management and employees with the intelligence to close these gaps since market-oriented companies collect information on customers' needs and wants and adjust their marketing activities accordingly (Pantouvakis & Karakasnakis, 2021).

The company's management should provide appropriate guidance to employees to achieve relevant and qualitative implementation of activities to meet customer expectations (Amin et al., 2016; Ho et al., 2017) based on the organizational culture that supports market orientation activities.

The impact of market orientation on service quality has been proved in several studies. Chin et al. (2013) found that service quality has a moderating role in the market orientation performance relationships. The positive relationship between both constructs has also been supported in the banking industry (Pattanayak et al., 2017), tourism and hospitality industry (Bigné et al., 2005; Sampaio et al., 2018), and the general service industry (Ramayah et al., 2011). Studies concerning companies operating in B2B markets are quite rare. In his market orientation and B2B meta-analysis, Chang (2014) proposed the relationship and according to Pantouvakis and Pantouvakis and Karakasnakis (2021) study, the higher service quality levels are the result of intelligence generation and responsiveness. Hamzah et al. (2020) study in B2B banking sector revealed that market orientation activities also influence more proactive service behavior that could lead to higher service quality levels. Hence, we hypothesize:

H2: The company's market orientation positively impacts service quality in B2B markets.

The provision of services or the sale of products takes place in a very dynamic environment. (Karimi Mazidi et al., 2014). Market orientation is realized through employees and marketing activities, which are constantly being developed, transformed, and upgraded for the company to better, quickly, and efficiently meet customers' needs. In line with that ICT support should be flexible and strongly support innovation in renewed, changed, and business-adapted business processes, models, methods, concepts, and approaches (Setiowati et al., 2015).

Homburg and Wielgos (2022) argue that market orientation enables better ICT support through the development of digital marketing capabilities and that the impact is threefold. First, customer-oriented companies can better understand customers across different stages of the buying process, which enables them to foster abilities to seamlessly integrate digital marketing capabilities. Second, competitor orientation gives the potential to better assess the strengths and weaknesses of configurations of digital marketing capabilities and ICT. Finally, because the company's market orientation is highly dependent on inter-functional coordination, ICT allows for a flexible division of

tasks among employees. Therefore, the actual roles and tasks of individuals are no longer necessarily aligned with formal roles and tasks (Breidbach & Maglio, 2016). Furthermore, through digitization, ICT enables the integration and implementation of such information processes and activities that are tailored to customers' needs and interests (Adamczewski, 2015).

Masa'deh et al. (2018) researched the impact between market orientation, technological orientation, and company performance on the B2B markets, but the results of the relationships between the three were inconclusive. Tseng and Liao's (2015) study shows that market orientation is positively related to IT technology and both have a positive impact on company performance. Homburg and Wielgos's (2022) empiric evidence support that all three dimensions of market orientation are related to digital marketing capabilities, which need ICT support, and that digital marketing capabilities indeed moderate market orientation–performance relationship. According to that, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: The company's market orientation positively impacts ICT B2B marketing support.

Quality assurance enables the provider to create a competitive advantage in the market and improves supplier's performance (Gummesson, 2014; Rogo et al., 2017). In addition, higher delivered quality often improves partner relationships and operational efficiency, therefore, company performance and the competitiveness of the entire supply chain. Also considering B2B services, which are mainly costumed to the customer's specifications, higher service quality should generate a better market performance, such as higher willingness to pay, customer satisfaction, and loyalty, finally resulting in higher company performance (Kleinaltenkamp et al., 2017).

Furthermore, several authors have researched the impact of service quality on financial performance (e.g., Grant & Schlesinger, 1995; Rust et al., 1995), and the link is well established in the marketing literature. Also, the positive relationship between service quality and performance has been reported by several authors who researched the topic in the B2B context (e.g., Janita & Miranda, 2013; Kleinaltenkamp et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2015). On this basis, we set the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis H4: The service quality positively impacts the company's performance.

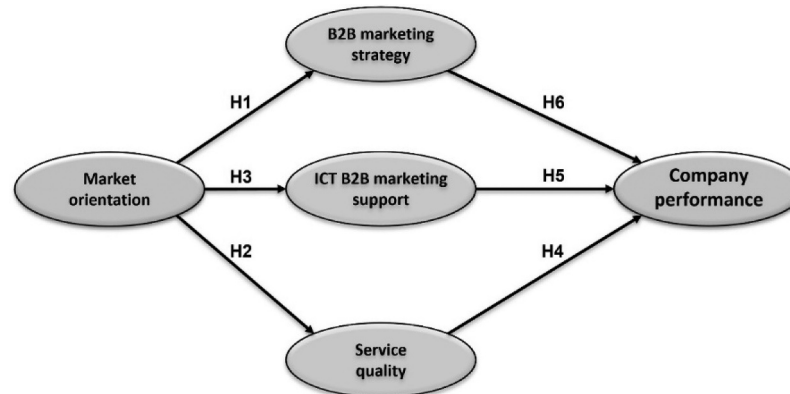
ICT management provides support in making business decisions and entering the market. This support partially depends on organizational culture, values, and strategic goals (Alsaad et al., 2017; Choshin & Ghaffari, 2017). Companies need to introduce and use ICT in response to environmental demands and increasingly fierce competition (Kabanda & Brown, 2017). Involving ICT in the implementation of marketing activities enables the improvement of the efficiency of their performance and adjustment of other organizational functions according to the set strategies to meet customer needs that affect the company market and financial performance (Setiowati et al., 2015).

In their study, Visser et al. (2015) demonstrate that ICT support can form the core of the company's management, and it affects company performance. According to Nobre and Silva (2014) and Chan and Raharja (2018), ICT has taken over an essential aspect of implementing B2B marketing strategies and planned activities and, through such processes, affects the company's performance. Due to the increasingly important role of ICT in the operation of the company, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis H5: ICT B2B marketing support positively impacts the company's performance.

B2B marketing strategies include strategic planning of marketing activities that enable satisfying the interests of target groups and competitive advantage that affects performance. In doing so,

Figure 1. Conceptual model.



they focus on two fundamental dimensions: market dimension (new and existing markets) and product dimension (new and current products; Chan & Raharja, 2018). B2B customers have fewer options for alternatives in the market, so they need to have relations with several providers to reduce their dependence and potential risks. Therefore, choosing and applying the right marketing strategy has a significant impact on business performance (Brassington & Pettitt, 2007). For a company to operate successfully in such a market, it should include an analysis and focus on selecting target markets when designing marketing strategies (Lagat & Frankwick, 2017). On B2B, market-based transactions are based on long-term relationships built by partners through trust, reliability, and good relationships (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Dominique-Ferreira et al., 2016). Therefore, those are often much more important than the price of the product itself and have a substantial impact on business performance (Chan & Raharja, 2018).

There are several studies that support the relationship between marketing strategy and performance. For example, Zott and Amit (2008) and Olson et al. (2005) show that market strategy significantly impacts performance. Vorhies and Morgan (2005) tested the relationship within the B2B industry and showed that performance is influenced by marketing organization structure and by business strategy. Other evidence from B2B markets was provided by Zahay and Griffin (2010) showing that customer-based performance measures and business growth performance are higher in the context of strategic marketing positioning decisions and by Koo et al. (2016) supporting the impact of export marketing strategy on export performance. Based on that, we set the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis H6: Successful development and implementation of B2B marketing strategies positively impact the company's performance.

The conceptual model and hypotheses are presented in Figure 1

3.2. Control variables

We included the share of turnover generated by the company in the B2B market as a control variable since it indicates the activity of a company in the B2B market. Companies with a lower turnover in the B2B market have different interests than those with higher turnover. It should be noted that the market exposure of a company that sells its products/services in the B2B market is much higher as it has fewer customers in comparison with companies that mainly operate in B2C markets (DeConinck & DeConinck, 2017). That raises the question of whether companies can allow any of the B2B customers to represent the majority of their activities, as they must be aware that they may also fail in the event of termination. That can potentially influence their market and financial performance.

The number of employees was set to determine the company's size. Increasing the number of employees can be understood as an indicator of company performance (Cowling et al., 2018). Concerning company size as a control variable, various authors (e.g., Azeez, 2015; Olokoyo, 2013) have shown that firm size is positively related to firm performance as larger firms make better use of economies of scale. The size can be understood not only as a control variable but also as an essential moderator based on research by Hui et al. (2013), who observed the impact of the introduction of innovation in the company, organizational learning on company performance

4. Methodology

4.1. Measurement instrument and data collection

The measurement instrument was developed using items from the literature and self-generated items. It was developed in two phases. First, we examined content validity using four academics, two specialized in B2B marketing, and two specialized in marketing research. Then a questionnaire was developed in the English language and translated into Slovenian, German, and Serbian using the back-translation procedure suggested by Harkness (2010). In the second phase, the measurement instrument was tested on a smaller non-representative sample of 60 respondents from companies whose revenue in B2B markets was higher than 20%. In this phase, the items were tested for comprehension and potential redundancy. Also, convergent and discriminant validity was assessed.

We used a 7-point Likert scale for measuring marketing strategy, ICT B2B marketing support, B2B market orientation, and B2B service quality. Some items were adopted from Sousa et al. (2005) and Kohtamäki et al. (2012) for marketing strategy, and some were self-generated. A total of 8 items were used for this research. Also, the items for measuring ICT B2B marketing support were a combination of items adopted by Sarkees (2011) and the self-generated items, of which six were used in this research. MKTOR scale developed by Narver and Slater (1990) was used for measuring market orientation on B2B markets, namely 9 items. Items for measuring B2B service quality were self-generated, using the previous insights from Parasuraman et al. (1988), Ganesan (1994), Cannon and Perreault (1999), Gounaris (2005), and Yee et al. (2013). Eight items were used to measure the proposed construct. Company performance was measured compared to key competitors with a 7-point semantic differential from worse to better. The four items used in this study were adopted from Homburg and Pflesser (2000) and Milfelner (2008).

Following some modifications to the layout and wording of the questions, the questionnaire was e-mailed to 5,638 randomly selected companies (1,543 or 27.4% from Slovenia, 1,714 or 30.4% from Austria, and 2,381 or 42.23% from Serbia). Computer-assisted web interviewing was used for data collection. In every company, we identified an informant in the position of CEO or member of the Board of Directors responsible for marketing or marketing director. One of the criteria was that the company selected in the sample generated at least 20% of its revenue in B2B markets. After the initial exclusion of companies that had not met this criterion, 636 sample units were included in the research. The response rate was 13.6% for Slovenia, 12.7% for Austria, and 8.8% for Serbia. The final sample for Slovenia comprised 210 units (33.0%), Austria, 217 units (34.1%), and Serbia, with 209 units (32.9%).

4.2. Sample characteristics

The majority companies (76.3%) included in the final sample generated more than 60% of their revenue in the B2B markets. Approximately 66.4% of companies were mainly engaged in services and 33.6% in producing or selling products. Most companies report that they are not internationalized, or part of any international corporation, and 24.8% of companies are internationally active. The highest percentage of companies came from the financial and real estate industry (15.4%), followed by the information and communication industry and advertising (13.7%), transport and storage industry (11.6%), and professional, scientific, technical education or consulting industry (11.6%). We compared the level of marketing resources between the companies operating in different industry sectors using one-way ANOVA. The results show that companies in the professional, scientific, technical

education or consulting industry seem to have better developed marketing strategic resources than in other sectors. Contrary to that processing industry, agriculture, hunting, forestry, and fishing industry seems to have lower developed resources in all four categories. We have not found any other significant differences between industry sectors with other types of resources.

Concerning the company size, 49.4% micro, 36.0% small, 10.8% medium, and 3.8% large companies were represented in the sample. Furthermore, the average number of employees in all companies was 41.89, while the average age of the companies included in the survey was 14.66 years. The main sample characteristics are presented in Table 1.

4.3. Validity and reliability of the scales

We performed the confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) to test the scales' dimensionality, reliability, and validity for every first-order construct in the first phase. That was a marketing strategy, ICT B2B marketing support, B2B market orientation, service quality, and company performance.

The structural equation modeling was performed with the maximum likelihood (ML) estimation using the AMOS 27 software. Each concept was first tested as a unidimensional construct and then as a multi-dimensional one. The fit indices indicated that a multi-dimensional structure was more valid than a unidimensional one in three cases. First, marketing strategy is a multi-dimensional construct with two subconstructs: development and implementation of marketing strategy. Second, as expected, market orientation resulted in a three-dimensional construct, namely customer orientation, competitor orientation, and inter-functional coordination. Third, service quality proved to be a two-dimensional construct with subconstructs named customer-oriented quality and market power concerning the corresponding items. Finally, ICT B2B marketing support and company performance were unidimensional constructs.

Since, according to some authors chi-square value (χ^2) may be an inappropriate standard when dealing with the complex model and the large sample size, as in our study, we used other fit indices and compared their calculated values to the proposed thresholds from the literature: RMSEA <.08, NFI > .90, CFI > .90, NNFI > .90 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The results of the single CFAs are presented in Appendix 1. The majority of fit indices for single models were within the suggested boundaries. Also, all item loads have reached the level of .6 or higher, and all average variance extracted was higher than .5, suggesting the appropriate convergent validity. Discriminant validity was tested for the multi-dimensional constructs (marketing strategy, market orientation, and B2B service quality), and ratios of correlation between latent variables were calculated within the HTMT matrix (Henseler et al., 2015). All ratios of correlation were lower than the suggested threshold of .85. They were .75 for marketing strategy, .74, .56, .61 for market orientation, and .56 for B2B service quality. That shows the appropriate discriminant validity of the scales. Finally, composite reliabilities were all higher than .6, suggesting the appropriate reliability of the scales used.

In the following step, to simplify the structure of the final model for hypotheses assessment, we constructed new variables (second-order constructs) with the latent scores for 5 constructs. That was: B2B marketing strategy with two indicators (marketing strategy development and marketing strategy implementation), market orientation with three indicators (customer orientation, competitor orientation, and inter-functional coordination), service quality with two indicators (customer-oriented quality and market power), ICT B2B marketing support, and company performance with one indicator. In addition, for two latent variables with one indicator, the error variance of the residuals was set to 0. The CFA results for the newly composed variables are presented in Table 2.

For the second-order constructs model, we can also establish convergent validity for all the constructs (indicator loads were higher than .6 and AVEs higher than .5). Furthermore, the HTMT matrix (Henseler et al., 2015) in Table 3 also suggests that all ratios of correlation between latent

Table 1. Sample characteristics

Country	Frequency	Share in %
Slovenia	210	33.00%
Austria	217	34.10%
Serbia	209	32.90%
Together	636	100.00%
Revenue in the B2B markets		
Between 20% and 40%	151	23.7
Between 40% and 60%	129	20.3
Between 60% and 80%	126	19.8
Between 80% and 100%	230	36.2
Together	636	100
Majority of revenues		
Production/sales of products	214	33.6
Services	422	66.4
Together	636	100
Internationalization of the company		
Yes	158	24.8
No	478	75.2
Together	636	100
Industry		
Financial and real estate industry	98	15.4
Information and communication industry and advertising industry	87	13.7
Transport and storage industry	74	11.6
Professional, scientific, technical education or consulting industry	74	11.6
Trade, maintenance and repairs of motor vehicles	54	8.5
Processing industry, agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing industry	53	8.3
Other industry	196	30.9
Together	636	100
Company size		
Micro	314	49.4
Small	229	36
Medium	69	10.8
Large	24	3.8
Together	636	100

variables were near or lower than .85, indicating the discriminant validity, and CRs higher than .6 adequate reliability.

5. Results

5.1. Results based on the entire sample

The fit of the structural model was once again evaluated with the χ^2 value and other representative fit indices. Despite the fact that χ^2 was significant and RMSEA was higher than .80, other fit

Table 2. Loadings and latent variables composite reliabilities and average variances extracted

Construct	Indicator	Loadings	CR	AVE
B2B marketing strategy	marketing strategy development	.844	.921	.854
	marketing strategy implementation	.990		
ICT B2B marketing support	ICT B2B marketing support	1,000	-	-
Market orientation	customer orientation	.871	.884	.720
	competitor orientation	.942		
	interfunctional coordination	.708		
Service quality	customer-oriented quality, and	.697	.807	.681
	market power	.935		
Company performance	company performance	1,000	-	-

Fit indices: χ^2 (21) = 214,451; GFI = .941; NFI = .950; NNFI = .905; CFI = .954; RMSEA = .127; RMR = .024

Table 3. HTMT ratio of correlations

	1.	2.
1. B2B marketing strategies		
2. Market orientation	.852	
3. Service quality	.625	.750

indices were within the suggested boundaries (χ^2 (21) = 214,451; GFI = .934; NFI = .944; NNFI = .913; CFI = .949; RMSEA = .120; RMR = .027).

In the final model, we included control variables, namely B2B revenue and the number of employees. Correlations between the latent variables are presented in Table 4, and regression coefficients and their significance intervals in Table 5.

The impact of market orientation on B2B marketing strategies ($\gamma_1 = .843$; $p < .01$) is strong and significant. Hence, we can support H1. Also, market orientation has a significant impact on ICT B2B support ($\gamma_2 = .499$; $p < .01$) and on service quality ($\gamma_3 = .689$; $p < .01$); therefore, we can also support H2 and H3. Contrary to that, the impact of service quality on company performance was statistically insignificant ($\beta_3 = .022$; n.s). Therefore, we rejected H4. However, the indirect impact of market orientation on company performance through service quality is positive ($\beta_i = .205$) and statistically significant at $p < .05$, which means that service quality is an important mediator in a market orientation performance relationship. The impact of ICT B2B marketing support on company performance is positive, quite weak, but statistically significant ($\beta_2 = .082$; $p < .05$). The same also holds true for the impact of B2B marketing strategy on performance ($\beta_1 = .180$; $p < .180$).

A positive and significant impact on company performance was observed for both control variables, but both impacts were relatively weak.

5.2. Differences between countries

According to Putnick and Bornstein (2016) measurement invariance should be assessed for group comparisons when making meaningful comparisons between groups, and when assessing

Table 4. Correlations between the latent variables

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. B2B marketing strategy	1.000				
2. ICT B2B marketing support	.488	1.000			
3. Market orientation	.840	.480	1.000		
4. Service quality	.593	.408	.683	1.000	
5. Company performance	.230	.190	.226	.162	1.000

Table 5. Results of the structural model

Impact	Standardized coefficients	Significance
H1: Market orientation -> B2B marketing strategy	$\gamma_1 = .843$	$p < .01$
H2: Market orientation -> Service quality	$\gamma_3 = .689$	$p < .01$
H3: Market orientation -> ICT B2B marketing support	$\gamma_2 = .499$	$p < .01$
H4: Service quality -> Company performance	$\beta_3 = .022$	n.s.
H5: ICT B2B marketing support -> Company performance	$\beta_2 = .082$	$p < .05$
H6: B2B marketing strategy -> Company performance	$\beta_1 = .180$	$p < .01$
B2B income -> Company performance	$x_1 = .089$	$P < .05$
Number of employees -> Company performance	$x_2 = .088$	$P < .05$

Fit indices: χ^2 (21) = 214,451; GFI = .934; NFI = .944; NNFI = .913; CFI = .949; RMSEA = .120; RMR = .027

differences in relationships between constructs between groups. Measurement invariance suggests that constructs have the same meaning to a different group of respondents and therefore the construct can be meaningfully tested across groups. Because respondents came from three different countries with different cultural backgrounds we first tested for configural, metric, and scalar invariance. In order to compare the differences in impacts between latent variables, what was our initial task, at least configural and metric invariance should be achieved.

First in a row was testing for configural variance. According to Table 6, we can support it since all fit indices except TLI were higher than .9 and RMSEA was below .1. In the next step the full metric invariance was assessed, and all factor loadings were constrained to be equal across the three groups. As can be observed in Table 6 the difference in $\Delta \chi^2/df$ between configural invariance model and the full metric invariance model was statistically significant at $p < .05$, so we could not support a full metric variance. According to Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1998), however, at least partial metric invariance should be established for subsequent tests to be meaningful. Therefore, we removed the constraint for one indicator. Such a partial metric invariance model had the same fit to the data as configural invariance model and the difference in $\Delta \chi^2/df$ between configural invariance and partial metric invariance models was non-significant. Additional test for full and partial scalar invariance was not successful and we could not support it.

Table 6. Invariance test results and comparisons between structural models									
MEASUREMENT MODEL									
Model	χ^2	df	$\Delta \chi^2/\text{df sig.}$	NFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	
Configural invariance	212.87	51		.921	.939	.868	.938	.071	
Full metric invariance	232.56	59	.012	.914	.935	.878	.933	.068	
Partial metric invariance	223.09	58	.177	.918	.938	.882	.937	.067	
Full scalar invariance	253.20	65	.000	.907	.929	.880	.928	.068	
STRUCTURAL MODEL									
Unconstrained paths	248.85	70		.908	.932	.894	.931	.064	
Constrained paths	270.83	82	.038	.908	.932	.894	.931	.064	
Partially constrained paths	252.52	75	.597	.907	.933	.902	.932	.061	

Table 7. Structural paths for three countries (Slovenia, Austria, and Serbia)

	Slovenia		Austria		Serbia	
H1: Market orientation -> B2B marketing strategy	.791*	p < .01	.250*	p < .05	.848*	p < .01
H2: Market orientation -> Service quality	.585	p < .01	.394	p < .01	.679	p < .01
H3: Market orientation -> ICT B2B marketing support	.373*	p < .01	.073*	n.s.	.519*	p < .01
H4: Service quality -> Company performance	-.070	n.s.	.187**	p < .05	-.067	n.s.
H5: ICT B2B marketing support -> Company performance	.046	n.s.	.041	n.s.	.052	n.s.
H6: B2B marketing strategy -> Company performance	.056*	n.s.	.187*	p < .05	.292*	p < .01

*—differences in paths exist between Slovenia, Austria, And Serbia

**—differences in paths exist between Austria and other two countries

Next in line were tests for the structural model. Since we wanted to simplify the structure, control variables were not included in the final three-group structural model. Fit indices for the model where paths were unconstrained were in the suggested boundaries. When we constrained all paths between latent variables the significant $\Delta \chi^2/df$ between the constrained and unconstrained model was the result, meaning that the constrained model was not as good as the unconstrained model. After additional tests, the following paths were unconstrained: (a) path from market orientation to B2B marketing strategy for all three countries (b) path from market orientation to ICT B2B marketing support for all three countries, (c) path from service quality to company performance for Austria, and (d) path from B2B marketing strategy to company performance for all three countries. The partially constrained model has the best-fit indices concerning all three structural models, namely: $\chi^2(75) = 252.52$ ($p < .001$), RMSEA = .061, CFI = .932, TLI = .902 IFI = .933. Structural paths for all three countries and statistically significant differences are presented in Table 7.

Results for the three groups show that the positive impact of market orientation on B2B marketing strategy is stronger in Slovenia and Serbia and weaker in Austria. Also, the positive impact of market orientation on ICT B2B marketing support is the strongest in Serbia, followed by Slovenia, and non-significant in Austria. Contrary to that the impact of service quality on company performance that was not statistically significant in the entire sample is positive and significant only in Austria. The impact of the B2B marketing strategy on company performance is non-significant in Slovenia and positive in Austria and Serbia, being the strongest in Serbia.

6. Discussion

6.1. Theoretical implications

First, according to our study, adequately set B2B marketing strategies and adaptation to the demands of customers is a consequence of market orientation. The market environment is becoming more complex, more saturated, and thus less friendly to providers of products and services. Market orientation seems to lead to the development of better strategies that enable more substantial relationships with customers in B2B markets. It provides needed information concerning the customers and competitors and enables more effective information flow. Homburg et al. (2004) proposed that marketing strategy (specifically premium product differentiation) impacts market orientation, but the relationship was not empirically supported. This study suggests the opposite, namely that market orientation is an important resource for strategy development and implication. In emerging markets (e.g., Slovenia and Serbia) where market orientation still seems to be a scarce resource, it is even more important for companies to adopt it to be more successful in building strategic competencies.

Second, the company's market orientation is essential for achieving service quality in B2B markets. This result is in line with the work of Hamzah et al. (2020) and Pantouvakis and Karakasnakis (2021). Providers adapt their offer to market conditions, trying to follow the expectations and interests of B2B customers (indirectly to adapt to end customers) and fight the similar products offers of competitors. Market-oriented providers can offer the appropriate quality of products and services since market orientation enables intelligence generation and dissemination. According to that, they can also decide if they want to provide higher or lower-quality products and services and have better price orientation points.

The relationship between market orientation and ICT support was found to be generally positive. Other studies have proved the positive relationship between market orientation and digital marketing capabilities (e.g., Homburg & Wielgos, 2022; Verhoef & Bijmolt, 2019) and this study extends this view since it shows that market-oriented companies not only have a better potential to develop digital marketing capabilities but also can enable better ICT marketing support. We can even speculate that ICT marketing support is in fact a mediator necessary to develop digital marketing capabilities, but this claim warrants further research.

Our finding is expected since ICT support allows companies to adjust to B2B markets based on collected information, perceived market changes, and changed customer expectations. Furthermore, it indicates that market-oriented companies can develop better ICT capacities because of their intelligence-based orientation. Therefore, B2B companies that understand customers' needs and expectations, will also be able to develop or use better ICT solutions. Also, it is noteworthy to add that the expectations of B2B customers change according to the changes in B2C markets, and they need to be considered.

Concerning the differences between countries, the impact was strongest for Serbia, followed by Slovenia, and insignificant for Austria. In more developed markets, since the market-oriented approach is a necessity to prosper, it may be, that raising the level of it, does not have an impact on the implementation of ICT changes, since those processes are more developed and continuous than in emerging markets.

Surprisingly, no impact of market orientation on service quality was supported in this study concerning the entire sample. Despite the fact that this relationship was considered positive in previous studies (Kleinaltenkamp et al., 2017) such studies on B2B markets were rare. Our result could be attributed due to the fact that only single informants (especially business owners and heads of marketing departments) were included in our study. Despite many measurable parameters and validated measurement instruments such assessment can still be quite subjective. Concerning this, also end customers could be included in the research, since the respondents

taking part in company research studies may not always have enough contact with the end customer or enough information to assess the customer service quality. Also, the quality of service implementation in B2B markets does not only depend solely on the provider, but also on the B2B intermediary. It may also be that in the time of the COVID-19 crisis, quality was not so much related to performance due to the shortages in production and supply chains. Nevertheless, comparisons between the three countries showed that there is a positive impact for Austrian part of the sample. One of the reasons for that can be the more competitive situation on the market, but this certainly is the speculation that warrants further research.

This research confirms the positive impact of ICT B2B marketing support on the company's performance. ICT support should be seen as one of the essential marketing supporting resources. It acts as a central link to help collect, process, and distribute timely information to those who need to make the right decisions. Implementing marketing activities also depends on how quickly a company acquires, processes, and transmits information as it needs to adapt to market conditions.

Additionally, the impact of B2B marketing strategies on the company's performance was positive. According to the information enabled by market orientation, aligned strategies can be developed based on customers' changing needs, interests, and expectations. Companies that are better at the development and implementation of marketing strategies should also be more successful. This shows that marketing strategy development and implementation is an important and valuable resource for companies operating in B2B markets. Previous studies have partially supported that but only explained the impact of a specific type of strategy on performance. Our study also shows that adequately set B2B marketing strategies are reflected in higher performance. However, this relationship could not be completely straightforward in B2B markets and future studies should consider customers in the B2B markets as well as end customers when testing such relationships.

Concerning the control variables, the company's performance is weakly influenced by the B2B income generated in the B2B market and the company's size. B2B impact stems from companies in B2B markets being more interconnected and often more interdependent. The effect of company size may be due to the fact that larger companies have probably entered the market earlier and therefore have the advantage over the competitors (due to barriers to entry, and larger market share) Also their economies of scale can significantly impact production costs and the formation of the market price. This way, the company secures loyal customers, allowing it to be more successful.

6.2. Implications for management

The basis for the implementation of marketing activities in the company is a marketing strategy that must be set, presented to all employees, and sufficiently adaptable to changes in the market, as it is a condition for achieving business success.

Changing market conditions and customer preferences define the B2B market as extremely demanding, so companies need appropriate ICT support for business processes. Without timely information, the company's management cannot detect changing market conditions, so it is crucial to invest in ICT. In addition, it must ensure that the transfer of information within the systems is sufficiently fast and flexible and that all employees know how to use the ICT tools in order to develop digital marketing capabilities.

However, one of the important predecessors to introducing adequate ICT support is the appropriate marketing culture. On this basis, the companies can then define such strategies and ICT processes that support managers and employees in executing various marketing activities focused on meeting customers' needs. Altogether, the strong intertwining of relations between the provider and B2B customer decreases the danger of losing customers, which results in higher business performance. This is even more important to understand for firm management in emerging

markets since it seems that market-oriented culture in such markets is still a scarce resource, that can be a source of competitive advantage.

Therefore, management should integrate processes that enable market-oriented culture and, according to that, fine-tune the adequacy of the set strategies, quality assurance, and appropriate ICT support for the flow of information to create a competitive advantage in the market and enable successful business processes.

6.3. Limitations and possible further research

Possible further research should encompass a more detailed investigation of the relationship between ICT B2B marketing support and market orientation and introduce possible mediators. Since ICT support allows companies to develop new products and adapt their implementation (place, time, materials, color combinations, unique looks ...) to customers' needs, innovation processes could also be included in the research.

Studying the moderating role of market and technological turbulence on tested relationships in customer and supply markets in the current settings would also be worthwhile. In the context of market turbulences, the focus should be on the number of competitors in supply and customer markets, environmental acceptability, and customer demand for new products. In contrast, technological turbulence should focus on the uneven development of different activities and the diffusion of new technologies according to target customers and their location.

To exclude the possibility of common method bias we could collect data from multiple respondents (e.g., marketing and financial managers). Common method variance can have a potential effect since the answers were taken at the same time from single respondents. Also, the need for social approval may cause individuals to present themselves in a favorable light, regardless of their true feelings and attitudes regarding the topic (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Finally, this study considers companies from three selected countries (Slovenia, Serbia, And Austria), two from emerging markets and one from the developed market, and the results should therefore be considered in a specific context. It is also necessary to acknowledge the fact that those countries (especially Serbia) have different economic systems and thus also different possibilities and ways of doing business. In the future, it would make sense to carry out a survey for each individual industry in each participating country. Based on the results, the analysis could look for contact points and similarities between countries and industries.

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Appendix

Construct	Statement	Coefficient λ	CR	AVE
	B2B MARKETING STRATEGY			
Marketing strategy development	Our strategic objectives are clearly defined	0,685	0,843	0,574
	We have precisely defined how to achieve our strategic objectives.	0,779		
	The company strategy sets out our daily activities, and it is helpful in the decision-making process.	0,786		
	Very often we make in-depth analyses concerning our strategic opportunities in the market.	0,777		
Marketing strategy implementation	We use various tools for strategic planning (data collection, various analyses, meetings, model assumptions).	0,775	0,841	0,570
	Our employees are also involved in setting our strategic objectives.	0,722		
	The strategic importance of the implementation of B2B marketing is understood and supported by each employee in the company.	0,733		
	Different business functions in the company already anticipate possible deviations from plans and prepare scenarios of possible solutions in advance.	0,789		

χ^2 (19) = 191,506; $p < .05$; GFI = 0,931; NFI = 0,924; NNFI = 0,898; CFI = 0,931; RMSEA = 0,120;

(Continued)

(Continued)				
Construct	Statement	Coefficient λ	CR	AVE
	ICT B2B MARKETING SUPPORT			
ICT B2B MARKETING SUPPORT	We are often one of the first in our industry to notice Information Communication Technology changes and developments that may affect our business.	0,647	0,822	0,436
	We actively seek information regarding Information Communication Technology changes in the environment that are likely to affect our business.	0,699		
	There are constant undergoing processes in the company allowing us to obtain the information about new Information Communication Technology.	0,704		
	We regularly review the likely effect of Information Communication Technology changes on our business performance.	0,664		
	In general, we respond quickly to Information Communication Technology changes in the environment.	0,607		
	In general, we quickly start to use the new Information Communication Technology.	0,636		
χ^2 (9) = 12,315/9; p > .05; GFI = 0,994; NFI = 0,989; NNFI = 0,995; CFI = 0,997; RMSEA = 0,24				
	B2B MARKET ORIENTATION			
Customer orientation	Top management regularly discusses competitors' strengths and strategies.	0,889	0,794	0,567
	Our business objectives are driven primarily by customer satisfaction.	0,705		
	We measure customer satisfaction systematically and frequently.	0,643		
Competitor orientation	We are more customer-focused than our competitors.	0,873	0,872	0,630
	T We adapt our company's marketing mix to activities of competitors and market requirements.	0,799		
	Our salespeople regularly share information within our business concerning competitors' strategies.	0,780		
	Our top managers from every function regularly visit our current and prospective customers.	0,716		

(Continued)

Construct	Statement	Coefficient λ	CR	AVE
	B2B MARKET ORIENTATION			
Interfunctional orientation	All units (divisions, departments, etc.) are involved in preparation/formation of business plans and strategies of the company.	0,873	0,861	0,756
	Data on customer satisfaction are regularly disseminated at all levels in this business unit.	0,866		
χ^2/df (24) = 191,069/24; $p < .05$; GFI = 0,936; NFI = 0,939; NNFI = 0,919; CFI = 0,946; RMSEA = 0,105				
	B2B SERVICE QUALITY			
Internal oriented quality	The company has well-defined quality standards.	0,856	0,889	0,666
	The company has an internal control which regularly cares for quality control.	0,807		
	In order to provide adequate quality, all our employees attend trainings to improve quality standards.	0,802		
	Our company has standardised procedures to implement actions.	0,798		
Customer-oriented quality	Our company offers very fast and flexible services to customers.	0,835	0,808	0,678
	Our employees deliver promises made to our customers.	0,812		
Market power	Our customers are aware of their dependence on our company.	0,867	0,757	0,612
	The employees provide for improvement of quality performance in our company by sharing their knowledge, ideas, and experiences.	0,687		
χ^2 (17) = 158,277/17; $p < 0,05$; GFI = 0,944; NFI = 0,937; NNFI = 0,907; CFI = 0,943; RMSEA = 0,114;				
	COMPANY PERFORMANCE			
Company performance	Achieved volume of the value of sales in comparison with our major competitors.	0,798	0,774	0,464
	Employee productivity in comparison with our major competitors.	0,686		
	Total gross profit plus interest (EBIT—profit before taxation) compared to your major competitors.	0,624		
	Acquired market share compared to our major competitors.	0,600		
χ^2 (2) = 0,090/2; $p > .05$; GFI = 1,000; NFI = 1,000; NNFI = 1,009; CFI = 1,000; RMSEA = 0,000				



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