MARKETING RESOURCE CONFIGURATIONS: THE IMPACT ON MARKETING CREATIVITY AND CONTROL OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

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ABSTRACT

To leverage the collective knowledge within and outside of the firm, marketing processes are expanding across internal and external boundaries. However, the effects of these ever-expanding resource-configurations remains relatively understudied. This study's goal is to test the effects of various marketing-resource configurations on the creativity of marketing programs and the control over marketing resources. The results may highlight which configuration of marketing resources either reduce or enhance marketing's control of financial resources and which configuration may yield positive or deleterious effects on the creativity of marketing programs.

Keywords: Marketing resources, marketing creativity, uncertainty

Introduction

The literature describes the increasing complexity of marketing within the firm (Moorman and Day 2016). Marketing resources are extending beyond departmental boundaries and even outside of the organization (Webster Jr. et al. 2005). Depending on the organization, marketing resources could extend across its internal and external boundaries through the use of outsourcing activities to agencies or integrating cross-functional units into marketing processes. By expanding the location and source of these marketing resources, the firm hopes to leverage a unique configuration of internal and external marketing resources, thereby allowing market-oriented behaviors to flourish and enable competitive advantage (Gronroos 1994).

While the configuration of marketing resources continues to evolve, research on the subject is relatively underdeveloped (Webster Jr. et al. 2005); and the effects of these configurations remains underexplored. This research attempts to understand the varied configurations of marketing resources and their respective effects. Specifically, the study focuses upon two key research questions. First, the study seeks to understand the impact of extending marketing resources across multiple boundaries on marketing's creativity and marketing's control of resources. Second, the study seeks to better understand the contingent effects of the external environment and internal coordination mechanisms on these relationships.

Theoretical Background and Conceptual Model

The resource-based view (Barney 1991) provides the key tenets essential for the research study and the conceptual model. First, the resource-based view suggests that in order for the firm to garner competitive advantage, it must configure its resources in a manner that is valuable, distinct and relatively challenging for its competitors to duplicate (Barney 1991, Grant 1991). Hence, configuration applies to the structuring of critical marketing resources across multiple boundaries.

Second, the resource-based view highlights the importance of understanding the effects of critical marketing resources within the organization (Moorman and Day 2016). Hence, the conceptual model integrates two important internal effects of marketing resource configurations, that of marketing program creativity and the control over marketing resources.

Creativity of marketing programs is described as the extent to which unique and new marketing programs are developed (Verhoef and Leeflang 2009). Creativity is one form of innovation (Perry-Smith and Shalley 2003a), and one of two key purposes of the firm (Drucker 1954). Creativity has been shown to enable differentiation, which is critical for market performance and, at a more tactical level, positively influence performance (Suh et al., 2010). As such, it's reasonable to examine whether the configuration of marketing resources effects the creativity of marketing programs. The second outcome describes marketing's control over resources within the business unit. This element describes the extent to which marketing is viewed as a contributor to the business unit and receives significant resource allocations. As marketing resources are extended beyond the marketing function's boundaries, one must question whether this impacts the ability of function to garner financial resources.

Third, the resource-based view outlines the value of understanding the external environment and internal mechanisms in relation to the resource configuration. Specifically, the resource-based view outlines how a firm's internal resources "drive its performance in a dynamic competitive environment" (Collis and Montgomery 2008, p. 142). To model the interaction between the configuration of the business unit's marketing resources and its environment, we incorporate technological uncertainty into the conceptual model. Technological uncertainty describes the technological tumult within the environment (Jaworski and Kohli 1993) and provides us with an external factor consistently faced by managers.

Methodological Approach
Similar to other studies on marketing resources, we focus on the business unit (Krohmer et al. 2002). The study will use an online survey of key informants as the key informant approach has been used extensively within the marketing literature (Levav and McGraw 2009; Slater et al. 2007). The survey will use a combination of existing and new measures. When possible, existing measures of the constructs will be used or will be modified to test the hypotheses in the conceptual model. New measures will be developed for the configurations of marketing resources. The data will be examined for non-response bias and common method variance. Additionally, the two step approach will be utilized to assess reliability and validity (Anderson and Gerbing 1988).

Contributions
This study empirically tests the relationship between the configuration of marketing processes and two critical outcomes that of marketing program creativity and control over marketing resources. By doing so, the goal is to better understand the effects of a relevant marketing phenomena, when marketing resources extend beyond functional boundaries, and their commensurate effects.

References: Available upon request