THE IMPACT ON FOOD AND BEVERAGE FIRM PERFORMANCE: THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION, CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT AND SERVICE INNOVATION

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Abstract— Globalization leads to increased competition and has great impact on the business environment of food and beverage (F&B) industry. Hence, F&B firms continue to face globalization challenges generated by F&B multinational enterprises, which enhances the need to meet consumer's diversified demand. Therefore, F&B firms operate in a hyper-competitive sector where innovating is often a condition for survival since the product life cycle is fairy short. How F&B companies can maintain their competitiveness becomes an important issue; the improvement of innovation and customer relationship management (CRM) prove to be a critical role to achieve competitive ability and firm performance. There has been a wealth of researches on innovation, but few of them have been carried out from an entrepreneurial orientation (EO) perspective. Despite the fact that study of innovation in service sector and the manufacturing sector has been gaining momentum over the past few decades, investigations of the role of EO and innovation in organizations have mostly centered on information and high-tech industry, with less attention to F&B industry. Nevertheless, innovation capability is one of the main determinants of competitiveness in F&B industry, such as service innovation (SI). With a view to improving customer satisfaction and gaining competitive advantage in the industry, enterprises have to apply proactive market orientation (MO) strategies to their product and service.

The aim of this study is to examine the relationships among EO, SI and MO, and the mediating role of SI and MO between EO and CRM/firm performance will be further discussed. In F&B industry, there is a positive relationship between EO and overall firm performance, mediated by SI; and a positive relationship between EO and CRM is mediated by MO factors. By applying CRM in F&B industry, a company could enhance its ability to achieve the ultimate goal of retaining customers and better firm performance.

Keywords— Entrepreneurial Orientation, Service Innovation, Market Orientation, Customer Relationship Management, Firm Performance.

I. INTRODUCTION

Many scholars found that entrepreneurial orientation (EO) enables firms to perform better than competitors [1] [2] [3]. Reference [4] suggests that EO is a combination of three dimensions: innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk taking. In order to take better decisions under uncertainty and solve the existing problems, a food and beverage (F&B) firm with innovativeness is willing to question and abandon present or given circumstances and do experiments for new ideas with a view to manifesting itself in the launch of new products or services in the exploration of new markets. Therefore, F&B ventures with EO can establish an entrepreneurial strategy leading to more opportunities and firm growth. From the perspective of Service-dominant Logic (S-D Logic), it is crucial for F&B firms to apply innovative elements to their product and service, as those that change significantly how customers co-create value and also impact on market share [5]. With the normous development in the field of technology, the service flexibility is entailed a new and different conception. In addition, the reduction of service cost and the convenience for consumers can lead to higher potential value. Reference [6] also points out that once firms enhance their service abilities and related technologies, they can deliver higher added value to the customers. Thus, service innovation on technology and service capability is one of the key factors for F&B firms to increase customer loyalty and business performance.

Despite the rapid growth of product and service innovation on the F&B sector and the manufacturing sector, majority of past investigations centered on the difference between services and physical products rather than a systematic review on service innovation. However, even if there are related researches, there has been a paucity of research examining service innovation in F&B industry instead of manufacturing and IT industry [7].

Therefore, this study focuses on reviewing the past studies on service innovation in F&B industry.

When it comes to service innovation in F&B industry, business owners have to collect the information of the overall consumption environment so that they can develop products and services to meet market demand. In other words, when a company or enterprise adopts innovative entrepreneurial orientation behavior, such as new products and new ways of producing existing products, it has to take the effectiveness of the product itself into consideration. Moreover, by obtaining the information of the current market and consumers, firms are able to put the

acquired knowledge into their designing idea, and the newly launched products can meet the customers' expectation. Therefore, market-oriented strategy plays a very important role in this procedure. MO is not only one of the main topics of academic research in recent decades, but also a source of competitive advantage in service corporates[8] [9]. Through this kind of corporate climate, market intelligence or technology can be generated, be disseminated, and responsiveness to market intelligence [10]. MO was further examined by researchers[11] [12]that MO would lead to greater value for customers and later resulted in better performances of the organizations [13] [14].

Thus, enterprises should make good use of technology in order to collect customer information through multiple avenues. Nowadays there are more opportunities for food and beverage industry to interact with customers; hence, enterprises should adopt market-oriented strategies to meet the needs of the customer[15] [16]. By implement CRM, enterprises can build long term retention which both companies and customer could benefit from it and further enhance customer satisfaction and firm performance.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW & PROPOSITION DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO)in F&B Industry

Due to the competing changing environment, it is critical for firms to consider the importance of management team from the viewpoint of how their entrepreneurial preferences and values may influence strategic decision making. Reference [17] and [18] suggested that firms demonstrating more entrepreneurial strategic orientation have better performance. Prior scholars also mentioned that EO is an important element for firms to have better growth[10][19][20][21].

The most commonly accepted conceptualization of entrepreneurial orientation was developed by [4], who argued that a firm develops an EO which involves a willingness to take the risks, innovate, and behaves proactively.

2.1.1 Risk-Taking in F&B Industry

Reference [22] points out that entrepreneurs estimate possible risks and endeavor to find methods to reduce, shift or share risks. Reference [23] suggested that risk-taking is a disposition to take bold actions such as venturing into unknown or brand-new markets and committing many resources to a project without knowing the outcome. Present studies show that entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial ventures might take some types of risk, such as personal risk, financial risk, and business risk. Reference [24]. The first one is about personal decision in taking strategic actions. Financial risk includes committing big portion of its resources or borrowing a big amount of money to grow, and venturing into the untested markets or decide to use unproven technologies, for example, is one kind of business risk [24][25].

F&B companies are not just selling food and drinks, they are now offering a brand, an experience, and service. As companies expanding into new markets, they must bring in new ideas, launch novel products, and make sure the delivery system can bring the freshest products in time on a consistent basis, etc. At the same time, to achieve regulations for food, environment, and make sure the workers' safetyis equally important. Reference [26] The above points put the managers' ability to maintain or improve profitabilityat risk.

Thus, F&B managers with EO and the attitude of risk-taking will help the firm gain better performance.

2.1.2. Innovationin F&B Industry

Reference [27] claimed that innovation has been a key source of competitive advantage in enterprises. Innovation is also a vital factor in EO, and highly creative enterprise culture will possibly experience positive results in terms of new products, services, processes, or technologies. Despite the fact that past studies mainly focused on manufacturing industry or IT industry, innovation is seen as a core capability in F&B section as well. Food and service providers in the industry have todevelopservice innovation strategies andprovide innovative products in the highly changeable markets.

As a result, whether or not enterprises are administered in cultures that support novel ideas, experimentations, new solutions, and the innovative processes of managers will decide the strength of the innovativeness dimension of EO[28].

2.1.3. Proactivenessin F&B Industry

Reference[23] defined proactiveness as an opportunity-seeking, forward-looking points of view which involves introducing new products or services in advance. Meanwhile, companies with proactive perspectives operate in anticipation of future demand in order to create change and bring new discoveries to shape the environment.

Therefore, proactive F&B companies tend to be more entrepreneurial than reactive ones. They will create idea based on solutions of present problem, implementation of new product/service processes or forecasting the problem. Past scholars have found that there is a significant relationship between proactivenessand entrepreneurial activities[23][29].Reference [16] also mentioned a link betweenproactiveness and innovation.

With capabilities on proactive environmental strategy in F&B sector, managers are able toestablish sustainable competitive advantage.

2.2. Service Innovation (SI) in F&B Industry

Definitions of innovation range from identifying it as the creation and first successful application of a new product or process [30]; the creation of a new idea [31] and mechanism of creating value[32] [33]; a form of knowledge[34].

After 2000, service innovation has been frequently discussed in the academic fields such as service management and innovations (e.g., [35][36])and service operation management (e.g., [37] [38]). As reference [39] argued that "all innovation, whether a service process or a tangible product, should be viewed as a service-logic innovation," Reference [40] pointed out that SI is new developments which deliver core services and product. Furthermore, to develop successful new services to customer, SI not only comprises the new offered service development, but also the used processes or methods. Reference [41] [42]. Previous service studies on service innovation stated that service providers will better meet the needs of their customers if they innovate while anticipating the competition. It is strategically crucial for services providers to adopt different services for the purpose to differentiate from other competitors in the same industry.

Findings of Reference [19] argue a significant positive relationship between EO, innovation and quality performance in Asian small and medium enterprises, both direct and indirect relationships.Generally done by dynamically rearranging capabilities, EO and the knowledge of present and undiscovered markets lead companies to the innovation of product and process through technology.

Reference[43] points out that the availability of technological servicesstarts to move from novelty to expectation among many consumers.For instance, the advanced mobile payment system brings a few wallet Apps entering the market and there is a growing number of people stated that they would like to choose this option while available.

Accordingly, we consider SI in F&B industry as an ability to adopt the new services or technologies in a timely manner. Thus, we argued that a manager in F&B firm with EO can positively influence the company's SI orientation. As an efficient way to hasten growth and profitability, service innovation is imperative to both F&B firms and their customers.Hence, the following proposition is proposed:

Proposition 1: F&B firms with EO will positively affect SI.

2.3. Market-orientation (MO)

Market orientation is a concept which is believed to have great impact on organizations or companies as it influences how internal customer (employees) think and behave[44]. Reference [45] were the first specialists who started investigating MO and its three dominant components: intelligence gathering, intelligence dissemination, and responsiveness to market intelligence in their research. Besides, MO has been defined as a firm implementing the marketing concept to achieve firm targets and superior performance. Market-oriented firms can discover rapid and diverse changes in buyer's preferences by proactively capturing and disseminating customer information, which is vital in high-tech industries [46].Similarly, F&B industry has expanded globally and become highly competitive in the past decade. With MO, F&B firms can capture the latest trend and the preferences of consumers, further create the needed product and service.On the other hand, Reference [47] emphasizes that market orientation is an organizational culture which consists three behavioral components: customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional co-ordination. Additionally, the above components should include the generation and dissemination of market information and management's response to this information. From above it can be seen that the perspectives of reference [45] and reference [47] are complementary instead of totally unrelated.

Previous empirical entrepreneurship and innovation studies suggests that when EO has a linkage to MO culture, they can make outstanding contribution to successful innovation [48].A business can achieve MO at maximum effect when driven by an EO[47]. MO is valuable since its focus on the organization in the beginning, and it collects information of top customers' needs and competitors' abilities constantly.Second, MO will use the collected information to create continuously customer value[44][47].

In 2002, Reference [49]foundthat the greater the level of EO, the greater is the level of MO, which explains EO drives MO. In high EO companies, members are apt to recognize the needs to reduce uncertainty, do market learning activities and do more calculation about the future risks [50]. In F&B firms with EO, managers are more prone to invest in developing new product or service and to operate in advance of market changes, further collecting consumers' information and satisfy both present and potential needs of them.Hence, the following proposition is proposed:

Proposition2:EO is positively related to MO in F&B firms.

2.4 F&B firms' Performance

Performance is defined as a two-dimensional construct[51]. One of the dimensions is the objective performance, which involves financial or market-based measures such as capacity utilization, profitability, and market share. The other is the judgmental performance, involving customer- and employee-based measures such as service quality, customer satisfaction, and employee satisfaction. Other empirical research has used several accesses to measure firm performance, including financial performance, market effectivenessand strategic

objectives. Reference [52] suggested the most used dimension is financial performance and consists of indicators such as return on asset(ROA), return on investment(ROI), gross margin and profitability.

Enterprises with higher innovativeness might achieve higher organizational performance [53].In highly competitive and regulated F&B industry, successful new product development system is essential since the productlife cycle in the industry is short. Thus, we argued that in F&B firms, SI will positively influence their performance, and firms which successfully innovate and develop new services or novel products would have better chance to improve their business growth. Hence, the following proposition is proposed:

Proposition 3:SI in F&B firms will positively influence firm performance.

EO affect firm performance in different ways [54][23].Reference[55][56] argued that entrepreneurship in a company is positively associated with its performance. In addition, prior research has empirically found that the relationship between EO and performance can critically strengthen over time.For instance, while high innovative behaviors are positively related to sales growth, proactiveness shows positive relationship with sales level, sales growth, and gross profit [54][57]Therefore,based on the argumentsabovethatproposed:

Proposition4:EO in F&B firms will be positively related to firm performance.

2.5. Customer Relationship Management(CRM)

In the field of business, customer management is not a new concept, which is tobuilda beneficial relation with customers [58]. Compared to traditional relationship management (RM), CRM usually operates RM strategies and activities trough IT.Reference [59] point out that "the purpose of CRM is to efficiently and effectively increase the acquisition, growth andretention of profitable customers by selectively initiating, building and maintainingappropriate relationships with them." CRM practice is based on customers' data and is characterized by its technological elements after IT being used. CRM transfers customer data into the actual customer relationships by doing repetitive practices [60], such as collecting customer data, disseminating, using and integrating the data within the company, and all the above requires technology. However, building relationships or enhancing customer value is a more important factor for CRM. Reference[61] also argued that many companies have implemented CRM technology in order that it will enable themselves to improve service for customers, enhance customer retention and ultimately further increase the firm's financial performance. Nowadays CRM is used in varied industries such as banks, financial centers and manufacturing industry[62].It is crucial for those industries, as well as F&B industry,to apply CRM with their strategies. With CRM, firms are able to gather customer data rapidly, identify the most valuable customers during a period, and increase customer loyalty by providing customized products and services [63]. Despite the technological perspectives discussed,the philosophical bases of CRM are relationship marketing, lifetime value, customer profitability, retention and satisfaction created through business process management[64].

F&B industry grows steadilyand is in a highly competitive circumstances since it has developed into a sector with multiple functions, from simply product manufacturing,food and beverages providingto service offering. By implementing CRM, restaurateurs or managerscan increase customer satisfaction andcustomer loyalty, which further maintain competitive advantage.Moreover, F&B firms with CRM implementation would be able to get a better grasp of the trend in the market, as well as the customer needs.

As businesses focus more on customer retention and customer satisfaction, implementing CRM is seen as a top priority for companies to enhance the quality of customer information and satisfy customers' needs. Reference [44] [45] suggested that a market-oriented companyis more willing to focus on the demand of consumers by proactively capturing and disseminating information of customers. Hence, we suggest that a F&B firm with MO will use the collected information to create continuously customer value and build strong customer relationship. The following proposition is proposed:

Proposition 5: MO is positively related to CRM.

It is suggested that an organization adopting entrepreneurial orientation culture enables the members to be more proactive with respect to customer needs and will embrace risks in delivering value to customers with pleasure [65].F&B companies with CRM can refresh their customer by offering new services through IT. e.g. analyze customer's data by data mining and create overall viewpoint from customers. [66]Additionally, EO will positively affect CRM and its related strategies could be implemented sinceF&B managerswith EO are more willing to take risks of innovative ideas which might have the customers obtain the new service process or novel products.Hence, the following propositions are advanced:

Proposition 6: In F&B firms, there is a positive impact of EO on CRM.

2.5. The conceptual model of this study

The conceptual model of this study is illustrated in Fig. 1.

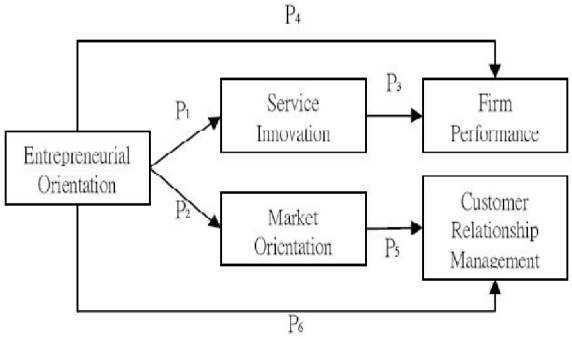


Fig. 1. The conceptual model of this study.

CONCLUSIONS

F&B industryhas expanded globally and become highly competitive in the past decade. Due to the low entry barrier of F&B industry,intense competition in the market leads to high rate of elimination and replacement.Thus, the linkage between F&B business supplier and customers becomes gradually crucial for customer acquisition and retention. To gain better practice of CRM and better firm performance, a F&B firm should apply EO strategies and adopt MO culture for the sake of innovative product launching and customer retention.

In the future, this study will discuss the relationships between EO and F&B firm performance, EO and CRM, and further examine the mediating role of SI and MO between EO and CRM/firm performance. This study hopes to reinforce the current understanding of the construct. In F&B industry, there is a positive relationship between EO and overall firm performance, mediated by SI; and a positive relationship between EO and CRM is mediated by MO factors.

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