



UNIVERSIDAD  
DE MÁLAGA



PhD. Programme in Economics and Business Management. University of  
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Faculty of Economics and Business Sciences. Faculty of Commerce and  
Management

## **DOCTORAL THESIS**

# **DIGITALLY SUPPORTED INTERNAL MARKET ORIENTATION: ANTECEDENTS, MEASUREMENT, REPERCUSSIONS FOR ORGANISATIONAL AND BUSINESS PERFORMANCE**

**Doctoral Thesis presented by:  
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**Programa de Doctorado en Economía y Empresa  
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Realizada bajo la tutorización de DRA. MARÍA DEL MAR MUÑOZ MARTOS y dirección de DR. JOSÉ LUIS RUIZ-ALBA ROBLEDY y DRA. MARÍA DEL MAR MUÑOZ MARTOS (si tuviera varios directores deberá hacer constar el nombre de todos)

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Authorizations for the dissertation of the doctoral thesis



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## INFORME DE LOS DIRECTORES PARA LA AUTORIZACIÓN DE DEFENSA DE TESIS DOCTORAL

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D. José Luis Ruiz-Alba Robledo y D.<sup>a</sup> María del Mar Muñoz Martos, directores de la Tesis Doctoral de D. Sergey Petrovich Kazakov, **informan favorablemente** la solicitud de autorización de defensa de la tesis con el título "*Digitally supported internal market orientation: antecedents, measurement, repercussions for organisational and business performance*", presentada por dicha doctoranda.

La citada tesis, que opta por la mención internacional, ha sido realizada por compendio de publicaciones y reúne todos los requisitos exigidos por el Programa de Doctorado en Economía y Empresa de la Universidad de Málaga. A este respecto, consideramos que la mencionada tesis supone una contribución de indudable relevancia científica, tanto en el ámbito Multicriterio, como en el campo de la Economía y de la Educación.

Y para que así conste y tenga los efectos oportunos, en Málaga a 16 de Marzo de 2021.

Fdo. José Luis Ruiz-Alba Robledo  
Reader in Marketing and Research  
Leader in the School of Management  
and Marketing at University of  
Westminster , London, UK

Fdo. María del Mar Muñoz Martos  
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## INFORME DEL TUTOR PARA LA AUTORIZACIÓN DE DEFENSA DE TESIS DOCTORAL

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D.<sup>a</sup> María del Mar Muñoz Martos, tutor de la Tesis Doctoral de D. Sergey Petrovich Kazakov, en el programa de doctorado en Economía y Empresa de la Universidad de Málaga, informa que:

Dado que codirige la tesis de la doctorando, con el título "*Digitally supported internal market orientation: antecedents, measurement, repercussions for organisational and business performance*", junto con D. José Luis Ruiz-Alba Robledo, se remite al informe elaborado por los dos, que se adjunta también a la documentación.

Y para que así conste y tenga los efectos oportunos, en Málaga a 16 de Marzo de 2021.

Fdo. María del Mar Muñoz Martos  
Profesora Titular de Universidad  
Departamento de Economía Aplicada  
(Matemáticas)  
Universidad de Málaga



Certificate of stay at a foreign University



**CERTIFICADO DE ESTANCIA EN UNIVERSIDAD O CENTRO DE INVESTIGACIÓN EXTRANJERO PARA LA OBTENCIÓN DE LA MENCIÓN INTERNACIONAL y PARA TESIS REALIZADAS EN RÉGIMEN DE COTUTELA**

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FECHA DE FIN DE LA ESTANCIA: (DD/MM/AAAA) 25/04/2019	

En LONDON, a16 de Marzo de 2020

Fdo:Jaafar El-Murad



Authorization of co-authors for the inclusion of articles



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**Authorization of co-authors for the inclusion of articles in a doctoral thesis made by publications.**

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The doctoral thesis developed by *Sergey Petrovich Kazakov*, with title "*Digitally supported internal market orientation: antecedents, measurement, repercussions for organisational and business performance*", is presented by compendium of articles.

Dr<sup>a</sup>. *María del Mar Muñoz Martos* appears as co-author of the publication listed below:

- Kazakov, S., Ruiz-Alba, J. L., and Muñoz, M. M. (2020). "The impact of information and communication technology and internal market orientation blending on organisational performance in small and medium enterprises". *European Journal of Management and Business Economics*. ahead-of-print, (DOI: 10.1108/EJMBE-04-2020-0068)

And so declares his acceptance to the inclusion of these articles in the aforementioned doctoral thesis, together with his resignation to use the same articles as part of another thesis.

*Málaga, on 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.*

Signed: *María del Mar Muñoz Martos*





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**Authorization of co-authors for the inclusion of articles in a doctoral thesis made by publications.**

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The doctoral thesis developed by *Sergey Petrovich Kazakov*, with title "*Digitally supported internal market orientation: antecedents, measurement, repercussions for organisational and business performance*", is presented by compendium of articles.

*Dr. José Luis Ruiz-Alba Robledo* appears as co-author of the publications listed below:

- Kazakov, S., Ruiz-Alba, J. L., and Muñoz, M. M. (2020). "The impact of information and communication technology and internal market orientation blending on organisational performance in small and medium enterprises". *European Journal of Management and Business Economics*. ahead-of-print, (DOI: 10.1108/EJMBE-04-2020-0068)
- Kazakov, S., Ruiz-Alba, J. (2020). "The nexus of internal market orientation and international HR management". *European Journal of International Management*. (Accepted 8 June 2020)

And so declares his acceptance to the inclusion of these articles in the aforementioned doctoral thesis, together with his resignation to use the same articles as part of another thesis.

*Málaga, on 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.*

Signed: *José Luis Ruiz-Alba Robledo*



Dr. José Luis Ruiz-Alba Robledo, Reader in Marketing and Research Leader in the School of Management and Marketing at University of Westminster,

and

Dra. María del Mar Muñoz Martos, Senior Lecturer in Applied Mathematics to the Economy and Business at University of Malaga.

Directors of this doctoral thesis:

**“DIGITALLY SUPPORTED INTERNAL MARKET  
ORIENTATION: ANTECEDENTS, MEASUREMENT,  
REPERCUSSIONS FOR ORGANISATIONAL AND BUSINESS  
PERFORMANCE”**

Authorise the presentation and public defence evaluating that the merits of the doctoral student Mr. Sergey Petrovich Kazakov can opt to achieve the degree of PhD.

Málaga, 16 of March, 2021

José Luis Ruiz-Alba Robledo

María del Mar Muñoz Martos

**Dedications**

To my parents

in loving memory

## Acknowledgements

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Second, I endlessly thank my esteemed supervisor **Professor Dr. José Luis Ruiz-Alba**, a very special and research dedicated academician at the University of Westminster, who found a like-minded person in me with regard to the internal market orientation field of study. I appreciate his immense support and guidance for my academic endeavours that have been lasting for five years by now. I value our friendship and collaboration very much. I am quite confident that the present doctorate project is just an onset for an array of seminal future research and impactful publications in top journals.

Third, I would like to convey a great degree of my appreciation to my second supervisor and tutor **Professor Dr. María del Mar Muñoz**, at the University of Malaga for her extraordinary tutelage and supervision all throughout the course duration of my PhD program. She has intensively coached me on the research process execution and navigated me through the program administrative procedures that sometimes were quite sophisticated for me as a foreign PhD student.

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**Professor Dr. Spiros Gounaris** at Strathclyde University, **Professor Dr. Ian Lings** at the Queensland University of Technology, and **Professor Dr. Achilleas Boukis** at the University of Sussex for their significant contributions in the internal market orientation theoretical concept and invaluable guidance from their publications on planning and completing this thesis;

**Mr. José Luis González Porras** for his support by giving meaningful advice, sharing data, insights and information extremely useful for the PhD program routine procedures accomplishment.

In addition, I want to thank the **University of Malaga**, especially **the Faculty of Economics and Business Sciences** and **Faculty of Commerce and Management**, for granting me an opportunity to enter and study in the high-quality doctorate program, for arming me with advanced academic skills and expertise, and for all the support I have enjoyed each day in these four years of my program.



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**Resumen de la tesis doctoral titulada «Orientación al mercado interno con soporte digital: antecedentes, medición, repercusiones para el desempeño organizacional y empresarial» [Digitally Supported Internal Market Orientation: Antecedents, Measurement, Repercussions for Organisational and Business Performance]**

El presente resumen describe una tesis doctoral que se han realizado a través del compendio de artículos publicados en revistas académicas, incluidas European Journal of Family Business, European Journal of Management and Business Economics y European Journal of International Management.

Los trabajos publicados y el tema de la investigación doctoral se centran en el concepto de Orientación al Mercado Interno. En consecuencia, este marco se basa en una combinación de conceptos de orientación al mercado y marketing interno. El concepto de Orientación al Mercado es el resultado de la búsqueda del mecanismo y pilares de implementación del nuevo concepto de marketing sobre los elementos de comportamiento organizacional y las coordenadas de enfoque estratégico. En conjunto, brindan herramientas y visión para que las empresas mejoren y mantengan su desempeño (Kohli y Jaworski, 1990; Narver y Slater, 1990). La orientación al mercado es la cultura corporativa organizacional que ayuda a las organizaciones a crear los modelos de comportamiento más prácticos y eficientes, relevantes tanto para los empleados individuales como para toda la organización, para crear excelencia en la creación de valor agregado y su entrega a los clientes (Deshpandé y Farley, 1999). Como resultado, la orientación al mercado facilita alcanzar un mayor grado de desempeño empresarial a través del valor agregado y las preferencias del cliente de los productos y

servicios de la empresa frente a la competencia (Kara et al., 2005).

El primer enfoque de la orientación al mercado surge de la generación e implementación de tres componentes de comportamiento organizacional: orientación al cliente, orientación a la competencia y coordinación interfuncional, respaldada por dos criterios de toma de decisiones: enfoque a largo plazo y la rentabilidad de la empresa (marco MKTOR: Narver y Slater, 1990). El énfasis en los clientes y competidores determina el compromiso de la empresa con la inteligencia de mercado, lo que lleva a datos de clientes y competidores. Una característica distintiva del concepto de orientación al mercado es que estos datos y toda la información relevante del mercado se difunden a través de la organización, involucrando a todos los departamentos y a cada función comercial o empleado individual. La coordinación interfuncional se basa en información obtenida de clientes y competidores siguiendo la inteligencia de mercado. También, La coordinación interfuncional obedece a los esfuerzos coordinados realizados por todos los departamentos de la empresa para crear y ofrecer un valor superior al cliente (Auh y Menguc, 2005; Ruizalba et al., 2019). Nuevamente, debe tenerse en cuenta que la implementación de la orientación al mercado no es solo responsabilidad exclusiva del departamento de marketing.

Otro modelo de la orientación al mercado sugiere la promulgación de tres componentes de comportamiento organizacional para implementar la orientación al mercado en la empresa. Estos componentes comprenden una recopilación de información de mercado, su difusión y la creación coordinada de valor para los consumidores con un enfoque en la rentabilidad a largo plazo (marco MARKOR: Kohli y Jaworski, 1990, Kohli et al., 1993).

El marketing interno es otro elemento fundamental de la orientación al mercado interno. Se concentra principalmente en los empleados, considerándolos como clientes de la empresa y no considerándolos como la clientela habitual. Otras partes interesadas o actores internos relevantes importantes para una empresa también están sujetos al marketing interno (Sasser y

Albeit, 1976; Berry, 1981). El marketing interno recibió reconocimiento en el ámbito académico tras una conceptualización de los fenómenos de "servitización" que implicaban la transformación de los empleados en proveedores del valor de los servicios de la empresa para los clientes y los compañeros de trabajo (Vandermerwe y Rada, 1988). Los procesos de servicio están a cargo de humanos y, por lo tanto, no son fácilmente reproducibles.

Inicialmente, se suponía que el concepto clásico de orientación al mercado delineado anteriormente equiparía a las organizaciones con elementos de comportamiento organizacional que ayudaran a las empresas a alinear sus estrategias de marketing con dos tipos de entidades externas, incluidos clientes y competidores (Kohli y Jaworski, 1990; Narver y Slater, 1990). Dicho esto, los primeros conceptos convencionales comprendían elementos intrínsecos a una organización, por ejemplo, disseminación de inteligencia y respuesta organizacional, que son críticos para la implementación de la orientación al mercado (Kohli y Jaworski, 1990). Al mismo tiempo, el concepto de marketing interno y marca ganó impulso en el interés de los académicos y dio lugar a una creciente variedad de publicaciones. Sin embargo, es relevante mencionar que la proliferación de literatura sobre marketing interno también reveló algunas críticas hacia el marketing interno.

La segunda generación de investigadores yuxtapuso la orientación al mercado con el marketing interno fusionando sus ámbitos externo e interno, lo que dio inicio a la conceptualización de la orientación al mercado interno (Lings, 2004; Gounaris, 2006; Lings y Greenley, 2009). La orientación al mercado interno es un concepto evolutivo que reemplaza al marketing interno. Se trata de un enfoque novedoso y avanzado para respaldar la percepción positiva de una empresa entre los empleados y crear un entorno interno favorable para los empleados con el objetivo de aumentar su desempeño a través de la consecución de la satisfacción laboral, el compromiso y la lealtad de los empleados (Rodrigues y Carlos Pinho, 2012). La orientación al mercado interior es un algoritmo de "cómo hacer" preciso que ayuda

a las empresas a adoptar el concepto de marketing interno. En esta línea,

El marco conceptual de la orientación al mercado interior abarca tres bloques de construcción: inteligencia del entorno de trabajo, comunicaciones interiores y estrategias de gestión (Lings, 2004; Gounaris, 2006). Estos constructos circunscriben elementos de comportamiento organizacional a los que se hace referencia como antecedentes de orientación al mercado interno. La implementación de la orientación al mercado interno es factible en la empresa si la organización promulga la secuencia del ciclo de gestión de la orientación al mercado interno, desde la inteligencia del entorno de trabajo hasta el desarrollo y ejecución de estrategias de gestión receptivas (Gounaris, 2010). Los investigadores notaron una similitud entre el marco de orientación al mercado interno y el concepto de orientación al mercado convencional (Rodrigues y Carlos Pinho, 2012). Es decir, La orientación al mercado interno es una huella del enfoque del comportamiento organizacional para la orientación al mercado, o, en otras palabras, replica el marco MARKOR acuñado por Kohli y Jaworski (1990) y desarrollado por Kohli et al. (1993).

La implementación de la orientación al mercado interior comienza con la ejecución de la inteligencia del entorno de trabajo que tiene dos objetivos. El primer objetivo es obtener información relevante sobre el intercambio de recursos humanos en el mercado laboral. Esta inteligencia es fundamental para comprender y percibir el mercado laboral intrínseco y la adecuación de los recursos humanos de la empresa a las condiciones actuales del mercado laboral externo (Lings y Greenley, 2009). Tal examen ayuda a comprender, por ejemplo, si las políticas de remuneración y beneficios de la empresa son suficientes para los términos y estándares del mercado externo; y si el nivel de habilidades y competencias del personal de la firma cumple con la experiencia de la fuerza laboral disponible en el mercado laboral externo. El segundo objetivo de la implementación de la inteligencia del entorno laboral se refiere al examen del mercado laboral interno. Literalmente, el segundo objetivo de la inteligencia del

entorno de trabajo se refiere a la adquisición de conocimientos de los empleados de la empresa sobre sus percepciones del clima y las condiciones laborales intrínsecas, la satisfacción con el apoyo recibido de los gerentes y compañeros de trabajo, la satisfacción laboral y otras facetas de su empleo en la empresa. firme (Gounaris, 2006).

Las comunicaciones interiores son reconocidas como el segundo elemento constructivo de la orientación al mercado interior. Abarca tres tipos básicos de actividades internas en el dominio de las comunicaciones internas, a saber, (a) comunicaciones corporativas que mantienen informado al personal de la empresa sobre las reglas, políticas, anuncios de trabajo y puestos vacantes disponibles de la empresa; (b) comentarios de rutina sobre diversos asuntos laborales recibidos de la dirección; y (c) la difusión interdepartamental de los datos de inteligencia generados por el examen del entorno de trabajo descrito anteriormente (Rodrigues y Carlos Pinho, 2012; Ruizalba et al., 2014). Las reuniones de incentivos y los eventos corporativos también pueden considerarse como un medio importante de comunicación interior bajo el paraguas de la orientación del mercado interior (Udriyah et al., 2019).

El tercer componente de la combinación de orientación al mercado interno es pertinente a las estrategias de gestión reactivas. Estas estrategias indican la última fase del ciclo de orientación del mercado interno y determinan los efectos de su implementación en la empresa. Al planificar estrategias de respuesta, las empresas deben tener en cuenta los conocimientos revelados después del análisis de inteligencia. Es decir, los planes tácticos deben abarcar el reclutamiento efectivo de talentos y la inducción de los nuevos empleados, la capacitación y el desarrollo del personal, la propuesta de sistemas adecuados de recompensas y beneficios complementarios, actividades en el dominio de las comunicaciones interiores y otros dominios relevantes de la orientación del mercado interno. Las estrategias de respuesta deben cumplir con las metas y objetivos corporativos (Rodrigues y Carlos Pinho, 2012). Más importante, la implementación de la orientación al mercado interno crea una variedad de efectos que son

significativos para la empresa (Gounaris, 2006). Los efectos, también denominados consecuencias de la orientación al mercado interior, han sido un tema profusamente estudiado hasta hace poco tiempo (Lings, 2004; Gounaris, 2006, 2008; Lings y Greenley, 2009; Boukis et al., 2015; Boukis, 2019). La esencia y la medición de los efectos de la orientación del mercado interno están estrechamente asociados con las nociones de desempeño organizacional y empresarial (Gounaris et al., 2010).

Basado en la investigación previa en el dominio de la orientación al mercado interno (Lings, 2004; Gounaris 2006, 2008; Gounaris et al., 2010; 2020; Lings y Greenley, 2009; Tortosa et al., 2010; Ruizalba et al., 2014 , 2016, 2019; Edo et al., 2015; Boukis et al., 2015, Boukis, 2019) y en base a las brechas identificadas en el estado actual de los estudios, se plantearon dos preguntas de investigación global que incluyen (1) «¿Cuáles son las antecedentes de un marco de orientación del mercado interior impulsado por las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación y aplicado en diversos entornos? », y (2)« ¿Cómo ayuda el marco de orientación al mercado interior aplicado por las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación a las organizaciones que operan en diversos entornos a respaldar su organización y ¿el rendimiento del negocio?".

Para especificar la lógica y la dirección del proyecto de investigación, estas preguntas de investigación globales o generales se desarrollaron posteriormente de forma más específica en 10 preguntas de investigación de orden inferior, mientras que cada pregunta de investigación global recibió 5 preguntas de investigación subordinadas en su dominio. El vínculo de las preguntas de investigación subordinadas y generales y las publicaciones relevantes que las abordan se describe en la Tabla 1.1, ubicada en la página 51 del manuscrito de tesis.

El manuscrito de tesis comienza con una Introducción que presenta las nociones y los constructos teóricos relevantes para el campo de estudio. Además, la sesión Introducción explica una brecha de investigación, el propósito del estudio y sus objetivos, así como

operacionaliza preguntas de investigación globales y subordinadas. El resto del manuscrito de tesis se desarrolla en 6 Capítulos que, en consecuencia, dan a conocer el avance del proyecto de investigación. En esta línea, los Capítulos 2, 3, 4 comprenden una serie de tres publicaciones que forman la base principal de la tesis. El capítulo 5 explica el resumen y discusión de los hallazgos globales que se derivan del proyecto de investigación formado por tres estudios. El capítulo 6 especula sobre las implicaciones teóricas y de gestión que surgen de la investigación,

### **1. Presentación de publicaciones y explicación de su vinculación con la unidad temática**

En medio del progreso de la presente investigación en torno a abordar las preguntas de investigación auxiliares mencionadas anteriormente, se han publicado tres artículos en revistas académicas en una secuencia de la siguiente manera:

Publicación 1: Kazakov, S. (2019). “Revisando la orientación del mercado interior en las empresas familiares”. *Revista europea de la empresa familiar*, vol. 9, núm. 1, págs. 5-20 [Kazakov, S. (2019). “Revisiting internal market orientation in family firms”. *European Journal of Family Business*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 5-20];

Publicación 2: Kazakov, S., Ruiz-Alba, JL y Muñoz, MM (2020). “El impacto de la combinación de la tecnología de la información y las comunicaciones y la orientación del mercado interno en el desempeño organizacional en las pequeñas y medianas empresas”, *Revista europea de economía empresarial y de gestión*. Vol. 30 No. 2, pp. 129-151, DOI: 10.1108 / EJMBE-04-2020-0068. [Kazakov, S., Ruiz-Alba, J. L., and Muñoz, M. M. (2020). “The impact of information and communication technology and internal market orientation blending on organisational performance in

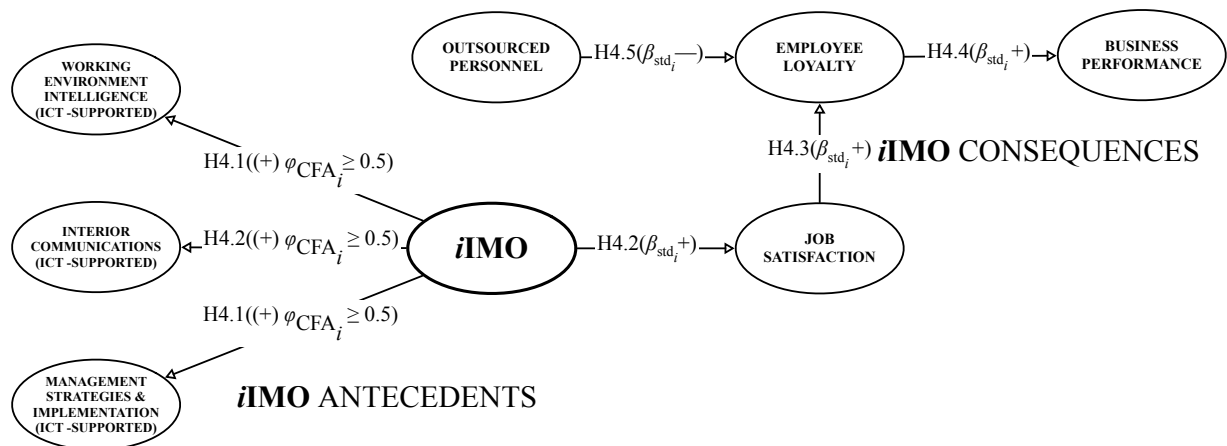
small and medium enterprises”. *European Journal of Management and Business Economics*. Vol. 30 No. 2, pp. 129-151, DOI: 10.1108 / EJMBE-04-2020-0068]. y,

Publicación 3: Kazakov, S., Ruiz-Alba, J. (2020). “El nexo de la orientación al mercado interior y la gestión internacional de RRHH”. *Revista europea de gestión internacional*. (En prensa, DOI: 10.1504/EJIM.2021.10037605) [Kazakov, S., Ruiz-Alba, J. (2020). “The nexus of internal market orientation and international HR management”. *European Journal of International Management*. (In press, DOI: 10.1504/EJIM.2021.10037605)].

Con respecto a la vinculación de las publicaciones con el propósito y los objetivos de la investigación, las preguntas de investigación generales y auxiliares y la integridad de la esencia interna de los artículos, la Publicación 1 es un documento conceptual e implica un punto de partida para nuestra investigación. Proporciona una revisión completa de la literatura anterior y contempla un estado actual de la teoría relevante para la orientación al mercado, el marketing interno y la orientación al mercado interno. En la Publicación 1, delineamos nuestro discernimiento de la evolución de la orientación del mercado interno y conceptualizamos la arquitectura de orientación del mercado interno considerando las condiciones comerciales actuales, el estado del entorno social y económico y una contemplación de las tecnologías modernas actualmente disponibles para las empresas. Basado en la revisión de la literatura y basado en los resultados del estudio conceptual, la Publicación 1 propone un nuevo marco de orientación del mercado interior (*i*IMO, Fig. 1) que considera y refleja los cambios globales significativos para las empresas. El resultado principal del estudio presentado en la Publicación 1 es una introducción conceptual de construcciones estructurales novedosas, incluidas las tecnologías de la comunicación de la información y el personal subcontratado esencial para la combinación contemporánea del concepto de orientación al mercado interno. Además, la

Publicación 1 delinea a fondo un enfoque metodológico designado para los estudios empíricos aclarados en las Publicaciones 2 y 3. incluidas las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación y el personal subcontratado, esenciales para la combinación contemporánea del concepto de orientación al mercado interior. Además, la Publicación 1 delinea minuciosamente un enfoque metodológico designado para los estudios empíricos aclarados en las Publicaciones 2 y 3. incluidas las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación y el personal subcontratado, esenciales para la combinación contemporánea del concepto de orientación al mercado interior. Además, la Publicación 1 delinea minuciosamente un enfoque metodológico designado para los estudios empíricos aclarados en las Publicaciones 2 y 3.

Junto con el primer artículo de una fila de investigación, la Publicación 2 investiga más a fondo el concepto desarrollado de orientación al mercado interno y sus impactos en el desempeño organizacional. Este último comprende la satisfacción laboral y la lealtad de los empleados, mientras que la lealtad de los empleados se posiciona como un producto de la satisfacción laboral después de que se implemente la orientación al mercado interno en la empresa. Esta publicación articula conceptualmente el desarrollo de nuestro marco sobre la teoría de las relaciones humanas acuñada por Mayo (1933). Esta teoría sirvió para una mayor justificación del constructo de comunicaciones internas. Otra reconocida postulación de la teoría administrativa de Fayol (1918) acomodó la construcción de bases para una propuesta de aplicación secuencial de tres comportamientos organizacionales para implementar la orientación del mercado interno en la empresa.



**Figura 1. marco teórico iMO**

En la Publicación 2, corroboramos empíricamente que las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación pueden reforzar la implementación de la orientación al mercado interno. Otros hallazgos derivados del estudio determinaron los efectos positivos sobre el desempeño organizacional que se hacen evidentes luego de la implementación de la orientación al mercado interno con soporte digital. Estos resultados demuestran evidencia de las capacidades del marco de orientación del mercado interno sugerido para mantener el desempeño organizacional y la plausibilidad de los beneficios del concepto para la operacionalización por parte de las empresas.

La Publicación 3 examina más a fondo el concepto desarrollado de orientación al mercado interior aplicado por las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación. Con el puente de la Publicación 1, la investigación presentada en este documento investiga y aclara el desempeño empresarial como una consecuencia última de la implementación de la orientación al mercado interno. Un estudio empírico que esta vez se completó en el marco de la investigación de la Publicación 3 también respaldó la viabilidad del marco de orientación al mercado interno desarrollado. Además, el mismo estudio también afirmó los efectos positivos que genera la orientación al mercado interno sobre el desempeño empresarial a través del constructo de

desempeño organizacional.

En resumen, una sinopsis sucinta del esquema de la lógica de la investigación incluyó un (1) examen del concepto de orientación del mercado interno y la adecuación de sus antecedentes a las condiciones y el entorno comerciales actuales (Publicación 1); (2) el establecimiento de una justificación para la instilación de tecnologías de la información y la comunicación y como estas tecnologías implican una fuerza impulsora que fomenta los efectos de orientación del mercado interior en la actualidad (Publicación 1); (3) desarrollo y propuesta del marco conceptual completo de orientación al mercado interior (Publicación 1); (4) delineación del enfoque metodológico para estudios empíricos dirigidos a la validación del marco propuesto (Publicación 1); (5) elaboración del marco de orientación del mercado interior y validación de sus antecedentes en varios contextos incluidos en la muestra (Publicación 2 y Publicación 3); (6) verificación empírica de los efectos positivos de la implementación del concepto de orientación al mercado interior propuesto sobre el desempeño organizacional y empresarial en varios contextos incluidos en la muestra (Publicación 2 y Publicación 3); (7) discusión sobre la contribución teórica que es significativa para la literatura de orientación al mercado interior (Publicación 2 y Publicación 3); (8) presentación de las implicaciones gerenciales que surgen de los hallazgos de la investigación empírica obtenidos (Publicación 2 y Publicación 3); y, finalmente, (9) revelar las limitaciones de investigación señaladas y la propuesta de vías y agenda para los estudios futuros en el ámbito de la orientación al mercado interior (Publicación 2 y Publicación 3).

## **2. Resultados y conclusiones mundiales derivados de la investigación**

Como señalamos anteriormente, la trama de esta investigación fue revisar los elementos convencionales del comportamiento organizacional que comprenden y activan la orientación del mercado interno, luego engendrar y validar empíricamente un modelo conceptual ampliado

de orientación al mercado interno que incorpora tecnologías de la información y la comunicación. En este estudio, en primer lugar, pretendíamos examinar si el concepto convencional de orientación al mercado interno acuñado por Lings (2000, 2004), Lings y Greenley (2009) y más avanzado por Gounaris (2006, 2008), Gounaris et al. (2010, 2020) y Ruizalba et al., (2014) sigue siendo adecuado hasta el día de hoy y puede operacionalizarse en empresas modernas. En segundo lugar, nuestra investigación tuvo como objetivo atestiguar que las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación contemporáneas pueden reforzar y fortalecer los constructos tradicionales de comportamiento organizacional de la orientación al mercado interno. Nuestro tercer objetivo estaba relacionado con la garantía de los efectos positivos generados por la implementación del concepto de orientación al mercado interno con soporte digital. Es decir, la promulgación del concepto de orientación al mercado interno es un proxy para crear y mantener el desempeño organizacional y comercial en la empresa. Los objetivos manifestados del estudio se lograron a través del progreso de la investigación que comprende tres fases clave. Como señalamos anteriormente, estas fases de investigación cronológica están representadas por tres publicaciones secuenciales. Nuestro tercer objetivo estaba relacionado con la garantía de los efectos positivos generados por la implementación del concepto de orientación al mercado interno con soporte digital. Es decir, la promulgación del concepto de orientación al mercado interno es un proxy para crear y mantener el desempeño organizacional y comercial en la empresa. Los objetivos manifestados del estudio se lograron a través del progreso de la investigación que comprende tres fases clave. Como señalamos anteriormente, estas fases de investigación cronológica están representadas por tres publicaciones secuenciales. Nuestro tercer objetivo estaba relacionado con la garantía de los efectos positivos generados por la implementación del concepto de orientación al mercado interno con soporte digital. Es decir, la promulgación del concepto de orientación al mercado interno es un proxy para crear y mantener el desempeño organizacional y comercial en la

empresa. Los objetivos manifestados del estudio se lograron a través del progreso de la investigación que comprende tres fases clave. Como señalamos anteriormente, estas fases de investigación cronológica están representadas por tres publicaciones secuenciales.

La Publicación 1 implica un estudio conceptual y sirve como inicio para un proyecto de investigación. Abarca una revisión de la literatura temática sobre la orientación del mercado interno y analiza lo que la teoría ha logrado hasta ahora en este campo particular de investigación. En esta Publicación, contemplamos por primera vez en el proceso de realización de proyectos de investigación los efectos que el avance de las tecnologías produce en las empresas en la era actual. Además, en la misma Publicación, también deliberamos y aclaramos las condiciones y realidades actuales en las que se operan las empresas. Al yuxtaponer un cuerpo de teoría existente con las tendencias, prácticas comerciales y tecnologías actuales, revisamos el paradigma de orientación del mercado interno y postulamos nuestra visión de su conceptualización que, en nuestra opinión,

Acuñamos una combinación de los constructos convencionales de orientación al mercado interno de inteligencia del entorno de trabajo, comunicaciones interiores y estrategias de gestión con tecnologías de la información y la comunicación en el marco conceptual desarrollado. El concepto propuesto sitúa las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación como motor de activación y aplicación más eficaz de la orientación del mercado interior en una empresa. Al abordar las prácticas de tendencia que las empresas utilizan ampliamente, también proponemos un constructo estructural de personal subcontratado como una variable interina que modera los efectos de los antecedentes de orientación al mercado interno sobre sus consecuencias derivadas de la implementación del concepto *i*IMO. El estudio conceptual de la Publicación 1 también sugiere la inclusión de constructos de desempeño organizacional y desempeño empresarial. Estas variables de constructo dependiente son necesarias para medir los efectos de la implementación de la orientación del mercado interno en una empresa.

Además, el desempeño organizacional y las construcciones de desempeño empresarial se colocan secuencialmente en el modelo desarrollado donde el desempeño organizacional precede y media el desempeño empresarial resultante de la ejecución de la orientación del mercado interno.

Además, la Publicación conceptual 1 delinea los detalles de nuestro enfoque metodológico utilizado para escudriñar y validar el concepto desarrollado mediante la realización de dos estudios empíricos posteriores. Exhibimos estas investigaciones publicadas en los Capítulos 3 y 4 del manuscrito de tesis.

Vinculada con el documento conceptual antes descrito, la segunda Publicación 2 desarrolla más las disposiciones teóricas del concepto de orientación al mercado interior propuesto. En la Publicación 2, analizamos la literatura complementaria para defender nuestros supuestos y visión del marco conceptual desarrollado de orientación al mercado interno. En esta línea, abordamos la literatura más reciente y relevante temática sobre la vinculación y diferencias entre la orientación al mercado interno y el marketing interno; adopción de tecnologías de la información y la comunicación; y también se centró en el conjunto existente de estudios que han examinado la aplicación de la orientación al mercado interno en los entornos de investigación de las pequeñas y medianas empresas.

La Publicación 2 presenta una investigación empírica de la integridad del concepto de orientación al mercado interno propuesto. Además, en el mismo estudio, evaluamos los efectos de la implementación del concepto de orientación al mercado interno sobre el desempeño organizacional. Para validar nuestras suposiciones, utilizamos entornos de investigación de pequeñas y medianas empresas que operan en la Federación de Rusia y encuestamos a 316 empleados bajo el procedimiento de muestreo de múltiples etapas.

Tras la aplicación del análisis factorial confirmatorio como parte del procedimiento estadístico de modelado de ecuaciones estructurales, los resultados de este estudio revelaron

un nivel aceptable general de validez de constructo del modelo *i*IMO sugerido. Este hallazgo significa la pertinencia e idoneidad de las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación para combinar elementos convencionales de orientación al mercado interior. No obstante, dos constructos auxiliares de capacitación / desarrollo de personal y segmentación de personal incluidos inicialmente en el modelo conceptual bajo el paraguas del constructo de segundo orden de desarrollo e implementación de estrategias de gestión no cumplieron con los valores umbral de las mediciones de validez convergente y discriminante. En consecuencia, los eliminamos del modelo. Con respecto a este hallazgo, postulamos que los conceptos de formación / desarrollo del personal y de segmentación del personal pueden resultar redundantes en algunos contextos en los que se aplica el concepto de orientación al mercado interior propuesto. Las pequeñas y medianas empresas entran en esta categoría, principalmente debido al tamaño de su personal y la baja capacidad financiera.

Además, un estudio empírico descrito en la Publicación 2 proporcionó una amplia evidencia de los efectos positivos de *i*IMO en el desempeño organizacional. Los resultados del análisis de datos de acuerdo con la metodología desarrollada en la Publicación 2 revelaron un efecto directo notable que genera la implementación del concepto *i*IMO desarrollado sobre la satisfacción laboral de los empleados en las pequeñas y medianas empresas. El otro hallazgo que surge del estudio de la Publicación 2 demostró que la implementación del concepto *i*IMO de orientación al mercado interno sugerido afecta directamente la lealtad de los empleados. Además, además de la determinada influencia positiva directa de la satisfacción laboral en la lealtad de los empleados, el mismo estudio también proporcionó una amplia evidencia empírica de los efectos positivos indirectos del *i*IMO sobre la satisfacción laboral y la lealtad de los empleados. Curiosamente, Según los resultados del estudio en la Publicación 2, el valor del coeficiente de efecto positivo directo de la satisfacción laboral sobre la lealtad de los empleados se asemeja al valor del resultado indirecto positivo generado por la implementación del

concepto *i*IMO sobre la lealtad de los empleados. Los hallazgos consolidados que surgen del estudio empírico delineado en la Publicación 2 proporcionaron bases sólidas para postular la plausibilidad del despliegue del concepto *i*IMO desarrollado en pequeñas y medianas empresas y corroboraron las ventajas tangibles de la implementación de *i*IMO en este tipo de empresas.

La Publicación 3 aclara el concepto de *i*IMO desarrollado y aborda cuestiones de investigación relevantes para la variable de construcción endógena del desempeño empresarial como resultado final de la implementación de *i*IMO. Es más, en este sentido, examinamos el desempeño empresarial como un producto del desempeño organizacional en la Publicación 3. En medio de enmarcar el plan para este estudio en particular, pretendíamos verificar el concepto desarrollado de orientación al mercado interno en entornos distintos a los de pequeña y mediana escala. empresas que fueron examinadas bajo el estudio en la Publicación 2. Dicho esto, nuestro objetivo fue medir su aplicabilidad y relevancia en diferentes contextos porque ciertamente ayuda en la generalizabilidad del marco *i*IMO propuesto. En esta vena, En medio de la recopilación y revisión de la literatura relevante para la gestión de recursos humanos internacional, también notamos en el cuerpo de investigación existente que las corporaciones multinacionales son propensas a emplear personal externo subcontratado. Este tipo de contratación se ha convertido en una práctica común de gestión de recursos humanos para este tipo de empresas. Como investigaciones anteriores han señalado los impactos que genera el personal subcontratado en la satisfacción laboral percibida por los empleados habituales, en este estudio también investigamos un efecto moderador de la contratación de empleados subcontratados sobre la vinculación entre *i*IMO y la satisfacción laboral de los empleados habituales. Hasta donde sabemos, Para lograr estos dos objetivos principales de investigación mencionados anteriormente, desarrollamos una metodología de investigación convincente para el estudio empírico que incluía un conjunto de instrumentos para recopilar datos esenciales para abordar las preguntas de investigación planteadas en este estudio. En esta línea,

actualizamos un cuestionario desarrollado anteriormente para el estudio descrito en la Publicación 2 incorporando un conjunto de preguntas relevantes para el personal subcontratado y las construcciones de desempeño empresarial. La metodología desarrollada ayudó a obtener una muestra de 650 empleados encuestados que trabajaban en 147 empresas multinacionales en la Federación de Rusia. Como estas organizaciones a menudo varían en número de empleados, Establecimos un procedimiento para encuestar a cinco empleados por una empresa abarcada para asegurar una distribución uniforme de la muestra y un grado aceptable de representación de organizaciones multinacionales en nuestra investigación. Más o menos, tal enfoque facilitó un examen de las diferentes culturas, industrias y diferentes prácticas de gestión de la gestión internacional de recursos humanos en nuestra investigación.

Los resultados del análisis de datos recopilados en el estudio de la Publicación 3 facilitaron el logro de los hallazgos articulados y la obtención de conclusiones similares a los hallazgos planteados en el estudio anterior, como se describió anteriormente con respecto a la Publicación 2. Evidenciamos que, al principio, *iIMO* está determinado una combinación de tres elementos de comportamiento de la organización, incluida la inteligencia del entorno de trabajo, las comunicaciones internas y las estrategias de gestión aplicadas por las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación; y, en segundo lugar, *iIMO* influye positivamente en el desempeño organizacional de la empresa. Sin embargo, como el estudio de la Publicación 3 tenía un propósito y objetivos más amplios, es esencial especular sobre los hallazgos únicos relevantes para esta investigación en particular.

En esta línea, encontramos evidencia empírica del resultado positivo generado por el desempeño organizacional impulsado por *iIMO* sobre el desempeño empresarial en el contexto de firmas multinacionales, mientras que la hipótesis resultante no puede ser rechazada. Este hallazgo señala el efecto positivo absoluto de la implementación del nuevo concepto *iIMO* y es esencial para las empresas porque el desempeño comercial es reconocido como la medida

más crítica de la condición y las perspectivas de una organización. Otro hallazgo importante que surge de la Publicación 3 es relevante para la contratación y contratación de personal subcontratado. Nuestro estudio no puede confirmar el posible impacto negativo del empleo de personal subcontratado para la satisfacción laboral de los empleados habituales en empresas multinacionales en esta línea. Este resultado particular significa que, además de muchas otras comodidades y beneficios,

Por lo tanto, los resultados empíricos del estudio presentado en la Publicación 3 confirmaron inequívocamente la viabilidad del concepto *i*IMO desarrollado en el contexto de las corporaciones multinacionales. Los hallazgos de este estudio también revelaron evidencia de que *i*IMO es plausible para su incorporación en las prácticas internacionales de gestión de recursos humanos.

### **3 Conclusiones**

La investigación de doctorado completada que comprende tres estudios secuenciales representa una contribución sustancial en la teoría del marketing, especialmente para el campo de estudios donde se examinan la orientación al mercado y la orientación al mercado interno. El primer estudio de esta secuencia denota una conceptualización de los avances teóricos del campo y propone inicialmente un marco teórico de orientación al mercado interno. En medio del inicio del proyecto de investigación, aspiramos a desarrollar un marco de orientación al mercado interno mejorado que se ajuste a la era actual de digitalización holística y que también sea adecuado a las condiciones actuales de funcionamiento de las organizaciones empresariales.

Como principal implicación de la teoría del marketing, nuestra investigación en varias fases contribuye a la teoría del marketing existente mediante el discernimiento y la justificación de la integración de la tecnología de la información y las comunicaciones en los elementos

estructurales antecedentes convencionales de la orientación del mercado interno. Con base en los hallazgos revelados por los estudios presentados en las Publicaciones 2 y 3, postulamos que las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación son importantes para los elementos de comportamiento organizacional que comprenden la orientación del mercado interno. Las tecnologías avanzadas son necesarias para mantener la activación e implementación del concepto de orientación al mercado interior en las condiciones comerciales actuales. Con esta contribución, afirmamos la validez de los principios de orientación del mercado interno, ya que los hallazgos de nuestra investigación están en línea con estudios anteriores (Lings, 2006; Gounaris, 2006; Lings y Greenley, 2009; Gounaris et al., 2010; Ruizalba et al., 2014). Además, los hallazgos de la investigación relevantes para esta contribución coinciden con los resultados de los estudios que examinan el impacto de la digitalización en las empresas (AlBar y Hoque, 2019; Chertchom et al., 2019; Eze et al., 2019; Ab Wahab et al., 2020 y otros).

Los hallazgos establecidos por la investigación completa son relevantes para las prácticas gerenciales. Estos resultados de investigación son importantes para los propietarios de empresas, gerentes contratados y otras partes interesadas responsables de ejecutar operaciones comerciales en pequeñas, medianas empresas y organizaciones comerciales multinacionales. Según los resultados de los dos estudios (Publicaciones 2 y 3), el enfoque propuesto para desarrollar e implementar la orientación al mercado interior es una solución adecuada para los entornos de las pequeñas y medianas empresas. Sin embargo, también puede resultar práctico para las empresas multinacionales que operan sus oficinas en el extranjero. En nuestra opinión, los hallazgos de nuestros estudios son esenciales para las organizaciones comerciales de varios tipos porque los propietarios y gerentes de negocios pueden beneficiarse de la adopción del concepto de orientación al mercado interno sugerido de varias maneras.

Este proyecto de doctorado que consta de tres estudios secuenciales no está exento de una serie de limitaciones de investigación delineadas en el capítulo final de la tesis. La limitación

crítica de la investigación descubierta fue la cuestión metodológica relevante para una pregunta de investigación auxiliar. En este sentido, enfrentamos cierta reticencia a participar en la encuesta durante la recopilación de datos, ya que solo un número limitado de empresas familiares respondió a nuestra llamada. Las limitaciones antes mencionadas y otras mencionadas son útiles en el posicionamiento de la agenda de investigación propuesta que describimos en las observaciones finales de la tesis.

En esta línea, sugerimos que los futuros investigadores investiguen más a fondo la comparación de la adopción de la orientación del mercado interno y los detalles de implementación en los dominios de las empresas familiares y no familiares es importante para la literatura de marketing. Entonces, en nuestra opinión, los aspectos específicos del tipo de empresa deberían recibir más atención por parte de la academia interesada en la investigación de la orientación del mercado interno. Por último, es necesario examinar el papel fundamental de los avances tecnológicos recientes en la conceptualización de la orientación del mercado interior. Estas y otras sugerencias para la investigación futura, como señalamos anteriormente, se pueden encontrar en el capítulo de Conclusiones de la tesis.

Esperamos que nuestro enfoque sugerido para implementar e implementar el concepto de orientación al mercado interno en una empresa respaldada por tecnologías avanzadas de información y comunicación logre el reconocimiento en la comunidad de investigación de orientación al mercado interno y merezca una posición digna en la literatura de marketing. Estamos seguros de que los futuros investigadores contribuirán a este campo de los estudios de marketing mediante la introducción de nuevas escalas, nuevas variables de constructo y nuevas relaciones entre las variables del modelo. Además, aspiramos a que el trabajo completado y los hallazgos de la investigación conserven una importancia para los gerentes que puedan interesarse en adoptar el concepto de orientación del mercado interno propuesto porque dicho enfoque gerencial es capaz de asegurar el mantenimiento y la mejora de las métricas de

desempeño organizacional y comercial en sus empresas.

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## Chapter 1. Thesis introduction

### 1.1. Research project background

Marketing denotes a business philosophy that invokes organisations to focus on various operations on customers' needs, wants, and demands (Baker, 1976; Deng and Dart, 1994). Marketing philosophy roots from the subjective marginal utility theory of value, which manifests that products and services value depends on consumer needs and perceptions (Warlas, 1860; Menger, 1871; Jevons, 1879). Through the value creation resulting from marketing concept implementation, organisations strive to create an appeal for their products and services and thus attain customers' favour and willingness to buy. Marketing grounds in the core concept of the free market economy known as an exchange. It is an essential part of economic behaviour and implies the intention of actors engaged in the market economy to achieve an equilibrium in limited resources reciprocal trade-offs (Houston, 1986). Through the value exchange, organisations implement marketing striving to ensure customer satisfaction as it leads to repeated purchases, thus, to organisation's survival and prosperity in the long run (Dowling and Uncles, 1997).

Although marketing had remained a tacit activity accompanying trade operations from the early ages of humanity, it was first conceptualised as an approach to manage firms at the beginning of the XXth century (Lusch and Laczniak, 1987). Since then, marketing has drastically evolved through five discrete concepts reflecting its prime orientation. Each of the marketing concepts and their pursuant ramifications signifies that marketing philosophy is not a rigid tenet as it is capable of adjusting to the challenges and influences characteristic of the

sequential historical eras (Fullerton, 1988). The core marketing concepts are individuated in the literature and renowned as production, product, sales, conventional marketing, and market orientation (Dibb *et al.*, 2005). Every noted marketing concept pertains to a particular period of marketing philosophy evolution which is the relevant to the specific historical context. However, even though the early marketing concepts seem obsolete for the latter-day era, they did not vanish and substantially represent the marketing concept implementation approaches available for businesses at present (Lamb *et al.*, 2008).

In the range of the core marketing concepts noted above, conventional marketing is considered as the most powerful paradigm compared to its predecessors. This valence is grounded in the strategic focus, which is a distinctive property of the conventional marketing domain. Since the late 1950s and early 1960s, firms have started to develop customer-centred strategies, and such a phenomenon established an onset for the present marketing thinking (Fullerton, 1988). Managers concluded that successful transactions did not solely rely on products and services availability, quality and specifications, affordable pricing, proactive sell-out, advertising and promotion. They reached a point in understanding customer need as an underlying force that drives demand for products and services (Homburg *et al.*, 2009).

As such, this novel line of thought benchmarked a genesis of customer orientation approach in marketing philosophy. Succinctly, customer orientation is about attaining a knowledge of customer needs through market intelligence succeeded by the further developing and marketing products and services that meet and satisfy the uncovered requirements (González-Porras *et al.*, 2019). It is also essential to generate and assimilate an intelligence on how the firm's developed and marketed outputs are perceived by customers as it gives a possibility to further improve products and services. Customer orientation denoted a shift in the business mindset and determined an avenue for the marketing evolution until the present

day (Lamb *et al.*, 2008).

As of to date, marketing paradigm is generally understood and accepted by business organisations as a critical managerial concept. Nonetheless, there is a question of the proper marketing concept execution, e.g., what shapes and determines the best approach to an efficient implementation of marketing and what organisations should do to plan and run effective marketing strategies (Kazakov, 2016). Additionally, it is essential to support marketing concept implementation by a definite and tangible mechanism including practical tactics, activities and metrics.

## 1.2. Market orientation

Resulting from the quest for the new marketing concept implementation mechanism, marketing academia suggested a concept of market orientation. It pillars on organisational behaviour elements and strategic focus coordinates that provide businesses with tools and vision to improve and maintain their performance (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Narver and Slater, 1990). Market orientation stems not solely from the deep firm's understanding of a customer, customer's needs and demands, but also if this understanding determines each and every corporate function (Shapiro, 1988). These integrated corporate functions in the process of market orientation implementation also imply that every strategic and even small tactical decision is well-coordinated between firm's departments (Ruekert, 1992).

Market orientation unveils a tenet grounded in a proposition that market-oriented firms will improve their performance. Organisations improve such performance by creating and

delivering their distinctive and sustainable competitive advantage. The competitive advantage is generated by more superior value that firms create for their respective target customers in comparison with firm's rivals chasing the same customers in the marketplace. In reality, each firm possesses many options to develop added value proposition to its customers (Anderson *et al.*, 2006). These options range from reductions in the cost of purchase and consumption to sophisticated product benefits, or more efficient ways to satisfy customer needs. Nonetheless, both options imply that a firm should model and maintain its intrinsic appropriate organisational culture to comply with a perpetual added value proposition (Denison *et al.*, 2004). In this stream of logic, market orientation is a business philosophy and culture that facilitates the development of superior customer value in the most efficient and effective way (Narver and Slater, 1990).

In line with above, market orientation is, first of all, the organisational corporate culture, that aids organisations in the creation of the most practical and efficient behavioural models relevant for both individual employees and the entire organisation to create excellence in added value creation and its delivery to customers (Deshpandé and Farley, 1999). As a result, market orientation facilitates attaining the higher degree of business performance through the added value and customer preferences of the firm's products and services versus the competition (Kara *et al.*, 2005).

The market-oriented company generally knows how to create added value for consumers, how to reduce customer costs through multiple ways, and how to attain a sustainable competitive advantage. The market-oriented firms typically do this via an ongoing examination of the possible methods to create and sustain a competitive advantage for existing and potential target customers. Next, in seeking a maximisation of the long-term profitability, a firm must establish and maintain long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with its customers. Finally,

the market-oriented organisation opts for the processes and procedures that help to share the created added value with the target customers in the best way possible (Matsuno and Mentzer, 2000).

Consequently, the first approach to market orientation arises from generation and implementation of three organisational behaviour components, namely customer orientation, competitor orientation, and cross-functional coordination, supported by two decision-making criteria — long-term focus on firm profitability (MKTOR framework: Narver and Slater, 1990). An emphasis on customers and competitors determines the firm's commitment to market intelligence, leading to customer and competitor data. A distinct feature of the market orientation concept is that this data and all relevant market information are disseminated throughout the organisation, engaging every department and every individual business function or employee. Cross-functional coordination is grounded in insights retrieved from customers and competitors following the market intelligence. Also, cross-functional coordination is pursuant to the coordinated efforts perpetrated by all firm's departments to create and deliver the superior customer value (Auh and Menguc, 2005; Ruizalba *et al.*, 2019). Again, it should be noted that market orientation implementation is not just the marketing department's sole responsibility.

Another canonical model of the market orientation suggests enacting three organisational behaviour components to implement market orientation in the firm. These components comprise a collection of market information, its dissemination, and the coordinated creation of value for consumers with a focus on long-term profitability (MARKOR framework: Kohli and Jaworski, 1990, Kohli *et al.*, 1993).

To date, market orientation is known as a vibrant stream of research as it has been

characterised with the substantial growth of publications in recent years. Market orientation literature reveals four basic ramifications including (a) definition and conceptualisation (Day, 1994; Ozuem *et al.*, 2018; Boukis, 2019); (b) measurement and market orientation scales development (Semyonov *et al.*, 2009; Prifti and Alimehmeti, 2017; Ayimey *et al.*, 2021); (c) modelling and measuring market orientation effects for a firm (Deshpandé and Farley, 1999; Ellis, 2006; Fernandes Sampaio *et al.*, 2020); and (d) market orientation adoption and adaptation mechanisms in the organisation (Harris and Ogbonna, 2000; Gebhardt *et al.*, 2006; Bhaskar, 2020).

### 1.3. Internal marketing

The changes in management thinking in the course of marketing philosophy transformation are also evinced by the shift in the marketing mix architecture (Lings, 2004). Twenty years after McCarthy (1960) had coined a notion the marketing mix containing four building blocks of entrepreneurship activities (product, place, price, promotion) that facilitate marketing implementation, Booms and Bitner (1981) suggested an advanced marketing mix model which emphasised 'people', or, more specifically, company employees among the other elements of their developed framework (process and physical evidence). Booms and Bitner's extension of the marketing framework marked a need for an organisation's human resources incorporation into the set of controllable factors intrinsic to a firm's environment (Lings, 2000).

Initially, researchers positioned a 7P mix as a practical solution for marketing execution relevant solely to service industries (Booms and Bitner, 1981; Cowell, 1984). Business performance in these domains in particular pivots on successful outcomes of the service

encounters that are based on human-to-human interactions (Daunt and Harris, 2014). Thereby, human resources are a critical asset for firms in service domains because service product properties implicate that the value is generated and conveyed to the customers mostly by employees (Gounaris *et al.*, 2020). Consequently, employees represent a value for the organisation; thus, they can be considered as customers. However, their intrinsic essence demands an approach different from a stratagem of interaction relevant to the firm's ordinary extrinsic customers. Hence, the marketing concept is eligible for targeting company employees and apply marketing tools on the internal market. In the course of 7P mix proliferation in the 1980s and 1990s, firms operating in the non-service industries also realised the role of human resources in building a competitive edge, so they adopted the same comprehension of employees as an essential internal customer (Goi, 2009).

Consequently, internal marketing emerged as an applied branch of the broader marketing concept. It distinctively concentrates mainly on employees by considering them as firm's customers amid considering them not like the ordinary clientele. Other stakeholders or relevant internal actors important to a firm are also subjected by internal marketing (Sasser and Albeit, 1976; Berry, 1981). Internal marketing received recognition in academia following a conceptualisation of 'servitisation' phenomena that entailed employees' transformation into providers of the firm's services value to customers and the fellow employees (Vandermerwe and Rada, 1988). Service processes are run by humans, and hence they are not easily reproducible. In this regard, researchers noted a critical role of employees in value generation and its dissemination towards the firm's customers (Varey, 1995).

Grounded in the marketing philosophy's roots, organisations run internal marketing to generate value, but this time, firm-created value is vectored towards employees and other internal actors (Lings, 2000; 2004). A sense and a purpose of internal marketing are to

supplement conventional employee rewarding and motivation approaches with powerful marketing tools to support employees in achieving a firm's goals (Boukis *et al.*, 2015). Internal marketing requires developing a well-integrated approach; hence it is a subject of its own and unique mix of tactical tools and policies.

Internal marketing programmes are primarily employee-centric. Fundamentally, they chase the increase in employee satisfaction with the job. Job satisfaction may lead to employee job commitment, implicating that employee work quality and productivity would also improve (Ruizalba *et al.*, 2014; Ruizalba and Vallespín, 2014). Employee loyalty is another important facet of internal marketing programs implementation consequences. Altogether, the noted consequences comprise organisational performance notions and metrics that we address more thoroughly in the next paragraph of this section.

Besides conventional employee care, rewarding and motivation policies, internal marketing amalgam commonly comprises practical programmes aimed to communicate corporate values, the essence of the job and why it is important for employees. The internal communications policies are also critical to disseminate a spirit of employee unity and engagement into the firm's corporate mission accomplishment. Moreover, building customer needs and demands awareness as well as customer-centric employee attitude is a fundamental principle of internal marketing communication campaigns (Bell *et al.*, 2004). In addition, the ultimate purpose of internal communication activities is also to grow up regular employees to firm's ambassadors who convey and proliferate corporate values, brand values, unique selling proposition, and added value proposition to external customers (Boukis *et al.*, 2015).

Recently, the notion of internal branding has become a vibrant and contemporary ramification of internal marketing. In accord with the extant body of literature, internal

branding is a multifaceted conception. In this vein, one stream of the research argues that internal branding is a procedure aimed at the external labour market to create and transmit value in the form of organisation's appealing image for the potential employees. To support its employer brand appeal, a firm may publicly communicate a specific message, e.g., 'a great place to work' to the anticipated recruits. Moreover, firms may encourage their employees to disseminate this or similar messages among employees networking communities using the word-of-mouth technique. Thus, internal branding may be linked to employer branding (Robertson and Khatibi, 2013; Aldousari *et al.*, 2017). Other researchers state that internal branding is a technique that a firm may employ in order to inculcate employee conduct capable of enacting and keeping a corporate 'external' brand promise to customers (Löhdorf and Diamantopoulos, 2014; Boukis *et al.*, 2017). In light of the above, corporate 'external' product, company or employee brand pivot around the internal brand and should be aligned with it.

Nonetheless, internal marketing is not an impeccable solution for the intrinsic application of the marketing paradigm as it has been noted by researchers to have several limitations that we evince in the upcoming section of this Chapter.

#### 1.4. Internal market orientation

The classic concept of market orientation delineated earlier was originally supposed to equip organisations with organisational behavioural elements that help firms align their marketing strategies with two types of external entities including customers and competitors (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Narver and Slater, 1990). That said, early conventional concepts comprised elements intrinsic to an organisation, e.g., intelligence dissemination and

organisational response that are critical for market orientation implementation (Kohli and Jaworski, 1993). Simultaneously, the concept of internal marketing and branding gained momentum in scholars' interest and led to a growing array of publications. It is worth mentioning, however, that proliferating literature on internal marketing also unveiled some criticism towards internal marketing. Researchers pointed to the lax versatility and operationalisation issues as limitations of internal marketing (Pitt and Foreman, 1999).

The second generation of researchers juxtaposed market orientation with internal marketing by merging their external and internal scopes which gave an onset to the conceptualisation of internal market orientation (Lings, 2004; Gounaris, 2006; Lings and Greenley, 2009). Internal market orientation is an evolutionary concept that supersedes internal marketing. It is about a novel and advanced approach to endorse a firm's positive perception among employees and create an internal environment favourable for employees aiming to increase their performance via attainment job satisfaction, employee commitment, and loyalty (Rodrigues and Carlos Pinho, 2012). Internal market orientation is a precise 'how-to' algorithm that helps firms to adopt internal marketing concept. In this line, Rodrigues and Carlos Pinho (2012) correctly noted that internal market orientation is an effective tool to inculcate 'people orientation into an organisation' (Rodrigues and Carlos Pinho, 2012:290).

The conceptual framework of internal market orientation encompasses three building blocks: working environment intelligence, interior communications, and management strategies (Lings, 2004; Gounaris, 2006). These constructs circumscribe organisational behaviour elements referred to as internal market orientation antecedents. Implementation of internal market orientation is feasible in the firm if the organisation enacts the sequence of internal market orientation management cycle starting from working environment intelligence to the development and execution of responsive management strategies (Gounaris, 2010).

Researchers noted a similarity of the internal market orientation framework and the conventional market orientation concept (Rodrigues and Carlos Pinho, 2012). That is, internal market orientation is an imprint of the organisational behaviour approach to market orientation, or, in other words, it replicates the MARKOR framework coined by Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and further developed by Kohli *et al.* (1993).

The implementation of internal market orientation commences with the execution of working environment intelligence that has two-fold objectives. The first objective is to obtain a piece of relevant information about the exchange of human resources in the labour market. This intelligence is critical for attaining an understanding and perception of the intrinsic labour market and the firm's human resources adequacy to the current external labour market conditions (Lings and Greenley, 2009). Such an examination aids in comprehension, for instance, if the firm's remuneration and benefits policies suffice the external market terms and standards; and if the level of skills and competences of the firm's personnel complies with an expertise of the workforce available on the external labour market. The second objective of working environment intelligence implementation pertains to the internal labour market examination. Literally, the second objective of working environment intelligence is about insights procurement from the firm's employees on their perceptions of the intrinsic working climate and conditions, contentment with the support received from managers and fellow employees, job satisfaction, and other facets of their employment in the firm (Gounaris, 2006).

Interior communications are renowned as the second construct element of internal market orientation. It overarches three basic types of internal activities in the domain of interior communications, namely, (a) corporate communications that keep the firm's personnel informed on company rules, policies, job announcements, and available open job positions; (b) routine feedback on various job matters received from the management; and (c)

interdepartmental dissemination of the intelligence data generated by working environment examination delineated above (Rodrigues and Carlos Pinho, 2012; Ruizalba *et al.*, 2014). Incentive meetings and corporate events can also be considered as a significant means of interior communications under the umbrella of internal market orientation (Udriyah *et al.*, 2019).

The third component of internal market orientation mix is pertinent to the responsive management strategies. These strategies are an indication of the last phase of internal market orientation cycle and determine the effects of its implementation in the firm. While planning responsive strategies, firms must be mindful of the insights revealed following the intelligence analysis. That is, the tactical plans should encompass effective talent recruitment and induction of the new employees, personnel training and development, proposition of adequate rewarding and fringe benefits systems, activities in the domain of interior communications, and other relevant domains of internal market orientation. Responsive strategies should comply with corporate goals and objectives (Rodrigues and Carlos Pinho, 2012). More importantly, responsive management strategies should receive a commitment and support from the firm's top management and adequate funding to execute the planned activities (Lings and Greenley, 2009).

Implementation of internal market orientation creates a variety of effects that are significant to the firm (Gounaris, 2006). The effects also referred to as consequences of internal market orientation have been a profusely studied theme until most recently (Lings, 2004; Gounaris, 2006, 2008; Lings and Greenley, 2009; Gounaris *et al.*, 2010; Boukis *et al.*, 2015; Boukis, 2019). The essence and the measurement of internal market orientation effects are closely associated with notions of organisational and business performance that we explicate further in the next section of this Chapter.

### 1.5. Organisational and business performance

Performance denotes a crux of management strategies planning and execution (Luo *et al.*, 2012). Whereas firm's performance is critical for its survival in fierce competition and serves as a basis for business development, performance research is demanded by academia and practisers hence it is subjected as a vociferous topic in various fields of management studies. The importance of performance is well-understood in academia, as the literature situates it at the 'heart of strategic management' (Venkatraman and Ramanujam, 1986: 801).

Performance has remained a highly disputable notion in academia to date. Until most recently, there has been an ample academic discussion in literature around various facets of performance concept in managerial settings. Researchers point to the ambiguity of its denotation, structure, measurement levels and approaches to gauge performance and appropriate metrics. Regardless of the plethora of available performance-themed studies, this field of research still lacks cogent, well-founded, and harmonious findings (Mardanov, 2020). Hult *et al.* (2008) argue that performance complexity and nearly eternal multi-dimensionality are culprits for the lax of reliable results in this particular research field and performance operationalisation. Furthermore, researchers noted various repeated issues with research methodology in performance studies (Rosca and Bendul, 2019).

Studies under the array of research in the performance domain often refer to a conceptual framework suggested by Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986). Their approach posits three managerial performance levels, namely financial performance, business performance, and organisational effectiveness. From their point of view, the liaison between suggested domains of performance is consequential: financial performance supported by operational performance determines business performance which, in its turn, is an antecedent for organisational

effectiveness (Venkatraman and Ramanujam, 1986).

The significance of Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986) performance taxonomy concept for performance researches is well-recognised in academia. That said, in line with the criticism of performance research results reliability illuminated above, we believe that Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986) framework may lead to the development of bulky and excessive scales and measurement development. Consequently, aiming to avoid redundant and unnecessary performance measurements amid scoping the intrinsic domain of market orientation, we accommodate Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986) framework to our research concept by partitioning performance into two classification brackets namely organisational and business performance.

We posit that organisational performance hinges on the non-monetary and non-financial metrics of internal market orientation implementation in the firm. Such a predisposition is supported by prior studies in the internal market orientation stream of research (Lings, 2004; Gounaris, 2008; Ruizalba *et al.*, 2014). These studies often incorporate and highlight constructs of job satisfaction, job commitment, and employee loyalty as the indicators of organisational performance.

Job satisfaction is considered a critical facet of the firm's operations and, especially, it is especially significant for human resource management, internal marketing, and employer branding (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004). On a broader scale, job satisfaction is closely interrelated with human well-being that is subjected by many areas of science beyond business and management. Job satisfaction has been a vibrant research topic until most recently because it pertains to managers' area of substantial concern. Job satisfaction may elicit numerous effects of organisational performance. These effects can represent either negative outcomes, e.g., low

productivity, personnel turnovers, even job sabotage, etc.; or consequences that can benefit the firm including better job performance, employer brand support, unenthusiastic job-quitting intentions etc. (Zhou and Hu, 2019). According to literature, job satisfaction receives even higher significance if the job requires engagements in social contacts with customers or colleagues (Böckerman and Ilmakunnas, 2012). Besides the consequences noted above, job satisfaction also moderates other critical indicators of organisational performance, including job commitment and employer loyalty (Ruizalba *et al.*, 2014).

Employee job commitment often stems from job satisfaction. Allen and Meyer (1990) developed a conceptual framework where job commitment is depicted by three-dimensional construct amalgamating three elements, namely (a) affective commitment, (b) normative commitment, and (c) continuance commitment. Affective commitment denotes an emotional employee engagement, affiliation and sense of unity with his employing organisation. Normative commitment implies the employee perception of moral imperative to remain with his employer amid continuance commitment is linked with the expected disadvantages associated with quitting the current job (Allen and Meyer, 1990). In accord with Malhotra and Mukkherjee (2003), together or alone, each of these noted job commitment elements is capable of determining employee behaviour in the organisation including productivity, quality of the work, willingness to achieve customer satisfaction, and, more importantly, employee loyalty to her/his employer.

Employee loyalty to the place of work is a product of job commitment (Hasni *et al.*, 2018). This particular kind of loyalty attests a favourable result of employees relationships with their respective employers (Barros-Arrieta and García-Cali, 2020). Similarly to the notions of the normative and continuance elements of job commitment explicated above, employee loyalty represents the extent to which employee is willing to stay with her/his respective employee and

how employees will comply with the firm's brand standards amid service delivery to customers (Punjaisri *et al.*, 2009). In our opinion, an extant body of literature quite amply witnesses a similarity, even convergence of job commitment and employee loyalty (Watson *et al.*, 2018). Thus, we believe that these notions are seemingly intersected. Consequently, in this doctoral research, we comprise job commitment and employee loyalty under the construct of organisational performance.

Organisational performance is noted in the literature as a precursor of the business performance (Hult *et al.*, 2008). Business performance circumscribes around quantitative and qualitative outputs of firm's operations (Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1986). Quantitative metrics of business performance commonly comprise financial results such as sales volume, sales revenue, firm's profit, ROI, EBITDA etc., and indicators relevant to marketing strategy implementation including attained market share, customer satisfaction, brand awareness customer churn rates and others. Qualitative business performance indicators are relevant to feedback, attitudes, and perception that the organisation receives from internal or external actors (Luo *et al.*, 2012). Researchers suggest objective and subjective evaluations of business performance, whereas objective metrics are relevant to quantitative indicators amid subjective metrics are more pursuant to qualitative indicators of business performance (Hult *et al.*, 2008).

Literature attests that quantitative (objective) business performance metrics are more difficult to procure especially in methodologies that employ surveys requiring large samples of observed organisations (Lings, 2000; Morgan and Rego, 2006). Financial data representing business performance is subjected to sensitive information that firms commonly are not inclined to disclose. Because of this, researchers either face study participants' reluctance in obtaining this sort of data or receive biased information that hampers the application of statistical procedures and obtaining the reliability of research findings (Kleijnen and Smits,

2003; Morgan and Rego, 2006). It is why subjective (qualitative) metrics utilisation has gained more popularity in performance studies for data collection. Fortunately, it is feasible to capitalise on modern methods, for instance, Likert scale, that make it possible to 'digitise' qualitative data, e.g., perceptions, evaluations, etc., and secure quantitative datasets for application of the relevant statistical procedures. In our research, we utilise this methodological approach for scales development relevant to the three facets of business performance, namely employee evaluation of the firm's sales, profit and number of customers all incorporated in the proposed conceptual framework as well as for data collection essential for the concept examination suggested under this study.

#### 1.6. Information and communication technologies

The recent decade is characterised by the profuse digital transformation that has impacted numerous facets of the civilisation's way of living and development (Tsekeris, 2018). Information and communications technologies are in the heart of emerging holistic digitalisation and known as a core driver for this tectonic transformation. Naturally, business and economy have been among the areas most influenced by the digital transformation (Rossato and Castellani, 2020). Firms rapidly assimilate information and communications technologies, starting from simple desktop word processing and isolated intranet network solutions to sophisticated business processes automation and technology-supported decision making frameworks. Furthermore, literature points to the role of information and communications technologies in determining the modern business landscape and that digitalisation have become a major requirement for gaining the competitive advantage for a firm (Chouki *et al.*, 2020).

More specifically, information and communications technologies drastically reshape the way of how firms generate and deliver value to their customers and employees, mostly by technologically driven improvements in areas of communications and relationship management (Cascio and Montealegre, 2016). In this regard, information and communications technologies have become an effective interface for the firm's communications with its targeted actors. However, a dark side of information and communications technologies proliferation is also present. In this line, scholars noted that digital transformation might unveil a redundancy of various job positions even occupations that become obsolete (Tarafdar *et al.*, 2015; Kolokytha *et al.*, 2018). Moreover, the latest technologies often require a solid amount of investments for deployment and personnel training. The latter may shatter the employee's well-being in the organisation, and it also can be the reason for her/his stress at the workplace (Salanova *et al.*, 2013).

Cascio and Montealegre (2016) highlighted five contemporary information and communication technology trending areas that proved to be the most meaningful for businesses. They include (a) big data-based machine learning; (b) cloud computing solutions; (c) sensors, QR-coding and intelligent manufacturing; (d) drones, droids and robotics; and (e) green-energy solutions. More recent trending information and communication technologies include 'internet of everything', big data-based deep learning and artificial intelligence, and virtual reality applications (Chouki *et al.*, 2020). The latest information and communication technologies not only provide a means for employees that can make them more efficient and productive in their working routine, but they give employees and managers a plausible solution to rethink and rebuild the entire approach to their job execution (Cascio and Montealegre, 2016).

Advanced information and communication technologies adoption has become a critical

issue of the firm's survival in the modern business landscape. Notwithstanding the omnipresent comprehension of information and communication technologies adoption necessity by business and academic communities, digital transformation is not solely about simple technology deployment in the organisation, e.g., just purchasing and installing computer software. To generate a value of information and communication technologies utilisation for a firm, digital transformation denotes substantial changes in the organisation that encompass corporate culture reconciliation, development of digitally-committed strategy, organisational restructuring, and adaptation of firm's business processes (Vial, 2019).

Furthermore, firms may face numerous obstacles amid appropriation of information and communication technologies for their operations. These barriers for technology adoption have become an area of substantial preoccupation for academia. An extant body of literature has documented stumbling blocks that impede the internalisation of digital transformation or mitigate the effects of information and communication technologies deployment in the firm. In this line of research, by applying a systematic literature review, Chouki *et al.* (2020) revealed eighteen barriers that hamper the adoption of information and communication technologies in the firms. Although this research scoped small and medium enterprises, the noted frontiers can be relevant to a wider range of business organisations.

According to Chouki *et al.* (2020), there are two paramount types of barriers to information and communication technologies adoption by the firm: external and internal. Then, 'internal' class of barriers is subdivided into a number of categories each of those represent a specific perspective or actor who/what is relevant to a specific technology adoption obstacle. These categories include managers, employees, organisation, and resources. It stems from the study that low management commitment and confidence, employee reluctance for change, lack of human and financial resources are the most prominent barriers to information and

communication technologies adoption in the firm (Chouki *et al.*, 2020).

As we noted herein-above, current information and communication technologies play a critical role in managerial and business processes run by the firms. We envision internal market orientation examined under this study as a contemporary marketing paradigm inculcation in managerial processes relevant to the internal labour market. Therefore, information and communication technologies are significant in this respect, and their blending with internal market orientation should be thoroughly investigated further.

### 1.7. Research gap

As we elucidated earlier in this section, internal market orientation has remained an established research field in the last twenty years. In this respect, an interest exhibited by marketing academia to the concepts of market orientation, internal marketing, and internal market orientation is substantiated by a gradual increase of the relevant publications in the most recent decade. Notwithstanding the seeming plethora of studies, the extant body of internal market orientation literature is not without some detectable conceptual limitations, methodological limitations, theoretical imperfections and gaps.

First, until most recently, literature has focused on the examination of the internal market orientation antecedents more than on its implementation consequences with an exception of the limited number of researches (Lings and Greenley, 2009; Rodrigues and Carlos Pinho, 2012; Edo *et al.*, 2015). In this vein, particularly, the mediating effect of organisational performance enforced by internal market orientation on the firm's business performance has

been undocumented in the literature to date. We reckon that this pivotal effect should be addressed in the domain of internal market orientation research theme.

Second, we noted understandable but still notorious generalisation problem in several internal market orientation themed studies. Until recently, a majority of internal market orientation research publications are relevant to the service sector. Simultaneously, various research settings and contexts that can benefit the theoretical concept of internal market orientation have been investigated poorly or not examined at all. Hence, it is imperative to explore new contexts, research settings and areas to diminish the generalisation issues noted in the internal market orientation studies.

Finally, as we determined it from the literature, internal market orientation paradigm tends to become a hardwired tenet (Kohli and Jaworski, 2017). In our belief, there is an acute paucity in studies that attempt to rethink and reconcile the concept of internal market orientation in the new economic realities and conditions that produce a substantial impact on businesses. The emerging changes in the economy, society and business domains predispose a rationale for modernising the internal market orientation conceptual framework to make it more adequate to the new environmental conditions. In this line, a proliferated holistic digitalisation of businesses that we depicted above still remains unexplored in the internal market orientation framework settings (Cascio and Montealegre, 2016; Tsekeris, 2018; Rossato and Castellani, 2020). Furthermore, the blending of internal market orientation with human resources management's popular practices, including personnel outsourcing and out-staffing, has not yet received attention from marketing academia.

#### 1.8. Research questions, purpose and objectives

Grounded in the prior research in the domain of internal market orientation and based on the gaps identified in the current state of studies that we highlighted in the previous paragraph, we pose several key research questions that overarch our research project as follows:

**ORQ#1: What are the antecedents of internal market orientation framework driven by information and communication technologies and applied in various settings?**

, and:

**ORQ#2: How does the internal market orientation framework enforced by the information and communication technologies help organisations operating in various settings to support their organisational and business performance?**

Due to the tangible volume and of the above-posed overarching research questions we partitioned them into ten ancillary research questions that helped us in their gradual addressing and solution through the sequence of three publications. We posited the ancillary research questions as follows:

**RQ1:** What organisational behaviour elements, that are adequate to the challenges of the modern digital era, constitute IMO in the context of the family firms?

**RQ2:** Which elements of the organisational behaviour constitute IMO in SMEs?

**RQ3:** Do ICT-supported organisational behaviours of working environment intelligence,

interior communications, and management strategies implementation cooperatively enact the iMO activation in international firms?

**RQ4:** Is there a difference in IMO concept implementation and its effects in the domains of family and non-family businesses?

**RQ5:** Do family firms, that have a higher level of IMO implementation, have better business performance metrics than family firms with a lower level of IMO implementation?

**RQ6:** Does IMO positively influence the business performance metrics of the family firms?

**RQ7:** Do ICTs reinforce the effects of IMO implementation in SMEs?

**RQ8:** Does the implementation of IMO produce positive effects on internal organisational performance in SMEs?

**RQ9:** Does iMO help MNCs maintain a positive business performance in IHRM settings?

**RQ10:** Is it possible to quantify the total effect (direct and indirect) of IMO on the outputs?

In order to solve the posed overarching and their ancillary research questions, the purpose of this research is to develop and empirically validate a conceptual model of internal market orientation that incorporates information and communication technologies. The developed model denotes the antecedents (organisational behaviour elements) of internal market orientation that activate its implementation in a firm. We investigate (a) if information and communication technologies are capable of fostering every antecedent of internal market

orientation and (b) if the implementation of internal market orientation generates positive effects on organisational and business performance of a firm.

The study's exhibited purpose requires a set of objectives representing a sequence of actions to complete the research. The following objectives of this research arise from the prior discussion, overarching research questions, and the purpose of the study:

**O1: To validate the conventional dimensions (antecedents) of internal market orientation.**

To accomplish this objective, first, the extant theoretical concept of internal market orientation should receive scrutiny as pertinent literature reveals an inconsistency in notations of internal market orientation elements (working environment intelligence, interior communications, management strategies) and different approaches to its measurement (Lings and Greenley, 2009; Rodrigues and Carlos Pinho, 2012; Edo *et al.*, 2015). This examination is essential to elaborate a robust and authentic conceptual model under this study to validate the subject matter of internal market orientation and gauge its effects of organisational and business performance.

**O2: To develop and verify auxiliary scales representing information and communication technologies incorporation in the conventional dimensions (antecedents) of internal market orientation.**

Moving from accomplishment of the prior objective to the subject of O2, we develop a novel framework of internal market orientation by the inclusion of scales that represent an instrument to measure an inculcation of information and communication technologies into

every internal market orientation construct. It is also imperative to justify the novel scales inculcation by corroborating the updated internal market orientation model construct reliability, convergent, and discriminant validity. By addressing this particular objective, we confirm the locus of information and communication technologies in the concept of internal market orientation and their significance for the developed framework. In addition, by accomplishing this objective, we bridge the gap in the extant *i*IMO theory, which has not considered information and communication technologies in the domain of internal market orientation.

**O3: To validate the positive impacts of internal market orientation enforced by the information and communication technologies on the firm's organisational and business performance.**

While carrying out O3, it is mandatory to suggest and justify associations that appear amid linking internal market orientation antecedent and consequences constructs. In this line, we introduce two constructs that entail the consequences of internal market orientation, namely the firm's organisational performance and business performance. The measurement of the linkage between organisational and business performance implies a distinct theoretical contribution because it has been not examined by the earlier *i*IMO studies in the single framework. The resulted structural model will depict the full universe of internal market orientation, starting from its precursors all the way to its aftermaths. Previously noted validation of positive effects on firm's performance occurring from internal market orientation implementation would build a rationale for internal market orientation adoption by firms.

**O4: To corroborate a generalisability of the developed internal market orientation framework application and its positive effects on the firm's organisational and**

### **business performance in various settings.**

In tackling the generalisation issues intrinsic to the research in the market orientation stream that we illuminated earlier, unlike the generic research approach that often is relevant to the singular context examination, this study applies to several research contexts different from one to another. We believe that this methodological technique helps evince the versatility of internal market orientation concept that we develop in this study and vindicate the positive influences of internal market orientation in various conditions and contexts where it is applied. Thereby, the suggested approach will allow to mitigate generalisation issues notorious to IMO research and help corroborate the applicability of the developed *i*IMO concept in organisations of various sizes and sectors of operation.

**O5: To examine the moderating effects of trending human resource management practices on the linkage between internal market orientation influences and the firm's organisational and business performance.**

As we noted earlier, additionally, in this study, we thrive to consider several pivotal phenomena observable nowadays in firms' operations. It is done in an attempt to demonstrate the possible influence of the eventual external forces that emerge beyond the framework of internal market orientation but might mitigate or bolster its effects on the firm's performance indicators. In this vein, we investigate the moderating effect that outsourced personnel contracting generates on the link between internal market orientation implementation and organisational performance. This objective denotes a novel approach to measure the effects generated by auxiliary variables that can produce an influence on internal market orientation consequences. To date, such effects have been not documented in the marketing literature.

Upon the accomplishment of the above-itemised research objectives, we contribute to both marketing theory and practice in a number of ways. From the point of marketing theory, we will first propose a redeveloped framework of internal market orientation that amalgamates the organisational behaviour elements essential to enact marketing paradigm execution vectored towards the internal labour market with the firms' holistic digitalisation enforced by information and communication technologies. Second, our research will further supplement the extant literature by verifying the positive linkage between digitally-powered internal market orientation implementation and firms' organisational and business performance. Finally, we will propose a discussion on consideration and measurement of the moderating effects that some routine business practices may generate on the structural linkage between internal market orientation implementation and its consequences.

This research will also have implications for business practice, so its findings imply significance for managers. With the help of attained findings that will follow the finalisation of our research, we will exhibit the efficacy of the developed internal market orientation concept for practice. We believe that the results stemming from our study will build managers' confidence and trust in the proposed approach to applying marketing concept for human resource management in their respective organisations. In this respect, we will suggest basic 'how-to' methods to adopt the concept of internal market orientation in their firms.

### 1.9. Research unfolding and linkage of publications

As we pointed earlier, an extant conceptualisation of internal market orientation identifies certain elements of organisational behaviour (also referred to as antecedents by the literature)

that are critical to activating internal market orientation in the firm. These elements were not conceptualised haphazardly as the conventional internal market orientation framework is grounded in the classic MARKOR model representing the broader (or external) market orientation paradigm (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Kohli *et al.*, 1993). As a result, a paramount matter of question concerning conceptual model development and implementation is relevant to the appropriate notation of internal market orientation antecedents.

Although the current acknowledged internal market orientation model is monolithic and seemingly impeccable, pertinent literature unveils various akin but still different conceptions, notions, and notations of internal market orientation antecedents. It may lead to misconceiving of the internal market orientation concept. Consequently, it is essential to begin with a clarification of the notions and notations that are relevant to the domain of internal market orientation concept. We articulate our vision and depict the concept of internal market orientation all the way through Publications 1, 2, 3 that represent Chapters 2, 3, and 4 in this manuscript accordingly. The Publications' sequence is also created in line with addressing the overarching research questions that we posed in the prior paragraph 1.8 of this introduction section.

Whereas the raised overarching research questions are, in our belief, relatively comprehensive, complex and sophisticated, we came to a decision to fragment them into a series of ancillary research questions that are helpful in gradual addressing and solving the posed global research questions. This fragmenting of research questions was also helpful to plan a sequence of pursuant studies and put them all together into a single logical order under the doctoral research project. Table 1.1. below delineates a synopsis matrix of the posed overarching research questions, their ancillary research questions and the linkage to Publications that focus on these overarching and subordinate research questions.

Publication 1 is a conceptual paper and implies an embarkment point for our research. It provides a comprehensive review of the prior literature and contemplates a current state of theoretical conceptualisation relevant to market orientation, internal marketing, and internal market orientation. In Publication 1, we delineate our discernment of the internal market orientation evolution and conceptualise internal market orientation architecture by considering the current business conditions, state of the social and economic environment, and a contemplation of the modern technologies currently available for firms. Grounded in the literature review and based on conceptual study results, Publication 1 proposes a novel internal market orientation framework that considers and reflects the global changes that are significant for businesses. The study's principal output presented in Publication 1 is a conceptual introduction of novelty structural constructs, including information communication technologies and outsourced personnel essential for the contemporary mix of internal market orientation concept. Moreover, Publication 1 thoroughly delineates the details of a methodological approach designated for empirical studies elucidated in Publications 2 and 3.

**Table 1.1. Research questions synopsis and their linkage to the addressing Publications**

<b>Overarching Research Questions</b>	<b>Specific Research Questions</b>	<b>Relevant Publications*</b>
<p><b>ORQ#1: What are the antecedents of IMO in its contemporary form driven by ICT technologies and applied in various settings?</b></p>	<p><b>RQ1:</b> What organisational behaviour elements, that are adequate to the challenges of the modern digital era, constitute IMO in the context of the family firms?  <b>RQ2:</b> Which elements of the organisational behaviour constitute IMO in SMEs?  <b>RQ3:</b> Do ICT-supported organisational behaviours of working environment intelligence, interior communications, and management strategies implementation cooperatively enact the <i>i</i>IMO activation in international firms?  <b>RQ4:</b> Is there a difference in IMO concept implementation and its effects in the domains of family and non-family businesses?</p>	<p>Publication 1            Publication 2            Publication 3</p>

	<b>RQ5:</b> Do family firms, that have a higher level of IMO implementation, have better business performance metrics than family firms with a lower level of IMO implementation?	
<b>ORQ#2: How does the novel ICT-model (iIMO) help organisations operating in various settings to improve organisational and business performance?</b>	<b>RQ6:</b> Does IMO positively influence the business performance metrics of the family firms? <b>RQ7:</b> Do ICTs reinforce the effects of IMO implementation in SMEs? <b>RQ8:</b> Does the implementation of IMO produce positive effects on internal organisational performance in SMEs? <b>RQ9:</b> Does iIMO help MNCs maintain a positive business performance in IHRM settings? <b>RQ10:</b> Is it possible to quantify the total effect (direct and indirect) of IMO on the outputs?	Publication 2 Publication 3

(\*) -

*Publication 1:* Kazakov, S. (2019). “Revisiting internal market orientation in family firms”. *European Journal of Family Business*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 5-20.

*Publication 2:* Kazakov, S., Ruiz-Alba, J. L., and Muñoz, M. M. (2020). “The impact of information and communication technology and internal market orientation blending on organisational performance in small and medium enterprises”. *European Journal of Management and Business Economics*. Vol. 30 No. 2, pp. 129-151, DOI: 10.1108 / EJMBE-04-2020-0068.

*Publication 3:* Kazakov, S., Ruiz-Alba, J. (2020). “The nexus of internal market orientation

and international HR management”. *European Journal of International Management*. (DOI: 10.1504/EJIM.2021.10037605).

In conjunction with the first paper in a research row, Publication 2 further investigates the developed concept of internal market orientation and its impacts on organisational performance. The latter comprises job satisfaction and employee loyalty, whereas employee loyalty is positioned as a product of job satisfaction after internal market orientation is implemented in the firm. This Publication further conceptually hinges our framework development on human relations theory coined by Mayo (1933). This theory availed further justification for internal communications construct. Another renowned postulation of administrative theory by Fayol (1918) accommodated building grounds for a proposition of sequential application of three organisational behaviours to implement internal market orientation in the firm.

In Publication 2, we empirically corroborate that information and communication technologies can bolster up internal market orientation implementation. Other findings stemming from the study determined the positive effects on organisational performance that become apparent following the implementation of digitally supported internal market orientation. These results demonstrate evidence of suggested internal market orientation framework's capabilities to maintain organisational performance and the concept's benefits plausibility for operationalisation by firms.

Publication 3 further examines the developed concept of internal market orientation concept enforced by information and communication technologies. Bridged from Publication 1, the research presented this paper further investigates and elucidates business performance as an ultimate consequence of internal market orientation implementation. An empirical study

this time completed under the research in Publication 3, additionally supported the viability of developed internal market orientation framework. Moreover, the same study also affirmed positive effects that internal market orientation generates on business performance via the construct of organisational performance.

Summarising, a succinct synopsis of research logic outline included an (1) examination of internal market orientation concept and its antecedents adequacy to the current business conditions and environment (Publication 1); (2) establishment of a rationale for information and communication technologies instillation and as these technologies imply a driving force that fosters internal market orientation effects in present (Publication 1); (3) development and proposition of the complete internal market orientation conceptual framework (Publication 1); (4) delineation of the methodological approach for empirical studies aimed at validation of the proposed framework (Publication 1); (5) elaboration of the internal market orientation framework and its antecedents validation in various sampled contexts (Publication 2 and Publication 3); (6) empirical verification of the positive effects of proposed internal market orientation concept implementation on organisational and business performance in various sampled contexts (Publication 2 and Publication 3); (7) discussion on theoretical contribution that is significant for internal market orientation literature (Publication 2 and Publication 3); (8) presentation of managerial implications that arise from the attained empirical research findings (Publication 2 and Publication 3); and, finally, (9) revealing the noted research limitations and proposition of avenues and agenda for the future studies in the domain of internal market orientation (Publication 2 and Publication 3).

The rest of this manuscript unfolds by four Chapters that consequently unveil the research project's progress as we circumscribed it hereinabove. Chapter 2 comprises the manuscript of the conceptual Publication 1 «Revisiting internal market orientation in family firms» dedicated

to the literature review, theoretical framework development accompanied by the elaboration of the cogent methodology for empirical verification of the proposed model. Chapter 3 is relevant to the Publication 2 «The impact of information and communication technology and internal market orientation blending on organisational performance in small and medium enterprises» where we empirically tested our developed framework in the settings of small and medium businesses and determined the positive effects of market orientation on organisational performance. In Chapter 4, we present the Publication 3 «The nexus of internal market orientation and international HR management» that is relevant to examining the developed model in international human resources management settings in the context of multi-national corporations. In this research, as we noted earlier, business performance as the ultimate consequence of internal market orientation application was measured. The study results depicted in Chapter 4 confirmed the positive effect of internal market orientation on business performance. Chapter 5 explicates the summary and discussion of the global findings that stem from the research project formed by three studies. Chapter 6 speculates on theoretical and managerial implications that arise from the research, provides guidance for future researchers interested in further developing the internal market orientation concept, and ends up with the concluding remarks.

## Chapter 2. Publication 1: Revisiting internal market orientation in family firms

Reference:

Kazakov, S. (2019). “Revisiting Internal Market Orientation in Family Firms”, *European Journal of Family Business*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 5-20.

<https://doi.org/10.24310/ejfbefb.v9i1.5468>.

### Abstract:

The present conceptual paper depicts Internal Market Orientation (IMO) theory development conceptualization with a contemplation of new conditions, realities and technologies available to modern businesses in service industries. Based on the results of a conceptual study, this study proposes a novel IMO framework which reflects the noted global changes that affects family businesses.

The denoted model introduces novelty variables including Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and Outsourced Personnel structural constructs. They avail to measure the effect of IMO implementation on job satisfaction and employee commitment that, in their turn, exhibit a positive impact on business performance in service industries.

**Keywords:** Internal Market Orientation; Job Satisfaction; Employee Commitment; Business Performance; Family Business.

**Chapter 3. Publication 2: The impact of information and communication technology and internal market orientation blending on organisational performance in small and medium enterprises**

Reference:

Kazakov, S., Ruiz-Alba, J.L. and Muñoz, M.M. (2021), “The impact of information and communication technology and internal market orientation blending on organisational performance in small and medium enterprises”, *European Journal of Management and Business Economics*, Vol. 30 No. 2, pp. 129-151. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJMBE-04-2020-0068>.

**Abstract**

*Purpose* – The present study examines the concept of internal market orientation (IMO) and its effects on organisational performance comprising job satisfaction and employees’ loyalty in the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) research context. Rooted in administrative theory, human relations theory, conventional theories of IMO and internal marketing, this study develops a novel *i*IMO theoretical framework that evinces the proliferation of ICTs in SMEs.

*Design/methodology/approach* – The proposed concept was empirically investigated by means of surveying 316 SME employees with the application of a multi-stage sampling procedure.

*Findings* – Research findings confirmed the viability of the ICT-supported *i*IMO framework, its positive effects on SMEs’ organisational performance, and exhibited ample

empirical evidence for the proficiency of the *i*IMO concept and its suitability for operationalisation by SMEs.

*Originality/value* – This study introduces ICTs as a novel IMO dimension which considers the undergoing holistic digitalisation of businesses. In addition, the present research posits the plausibility and confirms the benefits that arise following *i*IMO implementation in SMEs.

*Keywords* - SMEs, Job satisfaction, Market orientation, Organisational performance, Internal marketing, Internal market orientation

*Paper type* - Research paper

## **Chapter 4. Publication 3: The nexus of internal market orientation and international HR management**

Reference:

Kazakov S. P., Ruizalba Robledo J. L. (2021). “The nexus of internal market orientation and international HR management”, *European Journal of International Management*, ahead-of-print, DOI: 10.1504/EJIM.2021.10037605.

### **Abstract**

This paper examines Internal Market Orientation (IMO) in the context of international businesses (Multinational Corporations, MNCs) that execute international human resources management (IHRM) to manage their workforce overseas. Grounded in conventional IMO theory, this study suggests a novel *i*IMO framework that introduces the utilisation of ICTs in IMO and sets business performance metrics as an outcome of *i*IMO implementation. The viability of the *i*IMO model was verified following empirical research, which included surveying 650 employees who represent 147 international organisations in the Russian Federation. This paper posits the suitability of the *i*IMO concept application in the IHRM and affirms its efficacy in the improvement of the MNCs’ business performance.

**Keywords** - internal market orientation, market orientation, international human resource management, international companies, multi-national companies, organizational performance, business performance, IMO, MNC, IHRM, SEM-PLS

## Chapter 5. Results and discussion

In the present chapter, we start with a discussion around the synopsis of the attained results and findings that stem from the studies accomplished under this dissertation project execution. We continue with an explication of the details how the posed research questions have been addressed through the research project unfolding by three consequent publications (Publications 1, 2, and 3).

### 5.1. Research findings summary

As we noted earlier in the Introduction, the purpose of this research was to revisit the conventional elements of organisational behaviour that comprise and activate internal market orientation, then, to engender and empirically validate an expanded conceptual model of internal market orientation that incorporates information and communication technologies. Under this study, first, we intended to examine if conventional internal market orientation concept coined by Lings (2000, 2004), Lings and Greenley (2009) and further advanced by Gounaris (2006, 2008), Gounaris *et al.*, (2010, 2020), and Ruizalba *et al.*, (2014) remains adequate to the present day and can be operationalised in modern firms. Secondly, our research aimed to attest that contemporary information and communication technologies can bolster and strengthen the traditional organisational behaviour constructs of internal market orientation. Our third goal pertained to the assurance of the positive effects generated by digitally supported internal market orientation concept implementation. That is, internal market orientation concept enactment is a proxy for creating and maintaining both organisational and business performance in the firm.

The study's manifested aims were achieved via research progress comprising three key phases. These chronological research phases are depicted by three sequential publications. We represent them in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 accordingly.

The Publication titled «Revisiting internal market orientation in family firms» entails a conceptual study, and it serves as an onset for a research project. It encompasses a review of internal market orientation themed literature and analyses what the theory has achieved so far in this particular field of research. In this Publication, we contemplate the effects that the advancing technologies produce on businesses in the present era for the first time in the research project accomplishment process. Furthermore, in the same Publication, we also deliberate and elucidate current conditions and actualities in which businesses are operated. By juxtaposing an extant body of theory with the current trends, business practices, and technologies, we revisit internal market orientation paradigm and posit our vision of its conceptualisation that, in our opinion, makes internal market orientation paradigm more adequate to the challenges of the modern era.

We coined a blending of the conventional internal market orientation constructs of working environment intelligence, interior communications, and management strategies with information and communication technologies in the developed conceptual framework. The suggested concept situates information and communication technologies as a driving force for activation and more effective implementation of internal market orientation in a firm. By addressing trending practices that firms extensively utilise, we also propose a structural construct of outsourced personnel as an interim variable that moderates the effects of internal market orientation antecedents on their consequences stemming from implementing the *i*IMO concept. The conceptual study in Publication 1 also suggests the inclusion of organisational performance and business performance constructs. These dependent construct variables are

necessary to measure the effects of internal market orientation implementation in a firm. Moreover, organisational performance and business performance constructs are sequentially positioned in the developed model where organisational performance precedes and mediates business performance resulting from internal market orientation execution.

In addition, the conceptual Publication «Revisiting internal market orientation in family firms» delineates the details of our methodological approach utilised to scrutinise and validate the developed concept by the accomplishment of two subsequent empirical studies. We exhibit these published researches in Chapters 3 and 4 of the present thesis manuscript.

Linked with the above-depicted conceptual paper, the second Publication «The impact of information and communication technology and internal market orientation blending on organisational performance in small and medium enterprises» further develops the theoretical provisions of the proposed internal market orientation concept. In Publication 2, we analyse supplementary literature to advocate our assumptions and vision of the developed internal market orientation conceptual framework. In this line, we addressed more recent and relevant literature themed on the linkage and differences between internal market orientation and internal marketing; information and communication technologies adoption; and also focused on the extant body of studies that have examined internal market orientation application in the research settings of the small and medium enterprises. Furthermore, we build more solid grounds for the developed concept of internal market orientation with help from the provisions of administrative (Fayol, 1918) and human relations (Mayo, 1933) theories that are recognised in management sciences. The additional literature review helped us clarify and improve research questions and hypotheses posed earlier in the conceptual Publication. This Publication provided an additional theoretical rationale for consideration of information and

communication technologies incorporation in the conceptualisation of the internal market orientation and further specified research question and hypothesis relevant to this domain.

Our second Publication exhibits an empirical investigation of the posited internal market orientation concept integrity. In the same study, furthermore, we gauged the effects of internal market orientation concept implementation on the organisational performance. To validate our assumptions, we used research settings of small and medium enterprises operated in the Russian Federation and surveyed 316 employees under the multi-stage sampling procedure.

Following the application of the confirmatory factor analysis as a part of the structural equation modelling statistical procedure, the results of this study unveiled an overall acceptable level of the suggested *i*IMO model construct validity. This finding signifies information and communication technologies' relevance and suitability for blending with conventional internal market orientation elements. Nonetheless, two ancillary constructs of personnel training/development and personnel segmentation initially included into the conceptual model under the umbrella of management strategies development and implementation second-order construct did not comply with both convergent and discriminant validity measurements threshold values. Consequently, we removed them from the model. Concerning this finding, we posit that personnel training/development and personnel segmentation constructs may be redundant in some contexts where the proposed internal market orientation concept is applied. Small and medium enterprises fall into this category, mainly due to their staff's sizes and low financial capabilities.

Furthermore, an empirical study depicted in Publication 2 provided ample evidence for the positive *i*IMO effects on organisational performance. As we noted earlier in Chapter 3, job satisfaction and employee's loyalty to her/his employer are the two basic constructs that

comprise organisational performance. The data analysis results in accord with the methodology developed in Publication 2 revealed a notable direct effect that the developed *i*IMO concept implementation generates on employee job satisfaction in small and medium enterprises. The other finding that stems from the study in Publication 2 demonstrated that the implementation of the suggested internal market orientation *i*IMO concept directly affects employee loyalty. Moreover, apart from the determined direct positive influence of job satisfaction on employee loyalty, the same study also provided ample empirical evidence for the *i*IMO's indirect positive effects on employee job satisfaction and employee loyalty. Interestingly, according to the study results in Publication 2, the direct positive effect coefficient value of job satisfaction on employee loyalty resembles the value of the positive indirect outcome generated by the *i*IMO concept implementation on employee loyalty. The consolidated findings that arise from the empirical study delineated in Publication 2 provided solid grounds to posit the plausibility of the developed *i*IMO concept deployment in small and medium enterprises and corroborated tangible advantages of *i*IMO implementation in this type of firms.

The third Publication titled «The nexus of internal market orientation and international HR management» further elucidates the developed concept of internal market orientation and addresses additional research questions relevant to the endogenous construct variable of business performance as an ultimate outcome of *i*IMO implementation. What is more in this regard, we examine business performance as a product of organisational performance in Publication 3. Amid framing the plan for this particular study, we intended to verify the developed concept of internal market orientation in the settings other than small and medium enterprises that were examined under the study in Publication 2. That said, we aimed to measure its applicability and relevance to different contexts because it certainly aids in the proposed *i*IMO framework's generalisability. In this vein, we opted the international HR

management setting to examine *i*IMO in the context of multinational corporations and to propose this concept as standard routine policy or practice if our assumptions on *i*IMO suitability for this kind of organisations are validated.

Amid collection and review of the literature relevant to the international HR management, we also noted in the extant body of research that multinational corporations are prone to employ outsourced third-party personnel. Such contracting has become a common HR management practice for this kind of firms. As prior research has pointed to the impacts generated by outsourced staff on job satisfaction perceived by the regular employees, in this study we also investigated a moderator effect of the outsourced employees recruiting on the linkage between *i*IMO and job satisfaction of the regular employees. To our knowledge, this particular research objective was the first attempt in the marketing literature to measure the influence of the moderator variable(s) that can either diminish or bolster the impact of the internal market orientation concept implementation on its consequences.

To accomplish these two above-mentioned prime research objectives, we developed a cogent research methodology for the empirical study that included a set of instruments to collect data essential to address the research questions posed under this study. In this line, we upgraded a questionnaire earlier developed for the study depicted in Publication 2 by incorporating a set of questions relevant to outsourced personnel and business performance constructs. The developed methodology helped to secure a sample of 650 surveyed employees who worked in 147 multinational companies in the Russian Federation. As these organisations often vary in employee count, we established a procedure to survey five employees per one encompassed firm to secure an even distribution for the sample and acceptable grade of multinational organisations' representation in our research. More or less, such an approach

facilitated an examination of varying cultures, industries, and different managerial practices of international HR management in our study.

The results of the collected data analysis under the study in Publication 3 facilitated attainment of the articulating findings and reaching conclusions similar to the findings posited in the prior study as we depicted above with regard to the Publication 2. We evinced that, at first, *i*IMO is determined by a mix of three organisation behavioural elements including working environment intelligence, interior communications, and management strategies enforced by information and communication technologies; and, second, *i*IMO positively influences organisational performance in the firm. However, as the study in Publication 3 had extended purpose and objectives, it is essential to speculate on the unique findings relevant to this particular research.

In this line, we found empirical evidence for the positive outcome generated by the *i*IMO-driven organisational performance on the business performance in the context of multinational firms, whereas the pursuant hypothesis cannot be rejected. This finding signals the novel *i*IMO concept implementation's utter positive effect and is essential for companies because business performance is renowned as the most critical measurement of an organisation's condition and perspectives. Another important finding that arises from the research in the Publication 3 is relevant to the outsourced personnel recruiting and contracting. In this vein, our study cannot confirm the maleficence of outsourced personnel employment for the regular employees' job satisfaction in multinational firms. This particular result signifies that besides many other conveniences and benefits, HR practices pursuant to the outsourced personnel hiring neither inflict harm to the working climate in organisations nor inhibit the regular employees' job satisfaction.

Hence, the empirical results of the study presented in Publication 3 unambiguously confirmed the viability of the developed *i*IMO concept in the settings of multinational corporations. The findings of this study also revealed evidence that *i*IMO is plausible for incorporation in international HR management practices.

It is also essential to manifest that the data collection under the present doctoral research completed by means of two surveys fully complied with the requirements of the Federal Law of Russian Federation #152-FZ “On Personal Data” imposed on 27 July 2006. The research team ensured participants anonymity by not requesting to reveal any personal data amid surveying. The surveys were conducted on a non-personal basis, whereas participants were supposed to fill in the questionnaire form unattended. Questionnaire forms also did not comprise questions aimed to collect personal data (see Annexes in Sections 3.8 and 4.9). The collected dataset was deleted after the accomplishment of its processing necessary for analysis and hypotheses testing.

## 5.2. Discussion around the answers to the posed research questions

In this section, we further address and discuss the results of the completed research project. However, this time, the attained results are examined through the lens of the research questions posed amid the doctoral research project planning and designing. A matrix that illustrates the synopsis of the research questions raised under this study is presented in the introduction (Table 1.1; p.40). To accomplish the purpose of the doctoral research project we posed two overarching research questions: «What are the antecedents of IMO in its contemporary form driven by ICT technologies and applied in various settings?» and «How does the novel ICT-

model (*i*IMO) help organisations operating in various settings to support organisational and business performance?». As illuminated in the Introduction section, we then fragmented these global questions into a series of ten ancillary research questions. It was essential to facilitate gradual research progress by addressing overarching research questions with the one-by-one solving of the smaller research questions. In this paragraph onward, we elucidate the details of how the subordinate research questions were considered throughout the research project execution.

#### 5.2.1. Research question 1

According to this approach, the first question was propounded as follows: «What organisational behaviour elements, that are adequate to the challenges of the modern digital era, constitute IMO in the context of the family firms?». We posed this research question under the conceptual study depicted in Publication 1 and addressed it later in two empirical studies that are elucidated in Publication 2. However, it is noteworthy that in the progress of data collection in accord with research methodology developed for the study in Publication 2, researchers team faced difficulty in obtaining responses from the planned number of family businesses. Hence, it was decided to shift the research to a broader context of small and medium enterprises, as they often are family-owned businesses according to the extant literature (Maseda *et al.*, 2019).

The essence of the research question #1 implies a verification whether three organisational behaviour elements of the conventional internal market orientation concept namely working environment intelligence, interior communications, and management strategies are adequate to the present conditions where small and medium family businesses are operated. These elements are recognised in the literature as classic antecedents that activate the internal market

orientation implementation in the organisation. Their relevance to the internal market orientation concept has been confirmed by a plethora of earlier studies (Lings, 2004; Lings and Greenley; Ruizalba *et al.*, 2014; Yu *et al.*, 2019).

In this research project, the adequacy and viable capabilities of the classical internal market orientation paradigm were confirmed for the small and medium family/non-family businesses by the empirical study in Publication 2 as all of these high-order model constructs unveiled acceptable levels of composite reliability, convergent and discriminant validity. Consequently, this finding supports the results of the previous studies that vindicated the composition of internal market orientation construct comprising working environment intelligence, interior communications, and management strategies (Gounaris 2006, 2008; Gounaris *et al.*, 2010; Ruizalba *et al.*, 2014). In addition, as these studies are dated back to a period of time more than five years ago, this result of our research also corroborates the concept suitability for present times.

### 5.2.2. Research question 2

We raised the second research question of «Which elements of the organisational behaviour constitute internal market orientation in small and medium enterprises?» in Publication 2 to examine low-order latent construct variables that fit in the high-order conceptual elements of internal market orientation (e.g., working environment intelligence, interior communications, and management strategies). Overall, the study in Publication 2 statistically confirmed our assumptions on the low-order model constructs coherence with organisational behaviour elements (Table 3.2).

However, the other attained findings following the accomplishment of the empirical study in Publication 2 demonstrated that two low-order ancillary latent construct variables of personnel segmentation in the domain of working environment intelligence, and training/development in the domain of management strategies could not be validated for the settings of small and medium businesses. We explicate the details of these findings in the thesis manuscript's subsection 3.5.

On one side, the noted finding relevant to employer training and development redundancy is inconsistent with the fundamental stream of internal market orientation research (Gounaris, 2008; Ruizalba *et al.*, 2014; Park and Tran, 2018). Nonetheless, on the other side, this result of our research concurs with the studies that thoroughly investigated training and development in small and medium enterprises and discovered scarce benefits of these activities (Kitching, 1998). Small and medium firms may attain training and development advantage if they employ complex and advanced solutions for this activity (Huang, 2001). These solutions, however, can be neither available nor affordable for small and medium enterprises (Anchor, 2013).

To further address the research question #2, we utilised the same scales relevant to the above-noted low-order constructs in another empirical study which we explicate in Publication 3. Unlike the prior study in Publication 2 relevant to the settings of the small and medium businesses, the findings stemming from the research in Publication 3 affirmed a pertinence of personnel segmentation and training/development *i*IMO practices for multinational companies. This result is coherent with the extant body of internal marketing and internal market orientation research (Linga and Greenley, 2010; Park and Tran, 2018; Huang *et al.*, 2019). The finding discussed in this paragraph also complements studies in the international HR management domain that highlighted the significance of training and development for multinational companies (Hurn, 2014; Björkman and Welch, 2015).

### 5.2.3. Research question 3

Under the research question #3 «ICT-supported organisational behaviours of working environment intelligence, interior communications, and management strategies implementation cooperatively enact the *i*IMO activation in international firms» we specifically scrutinised the developed *i*IMO concept in the context of HR management of the multinational and international businesses. With respect to international HR management, we also aimed to investigate whether *i*IMO can be a solution to the notorious issue of so-called ‘global-local’ dilemma that has been noted by researchers as a routine stumbling block for decision making in for international business (Trompenaars and Greene, 2016). To complete this particular study, we observed 147 international organisations operating their subsidiary offices in the Russian Federation. The companies included in the sample are originated from 37 countries situated in many different parts of the world. Thereby, the obtained sample represents an ample mix of corporate cultures and international HR management approaches to test the developed *i*IMO concept.

The findings derived from the study circumvented in Publication 3 exposed clear evidence that *i*IMO can be a practical solution for multinational companies. That is, the suggested framework of internal market orientation may facilitate an upgrade of the international HR management routines because it a workable methodology to link and amalgamate renowned but often separated HR policies and practices under a single umbrella. As the prior research (Publication 2) similarly exhibited applicability of *i*IMO framework in the settings of small and medium enterprises, we posit that the developed concept is suitable for various industry affiliations, types, ownerships, and sizes of firms. Hence, the results of two empirical studies

(Publications 2 and 3) are not only consistent with the prior internal market orientation researches but they advance this research stream further (Lings, 2004; Gounaris, 2008; Lings and Greenley, 2009; Ruizalba *et al.*, 2014).

#### 5.2.4. Research questions 4 and 5

While pondering on research questions #4 («Is there a difference in IMO concept implementation and its effects in the domains of family and non-family businesses?» ) and #5 («Do family firms, that have a higher level of IMO implementation, have better business performance metrics than family firms with a lower level of IMO implementation?»), we intended to examine if there are detectable dissimilarities between family and non-family firms with respect to the implementation of internal market orientation. In particular, we wanted to discover if family and non-family firms attain different outcomes following the *i*IMO implementation.

Nonetheless, as we noted earlier, many targeted family-owned businesses demonstrated reluctance to participate in the survey for some reason. Perhaps, in our opinion, this reluctance can be explicated by the presence of intimacy, isolation, and privacy which are the distinctive family characteristics (Schumm, 1990; Gabb, 2008). The experienced resistance to participate in the survey created a situation with a low representation of family firms in the research, creating a clumping sample biased towards non-family businesses. Having experienced this data collection issue, our team made a decision to discard a descriptive variable of family/non-family firm ownership type and shift to solely small and medium businesses.

Thereby, unfortunately, research questions #4 and #5 remain unsolved at this point. Notwithstanding this circumstance, we pointed to it as a research limitation and proposed research questions #4 and #5 for the upcoming research agenda in the concluding remarks of Publication 2. Nevertheless, according to the extant literature, most small and medium firms are family businesses (Maseda *et al.*, 2019; Alayo *et al.*, 2021). In this vein, we argue that the findings of our study are relevant to family firms as well.

#### 5.2.5. Research question 6

The next five research questions explicated below are relevant to examining the causal linkages between *i*IMO exogenous and endogenous construct variables and gauging the effects of the proposed market orientation concept implementation. These questions belong to the domain of the overarching research question that we posed as «How does the novel ICT-model (*i*IMO) help organisations operating in various settings to support organisational and business performance? In this domain, we raised a research question #6 as «Does *i*IMO positively influence the business performance metrics of the family firms?» to validate positive effects of internal market orientation and affirm its necessity to ensure business performance.

We initially posed research question #6 in the conceptual study depicted in Publication 1. Still, due to the noted-above issues with data collection methodology application, this particular question was considered under different research settings by testing the hypotheses H2-H4 in Publication 3's study. As we pointed earlier, Publication 3 is dedicated to the empirical research completed in the context of HR management pursuant to multinational firms. Under this study, in this regard, we determined both direct and indirect positive effects

on business performance generated by the application of the suggested internal market orientation concept. This established finding coheres with prior studies that have examined the effects of internal market orientation on organisational performance (Tortosa *et al.*, 2009; Kaur Sahi *et al.*, 2013; Ruizalba *et al.*, 2014; 2016).

#### 5.2.6. Research question 7

Next, to detect an influence of information and communication technology on internal market orientation implementation, we brought up a research question #7 «Do ICTs reinforce the effects of IMO implementation in SMEs?» in Publication 2. In our belief, it is essential to address this critical research question because, in accord with the literature review accomplished in due course of the research project, it became evident that information and communication technologies are holistically crucial for businesses at present. It was important to raise this research question since the blending of new digital technology, and internal market orientation has not been amply examined in the extant body of literature to date.

New technologies penetrate into every business process and managerial practice. Information and communication technology drives business processes accomplishment, boosts personnel performance and thus improves a firm's business organisational and business metrics. At present, firms utilise a wide range of information and communication technologies, from basic software applications to sophisticated cloud computing solutions.

Hence, as internal market orientation is primarily a managerial concept, the researchers' blending of information and communication technology and internal market orientation should receive more consideration. Grounded in the extant piece of theory relevant to the digitalisation of businesses and driven by assumptions of the critical role of information and communication

technology in managerial processes execution, we proposed information and communication technology as an eligible internal market orientation dimension that supports its traditional antecedent elements. To reflect our vision of the latest technologies' significance for internal market orientation, we incorporated new manifest variables and appended supplementary measurement scales into each of the classical exogenous internal market orientation constructs (e.g., working environment intelligence, interior communications, and management strategies implementation).

The study's findings pursuant to the research question #7 indicate that our suppositions were correct as the results of the application of the statistical procedures demonstrate that measurements relevant to information and communication technologies are consistent with the *iIMO*, a framework developed under our doctoral research project. The results attained from addressing research question #7 augment an emerging but still limited stream of research that investigates similar research questions in the internal market orientation domain. The recent studies, similarly addressing a linkage between information and communication technologies and internal market orientation, discerned positive effects stemming from the relationship between these variables (Ruizalba *et al.*, 2019).

#### 5.2.7. Research question 8

A consequent research question #8 which we posited as «Does the implementation of IMO produce positive effects on internal organisational performance in SMEs?» was significant to scrutinise the initial consequence of internal market orientation implementation under the proposed concept. The effects stemming from an implementation of internal market orientation

are among the most studied research questions in marketing literature because the evidence of such effects creates a rationale and sense for the concept of internal market orientation adoption by firms. We noted earlier that organisational performance, according to our study, is comprised of two sequential dependent variables of job satisfaction and employee loyalty.

We addressed a research question #8 in the study under Publication 2 by testing two hypotheses necessary to illuminate a causal linkage between internal market orientation antecedents comprising information and communication technology-supported elements of organisational behaviour and consequences comprised by the latent constructs of job satisfaction and employee loyalty. By gauging both direct and indirect effects of internal market orientation application ( $i\text{IMO} \rightarrow \text{job satisfaction}$ ;  $i\text{IMO} \rightarrow \text{employee loyalty}$ ;  $\text{job satisfaction} \rightarrow \text{employee loyalty}$ ), we confirmed that positive direct or moderator effects of internal market orientation on organisational performance are present. The study in Article 2 is relevant to the settings of the small and medium businesses and concurs with the findings documented by other internal market orientation researchers in the same research settings (Shehu and Mahmoud, 2014; Beneke *et al.*, 2016). In the subsequent study elucidated in Publication 3, we also verified the positive effects of the developed concept of internal market orientation on organisational performance in multinational firms.

#### 5.2.8. Research question 9

Aimed to confirm additional positive effects of the developed approach to the internal market orientation we then posited a research question #9 of “Does *i*IMO help MNCs maintain a positive business performance in IHRM settings?”. This research question is encompassed

by Publication 3. In our belief, research question #9 is essential to corroborate an ultimate outcome of the internal market orientation, and this outcome is significant with regard to managerial implications because it concerns the most critical measurement of business operation that is business performance (Venkatraman and Ramanujam, 1986).

Under the study in Publication 3, we suggested that business performance consists of three dimensions: (a) customer retention rate, (b) firm's sales and (c) firm's revenue. By executing the empirical study in the settings of a multinational company, as explicated in Publication 3, we documented that technology-supported implementation of internal market orientation facilitates and maintains business performance. We agree with Lings (2004, 2006), Gounaris (2006), Lings and Greenley (2009), Gounaris *et al.* (2010), who earlier evinced similar positive internal market orientation outputs for business performance by their respective studies completed in various business contexts. This finding attained as a result of addressing research question #9 creates a solid rationale for the proposed internal market orientation concept internalisation in multinational firms.

Grounded in the extant body of research, we posited that there is no straightforward impact of internal market orientation on the firm's business performance (Hult *et al.*, 2008; Lings and Greenley, 2009). In this respect, we presented the hypothesis in the study presented in Publication 3 that helped to confirm that business performance is a product of organisational performance in international firms. Extending the evaluation of internal market orientation output with the introduction of a business performance variable facilitated obtaining a more precise measurement of internal market orientation implementation. This result corresponds with the findings reported by several prior researchers (Jyoti and Sharma, 2012; Kutu-Adu, 2017; Yu *et al.*, 2019).

### 5.2.9. Research question 10

Finally, we posed research question #10 as «Is it possible to quantify the total effect (direct and indirect) of *i*IMO on the outputs?». This research question is relevant to examining and establishing the proper methodological tools and procedures suitable for precise measurements of the internal market orientation implementation effects. We dedicated a special section in Publication 2 to address this particular research question.

By addressing the research question #10, we determined that the math chain rule suggested by Hammond and Sydsaeter (2012) is a practical tool to compute such effects apart from the popular structural equation modelling techniques. Thereby, we argue based on the study results in Publication 2 that chain rule can be considered an alternative statistical procedure to measure the effects of internal market orientation. So far, applying chain rule to gauging internal market orientation outputs can also facilitate attaining deeper and more detailed insights and conclusions relevant to the research in the domain of internal market orientation. The question of gauging internal market orientation direct and indirect effects on firm's organisational performance with the utilisation of the chain rule has been scantily addressed by the extant body of research to date. However, in this noted paucity of research the discernment of the direct/indirect internal market orientation that we obtained in our study in Publication 2 is in line with previous studies where these effects were also examined (Modi and Sahi, 2018).

## Chapter 6. Conclusions

Grounded in findings delineated in Chapter 5, in this concluding section we posit our contribution that is significant for the advancement in the concept of internal market orientation. We also discuss the implications for marketing theory consequently elucidated by this manuscript's prior chapters. Further in this section, we are continuing by deliberating the attained research results by speculation around the managerial implications stemming from the unveiled research findings. In our opinion, this part of the dissertation denotes an interest for the practitioners as we explicate the reckoned managerial implications in a great detail. Moreover, we accompany the discussed managerial implications with several recommendatory suggestions that can be noteworthy for the business owners and contracted managers who work in the small, medium, and large firms operating either on the domestic, or international market or both. We posit multifaceted applicability of the given recommendations because our studies confirmed the consistency of findings in various research settings.

We conclude this chapter by addressing the noted limitations that became visible following the research project accomplishment after Publications 1, 2, 3 had been published. Hinged on the discovered auxiliary research limitations, we suggest our vision of the avenues for future studies in the domains of internal market orientation, internal marketing and market orientation that may represent an interest for scholars engaged in these particular fields.

### 6.1. Theoretical implications

The completed doctoral research comprising three sequential studies represents a substantial contribution in marketing theory, especially for the field of studies where market orientation and internal market orientation are examined. The first study in this sequence denotes a conceptualisation of the field's theoretical advancements and initially proposes internal market orientation theoretical framework. Amid the commencement of the research project, we aspired a development of upgraded internal market orientation framework that conforms to the present era of holistic digitalisation and is also adequate to the current conditions of business organisations functioning.

Furthermore, through a sequence of addressing ten posed research questions, the second and the third study in this line of research were accomplished to validate our vision of the internal market orientation framework and interrelations between its antecedents and consequences. Besides, these two empirical studies introduce supplementary construct variables significant for the proposed internal market orientation model and the linkages between its variables. A compound of the findings stemming from three completed studies empowers us to posit several significant theoretical implications.

First and foremost, our multi-phased research contributes to the extant marketing theory by discernment and justification of information and communications technology embedment into the conventional antecedent structural elements of internal market orientation. Based on the findings revealed by studies depicted in Publications 2 and 3, we posit that information and communication technologies are significant for the organisational behaviour elements that comprise internal market orientation. The advanced technologies are necessary to maintain the activation and implementation of the internal market orientation concept in present business conditions. By this contribution, we affirm the validity of the internal market orientation tenets as our research findings are in line with prior studies (Lings, 2006; Gounaris, 2006; Lings and

Greenley, 2009; Gounaris *et al.*, 2010; Ruizalba *et al.*, 2014). Also, the research findings relevant to this contribution concur with the results of the studies that examine the digitalisation impact on businesses (AlBar and Hoque, 2019; Chertchom *et al.*, 2019; Eze *et al.*, 2019; Ab Wahab *et al.*, 2020 and others).

Second, our research contributes to the theory by revealing evidence of the positive effects arising following the implementation of the developed internal market orientation concept. In this regard, the present research encompasses two types of performance that both are critical for firms. Organisational performance is an initial consequence of internal market orientation. Grounded in the extant literature, we included job satisfaction and employee loyalty in the developed theoretical *i*IMO framework as the endogenous construct variables (Ruizalba *et al.*, 2014). In the study delineated in Publication 2, we confirmed a positive impact generated by internal market orientation on the organisational performance. The effects of suggested internal market orientation concept on organisational performance were also examined in the other research settings under the study depicted in Publication 3. The results of the study in Publication 3 also assured that these positive effects are present.

Business performance variable represented by the dimensions of the customer retention rate, firm's sales, and revenue variables is another consequence of internal market orientation implementation measured under our research. As business performance is the most critical metric of the firm's operations, we position it as an utter consequence and desired result of internal market orientation implementation. Also, in our research, we consider business performance as a product of organisational performance.

This research is the first in the stream of internal market orientation literature which addresses the relationship between organisational and business performance. The direct linkage

between organisational and business performance has been studied in a limited amount of research. We argue with Rodrigues and Carlos Pinho (2012) who posited that solely one element of internal market orientation, namely internal communications positively influences the organisational and business performance of a firm. According to our empirically verified findings, all three constructs of the developed market orientation framework (e.g., working environment intelligence, interior communications, and management strategies implementation) are critical for attaining organisational performance that consequently impacts business performance. In our belief, these findings provide a substantial contribution to marketing literature and further advance the research stream where causal links between internal market orientation and its consequences have been investigated (Lings and Greenley, 2009; Tortosa *et al.*, 2009; Ordanini and Maglio, 2009; Ruizalba *et al.*, 2014; Boukis *et al.*, 2017, Yu *et al.*, 2018).

Third, to our knowledge, our research is the first in the stream of internal market orientation themed studies that examined the moderating constructs valence on the links between antecedents and consequences of internal market orientation. In this respect, we introduced the moderator variable of outsourced personnel utilisation in our conceptual framework. By including this novel exogeneous construct variable, we gauged the moderating effect of outsourced personnel on the relationship between digitally supported internal market orientation and employee job satisfaction. Interestingly, the results of the data analysis presented in Publication 3 exhibited neither positive nor negative influence of contracting outsourced personnel on employee job satisfaction. This finding contributes to the studies in HR management and feeds the ongoing dispute on the outcomes of outsourced personnel contracting (Walker *et al.*, 2009; Hodari *et al.*, 2014; Imm *et al.*, 2016; Espino-Rodríguez and Ramírez-Fierro, 2018; González-Ramírez *et al.*, 2019; Nayak *et al.*, 2019).

Fourth, the findings stemming from the completed study support the tenets and contribute to the renowned theories profusely utilised by researchers in various fields of management and marketing studies. In this regard, the developed *i*IMO framework is aligned with the human relations theory as the proposed internal communications construct facilitates the increase of contacts between managers and employees (Mayo, 1933). Moreover, the suggested enforcement of information and communication technologies utilisation in *i*IMO's internal communications activities boosts the building of more frequent informal contacts that denote highly motivational factors for employees. Thus, the results of our study advance a conventional human relations theory by providing it with the digital edge and capability in the modern era. Besides, whereas one of the critical administrative theory principles (Fayol, 1918) asserts management as the means to lead the firm to achieve its goals (where, in fact, business performance is essential), the developed *i*IMO framework is an approach to make it, because implementing the proposed concept of internal market orientation maintains the attainment of business performance.

Finally, our research contributes to the development of the internal market orientation concept by addressing and tackling its generalisation issue. This research project includes two separate studies that were completed in different research settings. In this vein, the developed model of technology-supported internal market orientation concept was verified as a suitable solution to improve organisational performance in small and medium business organisations. Moreover, we validated the proposed conceptual framework in the alternative research context of international HR management in multinational companies. This particular study also established the validity of organisational behaviour elements for internal market orientation and confirmed that internal market orientation helps to support organisational and business performance in multinational firms.

## 6.2. Managerial implications

The findings established by the completed research possess relevance for managerial practices. These research results are significant for business owners, contracted managers and other stakeholders responsible for executing business operations in small, medium enterprises and multinational business organisations. According to the results of the two studies (Publication 2 and 3), the proposed approach to develop and implement internal market orientation is a suitable solution to the settings of small and medium businesses. However, it can be practical for multinational companies operating their offices overseas as well. In our belief, the findings of our studies are essential for business organisations of various types because business owners and managers can benefit from the suggested internal market orientation concept adoption in a number of ways. Here-in-below we itemise managerial implications and the claimed benefits from the accomplished studies.

First, managers may improve their comprehension of employees' stimuli and motivations to complete job routines by more proactive utilisation of technology-supported internal market labour intelligence, which is a part of the developed framework. Internal market labour intelligence is practical to discern concealed conflicts or other hidden events that are potentially harmful to a firm's working environment. We recommend managers in the study depicted by Publication 2 to benefit from internal market labour intelligence by arranging regular personnel meetings, anonymous employees surveying, and employ digital tools and activities that will facilitate internal labour market intelligence activation. These tools may comprise employee mobile applications and intranet platforms that are capable of the data collection essential for internal labour market examination (Piabuoet *et al.*, 2017; Baykal, 2020; Vardalier, 2020). In

this regard, gamification of the data collection procedures can be an effective instrument in internal labour market intelligence (Woźniak, 2017; Singh and Gupta, 2020).

Second, we also encourage managers to consider computer vision solutions in planning internal labour market research in their organisations. Artificial intelligence, which is enabled by computer vision solutions, can be an effective tool to recognise and evaluate employee emotional conditions at his/her working place (Khatri *et al.*, 2020). In this line, Real time-Employee Emotion Detection system (RtEED) using Machine Learning has been noted by researchers as an effective tool to recognize several human emotions including surprise, contentment, melancholy, antipathy, anger and anxiety with a help of webcams or office surveillance cameras (Chandraprabha *et al.*, 2021). However, firms should comply with their local personal data protection regulations and carefully regard employee's privacy as these activities may have substantial ethical implications (Chua *et al.*, 2017; Tikkinen-Piri *et al.*, 2018).

However, in the case of multinational companies, a broader approach for market intelligence should be applied. In particular, these firms can get a further advantage from supplementing internal market research with an external labour market perspective. Setting a labour market knowledge generation system will assist multinational companies in the development of remuneration and fringe benefits packages appealing to potential employees, thus helping to attract the best talents available on the local and global labour markets. The labour market intelligence system will also help multinational companies to maintain job satisfaction and employee loyalty, thus reducing churn rates and personnel turnovers. In this vein, researchers have determined a critical role of AI and machine learning solutions to run external labour market automated intelligence generation essential for a proper decision-

making in personnel hiring based on recommendation systems driven by recursive neural networks (Boselli *et al.*, 2017; 2018; Knaus *et al.*, 2020).

Third, we urge managers to consider the deployment and implementation of the technology-supported internal communications component of the recommended conceptual internal market orientation framework. To implement this element, managers can attain value from the technologies that dramatically speed up internal communications (Chertchom *et al.*, 2019). In this vein, we pointed to the virtual team working and employee co-working platforms, intranet solutions, cloud computing and messengers in Publications 2 and 3. Managers may effectively utilise these solutions to communicate their keynote messages, announcements, decisions and assessments to employees (Vardalier, 2020). According to the recent literature, the popular cloud solutions like Trello, Slack, Microsoft Teams, and others are not only considered as versatile teamworking platforms but they are also recognized as tools for effective internal corporate communications, according to the recent literature (Parsons *et al.*, 2018; Stray and Moe, 2020). Online meetings, events, contests even games can provide creative support to these communications and thus engage employees more effectively. That said, we argue that conventional ‘offline’ or face-to-face kind of meetings still make sense in building the right degree of internal communications between managers and employees.

The last and the most crucial point with regard to managerial implications stemming from the completed research concerns the development of the relevant policies and strategies that can activate internal market orientation in a firm. It’s a common knowledge, that every organisation is unique and specific. Hence, this point should be considered amid developing an internal market orientation activation strategy. Multinational companies can develop more standardised internal market orientation policies and convey them to their offices or subsidiaries overseas. Locally, these policies can be adapted to the local conditions of

subsidiary operations (Trompenaars and Greene, 2016). In addition, as our research did not reveal any negative impact generated by the contracted outsourced personnel on regular employees' job satisfaction, managers in multinational companies can utilise this kind of workforce without fearing any harm to the working environment in their firms. Literature witnesses that contracting outsourced personnel is an effective approach to reduce costs for multinational companies and, also, it is the means to improve organisational performance (Nyameboame and Haddud, 2017; Austin-Egole and Iherioanma, 2020).

In comparison with multinational companies, small and medium businesses have more freedom in the development and execution of internal market orientation strategies. They can also be more prone to the accelerated internal market orientation concept adoption mainly due to their size, which ensures faster decision-making. Nonetheless, in both settings of small, medium businesses and multinational companies, it is essential to assure managers commitment to internal market orientation (Ruizalba *et al.*, 2014). As our empirical studies confirmed the positive effects of the suggested technology-supported internal market orientation concept, its significance for businesses becomes obvious. Thereby, as a kick-off for internal market orientation deployment, managers may consider developing the appropriate strategies for the critical elements of internal market orientation, including working environment intelligence, interior communications, managerial care of employees, and support for work-family balance.

Researchers suggest that amid developing SME growth strategies, managers should consider the factors of the external environment and address external challenges by enforcing their strategic efforts in R&D, digitalisation, innovation, and trade activities that all together should comply with internal market orientation strategies (Azari *et al.*, 2017; Ipinnaiye *et al.*, 2017). These SME growth strategies and every single relevant tactical activity should receive

extensive digital support from the utilisation of the advanced information and communication technologies that enact the novel concept of internal market orientation. These strategies upon their execution should help firms to maintain and improve their organisational and business performance. The improvements in organisational and business performance following after the implementation of internal market orientation will indicate its successful adoption by a firm.

### 6.3. Limitations

This accomplished doctoral project consisting of three sequential studies is not without a number of research limitations. As we noted earlier in this manuscript, the key and important limitation in this research pertains to the methodological issue that we faced during the data collection stage under the study execution for Publication 2. Amid the research planning phase explicated in the conceptual study depicted in Publication 1, we targeted family firms as an object for the study. We were grounded in the available statistics data, which exhibited a number of family firms ample for research. It built a confidence in the developed research methodology and we anticipated receiving their sufficient representation in the sample.

Nevertheless, amid the process of data collection, the research team experienced difficulty in surveying this particular type of firms. According to our developed methodological approach delineated in Publication 2, we used a multi-stage sampling procedure. The first stage implied mailing the invitation to participate in the research to 1,500 randomly selected small and medium firms. Family firms represented half of this random selection. However, a limited number of family firms replied to our call. The sampling procedure's outcome did not suffice the sample to execute a comparative study as it was planned under research questions #4 and #5.

Second, it is essential to admit a research limitation relevant to the location where the current doctoral research project was completed as it generates certain generalisation issues. All three studies, including empirical researchers anticipating data collection, were accomplished in the Moscow region of the Russian Federation. The location selection was made due to the research team's residence and the short cultural distance that is helpful in data collection required for the study. We consider geography limitation typical for internal market orientation studies as most of them tend to be highly localised in certain counties, even domestic regions.

Third, as we pointed in the limitation section under Publication 2, we heeded a suggestion by Jaworski and Kohli (2017) to utilise a ‘red thread’ as an approach to improve the concept of internal market orientation. In this line, we blended the manifest variables relevant to information and communication technologies with the conventional constructs of internal market orientation that have been determined by literature earlier (Lings, 2004; Gounaris, 2008; Ruizalba *et al.*, 2014). However, amid being encapsulated inside the traditional internal market orientation constructs, the effects of information and communication technologies may not be discretely measured. Thus, their influence on internal market orientation might not be clearly documented by the utilised approach.

Fourth, under the research in Publication 3, we noted an insignificant moderating valence that the outsourced personnel creates on employee job satisfaction generated by internal market orientation. This research finding does not support the previous literature (Hodari *et al.*, 2014). At this point, we explain this controversial finding by the possible misperception of the outsourced personnel and the implications following its utilisation by survey participants who represent different managerial levels of the sampled firms.

Finally, we noted a perplexing issue in Publications 2 and 3 pursuant to the internal market orientation complete concept suitability for various firms. Our empirical studies confirmed an acceptable uniformity of the concept for small and medium enterprises as well as for multinational companies in general. We discovered that the complete developed conceptual framework of internal market orientation is entirely suitable for the latter kind of organisations. However, as we noted in the limitation section of Publication 2, some ancillary constructs of internal market orientation, including personnel segmentation and training-development, may be redundant or should be reconsidered for the context of small and medium firms.

The noted research limitations support our vision of the future research agenda for the market orientation, and internal market orientation themed studies. The upcoming paragraph clarifies the details of our proposition to future researchers interested in this field of study.

#### 6.4. Future research

Based on the research limitations that we had discerned in the process of our research project accomplishment delineated in the previous paragraph and in the relevant sections of published articles, we suggest researchers consider several noteworthy avenues for future research recommended below. In our opinion, further examination of the suggested research questions will benefit and advance the theories of market orientation and internal market orientation.

First, in our belief, a comparison of internal market orientation adoption and implementation specifics in the domains of family and non-family firms is significant for

marketing literature as according to the extant body of research, an examination of differences between family and non-family SMEs is essential (Allouche *et al.*, 2008; Rodríguez-Ariza *et al.*, 2017; Brück *et al.*, 2018). As it was pointed several times earlier in this manuscript, we originally planned to examine the differences between small family and non-family businesses. Nonetheless amid data collection the research team experienced reluctance to participate in the survey exhibited by potential study participants who belong to this specific type of organisations. Thus, we put this research topic on our future research agenda and simultaneously invite fellow researchers to address this critical research question in their respective studies.

Second, even though this research scoped two various kinds of organisations and thus contributed to internal market orientation conceptual framework generalisation, marketing literature will benefit from the suggested concept of digitally supported internal market orientation concept comparative examination completed in different geographies and business sectors. This proposition is commonly supported by the other studies in the domain of internal market orientation as literature witnesses (Gounaris, 2006; 2008; Ruizalba *et al.*, 2014; 2016).

Third, as marketing academia notes in their respective studies, firm type specifics should receive more attention from academia interested in internal market orientation research (Lings and Greenley, 2010; Boukis, 2019). Also, it is essential to investigate which low- or mid- or high order exogenous constructs are suitable for the specific type of firms. It would lead to the onset of the internal market orientation taxonomy stream of research similar to the studies in the domain of strategic marketing (El-Ansary, 2006). Consequently, we encourage future researchers to investigate the viability of the extant or newly developed ancillary internal market orientation antecedent elements for the various types of organisations as these researches will shed more light on this critical issue.

Fourth, as we elucidated in Publication 2, internal market intelligence dissemination between departments and employees by executing internal communications is an ambiguous and questionable element of the internal market orientation concept. The concept of internal market orientation is a product of its parental MARKOR framework, where interdepartmental information dissemination is an essential conceptual block (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990). However, in our belief, dissemination of internal labour market data among employees has a sense different from the MARKOR concept, and it is not critical in the realm of internal market orientation. In our opinion, at first, firms need to ensure employee personal data protection which is an area of growing concern in an accord with the recent literature (Ogriseg, 2017; Stepenko *et al.*, 2021). Then, it is also essential to ensure that firms control the flow of information sensitive to employees and includes but is not limited to rewards, penalties, and upcoming promotions (Sims, 1991; Tseng, 2020). We suggest and highly recommend future researchers to investigate this critical problem and provide ample clarification on internal labour market data dissemination between departments and employees.

Fifth, concerning the suitability of the developed framework constructs for the specific type of firms, as we noted above in this section dedicated to future research, we highly recommend academia to focus on training-development construct while planning internal market orientation studies in the settings of small and medium enterprises. In this vein, we pointed to the substitution of the *i*IMO's training-development element by employee mentoring-tutelage as an ancillary construct of management strategies planning and implementation in Publication 2. An extant body of literature supports this supposition (Bozionelos *et al.*, 2016). We expect that this research topic implies a contribution to internal market orientation theoretical concept, and thereby it has the potential to attract future researchers.

Sixth, it is necessary to examine the pivotal role of the recent technological advancements in the internal market orientation conceptualisation. To our knowledge, we are among the pioneering scholars who consider the holistic digitalisation of businesses in the context of internal market orientation and introduce measurement variables relevant to information and communication technologies to the internal market orientation conceptual iIMO framework. Examination of information and communication technologies blending with internal market orientation has the potential to become a seminal and influential stream of research in the realm of academic marketing. In this regard, we strongly recommend researchers to scope proliferating technologies that will shape the internal market orientation concept elements and its implementation in firms. These latest and advanced technologies may include but are not limited to artificial intelligence (AI), cloud computing (CC), virtual reality (VR), internet of everything (IoE), and deep machine learning currently addressed by scholars in various fields of research (Csapó *et al.*, 2018; Ding *et al.*, 2020; Libai *et al.*, 2020).

Seventh, as we pointed earlier in the limitations section of the present Chapter, the developed conceptual framework of internal market orientation masks information and communication technologies in the conventional antecedent constructs. It may generate an issue of unclear comprehension in information and communication technologies effects on internal market orientation. To solve this issue, we propose future researchers to examine information and communication technologies either as a separate exogenous antecedent construct at the same order-level with the classic antecedents, or measure its moderating valence on the linkages between internal market orientation and its antecedents or endogenous constructs. We ground this research proposition in the several studies that have measured the effects of information and communication technologies effects on firm's

performance posed them as a separated variable (Matteucci *et al.*, 2005; Yunis *et al.*, 2017; DeStefano *et al.*, 2018).

Eighth, with specific regard to multinational companies, we suggest addressing cross-cultural facet in the internal market orientation themed studies because we noted an influential research stream dedicated to the examination of the linkages between national culture, organisational, and business performance (Merchant *et al.*, 2011; Nazarian *et al.*, 2017; Behl, 2020). In our belief, consideration of cross-cultural variables in future researches can substantially contribute to the internal market orientation theoretical concept. In the same vein, in our opinion, researchers may want to juxtapose the tenets of ‘generations’ theory with the concept of internal market orientation as this array of studies is also proliferating (Gyurák Babel’ová *et al.*, 2020).

Finally, as depicted earlier in the present manuscript, in our research, we documented a paucity of consideration moderating variables that may enforce or mitigate the effects of internal market orientation implementation on dependent variables. In our opinion, it is essential to examine popular HR management practices because they may generate that mentioned moderating valence on the process of internal market orientation implementation. In addressing the notable paucity in the extant research, under the study explicated in Publication 3, we introduced outsourced personnel as a variable moderating the relationship between internal market orientation and organisational performance but did not confirm its moderating effects on employee job satisfaction generated by internal market orientation. Consequently, we encourage fellow researchers to scrutinise this and other widespread contemporary HR procedures, including, for instance, ‘green’ HRM, employee performance evaluation, ‘self-managed and effective teams’ and other relevant HRM practices that

influence the implementation of internal market orientation in firms (Hassan, 2016; Dumont *et al.*, 2017; Gill *et al.*, 2020).

### 6.5. Concluding remarks

As noted earlier in this manuscript, when we started planning this doctoral research project, our prime research motivation was to advance internal market orientation concept. As indicated in the literature review sections in three previous manuscript chapters, this vibrant marketing management concept has been themed by a plethora of research until most recently. However, in our belief, the tenets of internal market orientation theoretical concept require an upgrade, which can make them more adequate to the present conditions of the environment where business organisations are operated. Apparently, if internal market orientation framework does not receive a thrust from researchers who suggest the avenues for the conceptual framework development, this influential stream of research may face the situation when ‘all is said and done’ thus experience a decline with a time to come.

In this vein, we first looked at what could be a ‘red thread’ for the novel concept of internal market orientation. Then we made a supposition that information and communication technologies proliferation are capable of becoming a driving force for bolstering an internal market orientation renaissance in the present era of holistic digitalisation. Because firms widely and successfully blend business processes with utilising the latest information and communication technologies, consequently, we coined digitalisation as the above-noted ‘red thread’ element essential for the internal market orientation model development.

Having first sketched the model’s conceptual vision scheme, we named it ‘iIMO’ to highlight its digital sense. All conventional internal market orientation construct elements,

namely working environment intelligence, interior communications, and management strategies implementation, received ancillary constructs and manifest scales that reflected the concept's digital sense. As we profusely communicated earlier in this manuscript, the developed *i*IMO framework was empirically validated by the execution of two studies that corroborated its positive effects on organisational and business performance. Hence, the adoption and implementation of the proposed framework also generate tangible sense and benefits for firms.

Apart from this significant research outcome for managerial practices mentioned above, we also pose social implications that arise from our study's findings. Whereas internal market orientation concerns humans at their workplace, social implications arising from the execution of the suggested *i*IMO framework are also present. Internal market orientation implementation enacts organisational and business performance, and at the same time, it creates a positive social effect on employees' well-being at work. Ensuring job satisfaction in a firm implies that employees feel justice through the adequacy of rewards remunerations, receive contentment with their skills upgrade via training-development, and believe they are demanded by the colleagues thanks to the engagement in interior communications. Thereby, we argue that internal market orientation has consequences significant to modern global society's well-being as well.

We are hopeful that our suggested approach to deploy and implement the internal market orientation concept in a firm supported by advanced information and communication technologies will attain recognition in the internal market orientation research community and deserve a worthy position in marketing literature. We invite and persuade our fellow researchers to further investigate the digitally-supported internal market orientation concept in various contexts and settings. We are confident that future researchers will contribute to this

field of marketing studies by introducing new scales, new construct variables and new relationships between model variables. These endeavours documented in the literature will undoubtedly enrich and advance internal market orientation theoretical concept further. Finally, we aspire that completed work, and research findings preserve a significance for managers who may gain an interest in adopting the proposed internal market orientation concept because such a managerial approach is capable of securing maintaining and improving organisational and business performance metrics in their firms.

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