



Customer orientation, Cross-functional orientation, Competition orientation, and Absorption Capacity on Operational Performance of Pharmacies retail Business in Thailand

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Abstract

The operational performance of the global pharmaceutical industry is mainly affected by the dimensions of market orientation such as customer and cross-functional orientation. Though, the main objective of the study is to accelerate the operational performance of the pharmaceutical sector of Thailand mainly through the better dimensions of market orientation which includes customer, competition and cross-functional orientations. This research paper also clarifies the mediating role of absorptive capacity in improving the operational performance of the sector. The study explores the roles of market orientation dimensions and absorptive capacity related to 15 top pharmaceutical firms of Thailand, and data were also collected from these firms. The methods like SEM, confirmatory analysis, KMO and Bartlett's test are used to calculate and analyze data. Regarding the mediation role of AC, the study found that absorptive capacity positively mediates the relationship between operational performance and market orientation dimensions. According to results, it is also found that the direct impact of market orientation dimensions on the operational performance of the pharmaceutical sector of Thailand has significant and effective. All the outcomes of the given research study manifest that market orientation strategy overall strengthen the operational performance of the pharmaceutical sector.

Keywords: Operational performance, market orientation dimension, customer orientation, competition orientation, cross-functional orientation, absorptive capacity

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1 Introduction

The efficient operating activities of any pharmaceutical company majorly based on its organizational culture and absorption capacity in order to retain its position in the

market (Chienwattanasook & Jermsittiparsert, 2019). This is an informative approach to majorly focus on better marketing orientation based dimensions in order to enhance the productivity and reputation of a company in a



customer market(Jarernsiriornkul, Phueanpinit, Pongwecharak, & Krska, 2016). In Thailand, the majority of the pharmaceutical companies majorly focused on enhancing the marketing strategies and other operational capabilities in product development. Such strategically approach helps the management to attract and retain a large number of customers in the competitive market(Ahmad, Shariff, & Hafeez, 2017).

These factors play an important part in the organizational development of such drug

making companies in this state. That's the reason that the operational performance of such industrial companies is continuously increasing and the ratio of salaries of their working is gradually increasing(Wongtanchai, Ussahawanitchakit, & Jhundra-indra, 2017). According to the survey, the average salary of a pharmacist is based on his capabilities and experience level(Amorpinayo, 2018). In the current year, an operational performance-based salary of Pharmacist in Thailand is given below;

Experience	Amount in THB	Increase rate
0-2 years	73,500	0%
2-5 years	92,800	26%
5-10 years	122,000	32%
10-15 years	144,000	18%
15-20 years	159,000	11%
More than 20 years	169,000	6%

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Table 1: Experiences based salary of Thailand's Pharmacists

But in the last years, the productivity of pharmaceutical companies was continuously decreasing, because of the bad operational activities(Ratchakit-Nedsuwan et al., 2020). This lower operational performance was due to the lack of awareness regarding the brand and its related products & services to the targeted customers. From a future perspective, there are more chances to upgrade the operational performance level of the pharmaceutical companies in Thailand's customer market.

The majority of the market campaign in this industry is now majorly focused on developing values among the customers regarding the company's products and services (Jarernsiriornkul et al., 2016). In 2017, the percentage of lack of public awareness due to weak marketing strategies was increased by up to 30%, which made a major impact on the profitability ratio of a company(Wisawapaisarn, Yodmongkol, & Niwatananun, 2017). The related results regarding weak operational performance in Thailand are given below;



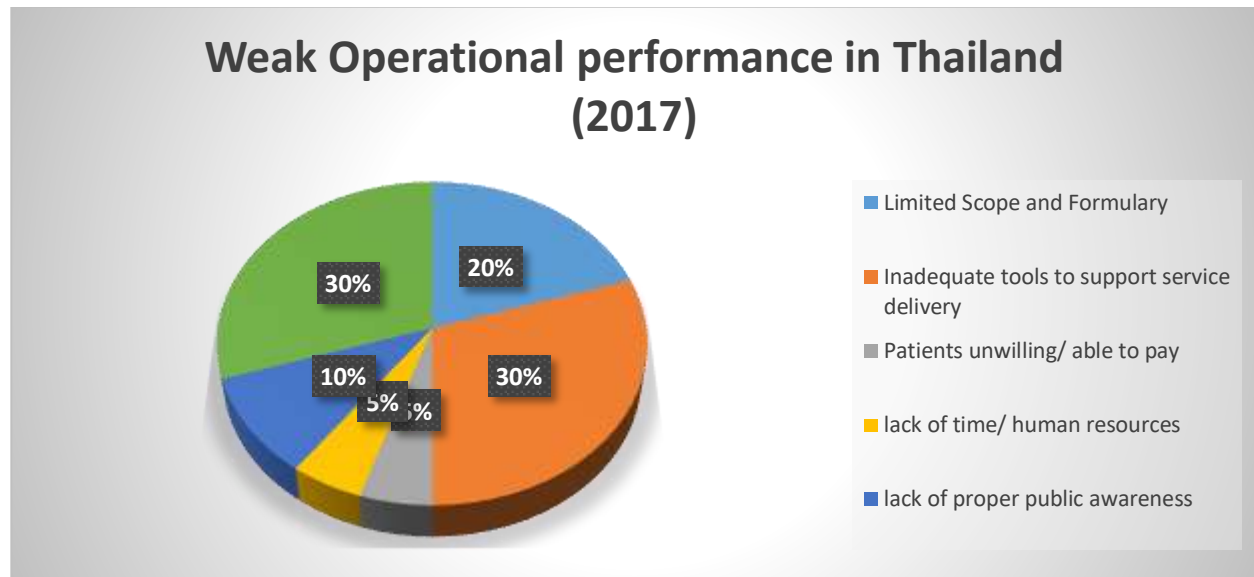


Figure 1: Weak Operational performance in Thailand (2017)

The above table and pie-chart based survey data show that the productivity of a pharmaceutical company is majorly based on efficient organizational performance in the developing and developed countries (Tangcharoensathien, Witthayapipopsakul, Panichkriangkrai, Patcharanarumol, & Mills, 2018). According to the market scenario, efficient sales and marketing strategies directly motivate the targeted customers to use the company's product and services in a quite efficient and entrepreneurial way (Suriyawongpaisal et al., 2019).

An absorption capability plays a major role in this case, to efficiently recognize the value of external and latest information regarding customer preferences. According to entrepreneurs, such innovative capabilities helps the companies to strengthen their commercial ends. In Thailand, only those companies are profitable whose management majorly focus on customer-oriented marketing strategies in their operating activities (Phueanpinit, Pongwecharak, Krska, & Jarernsiripornkul, 2018).

2 Literature Review

2.1 Market orientation and Operational Performance

In order to evaluate the impact of the market orientation on the performance level of an organization, a research was conducted by Udriyah with others in their research articles. According to the scholars, the profit margin of a company is majorly based on customer oriented, competitors oriented and cross-functional oriented marketing approaches of an organization (Migdadi, Zaid, Yousif, Almestarihi, & Al-Hyari, 2017; Udriyah, Tham, & Azam, 2019). These are constructive researchers which majorly aim to critically evaluate the current changing environment situation and makes such policies and decision-making process in their marketing department that a large number of stakeholders have become loyal with the company products (Al-Henzab, Tarhini, & Obeidat, 2018).

According to professional scholars, the operational performance of an organization is only developed due to the efficient marketing and sales department activities in the market. In this technological world, the majority of the researches is based on upgrading their marketing campaign in the market in order to

upgrade the performance level of an organization level (Chu, Wang, & Lado, 2016). Hence, such studies have been proposed the following hypothesis;

H1: Market orientation has a significant direct impact on Operational Performance

2.2 Mediating Role of Absorption Capability between Customer Orientation and Operational Performance

According to Shu-Yi Yand and others, a customer oriented marketing approach is considered as one of the basic and important role to mark a company position in a highly diverse customer market (Yang & Tsai, 2019). According to the researchers, the absorption capacity and innovations are closely correlated with one another by considering the customer orientation as a major controlling variable which motivate the managers and owners to change their operating activities to fulfill the market demand. This is a constructive approach to maintain the challenging situation of the customers in the industry and run the economy of an economy. According to the researchers, the majority of the researchers are quite innovative and want some new things in the company's product (Louro, Brandão, Jaklič, & Sarcinelli, 2019).

They stated that such adsorption capability of the company's management in the changing environment helps them to earn a large amount of profit margin, by continuously innovate something in a market. In the end, the majority of them are concluded that the cross-functional integration and customer orientation based marketing strategies help the marketer to shape the behavioral approach of the customers in the market, which fulfill the company's operating activities (Adel & Habib, 2018). So, the proposed hypothesis is given below;

H2: Absorption Capability plays a significant moderating role between Customer Orientation and Operational Performance

2.3 Mediating Role of Absorption Capability between Competitive Orientation and Operational Performance

Many researches are conducted by different researchers to critically evaluate the importance of competitors in the decision-making process of the marketing manager (Hernandez-Perlines, 2018). According to them, a rival existence in the market pressurized an organization to make some effective strategies and customer oriented marketing strategies or tools to make a product innovation, in order to earn a large amount of market shares and competitive advantage (Khalifa, 2018). According to their researchers, the majority of the innovations in the products and services of a company is majorly based on the rival strategies towards the same products and services (Jiang, Chai, Shao, & Feng, 2018). They stated that such activities create many opportunities in front of the customers to purchase their liked product.

They concluded that the adsorption capabilities of a marketing department helps the management to critically evaluate the strategies and activities of the competitors, and then innovate some additional features and quality of the company products and services. After these steps, market them to the same targeted customer (Jiang et al., 2018; Lii & Kuo, 2016). Also, it is a constructive approach to upgrade the competitive advantage in the customer's market. According to researchers, this factor creates a healthy competition and maintain the quality of the products (Croom, Vidal, Spetic, Marshall, & McCarthy, 2018). They said that such approach boosts the operational performance level of the company in the market. Hence, they suggested the following hypothesis;

H3: Absorption Capability plays a significant moderating role between Competitive Orientation and Operational Performance

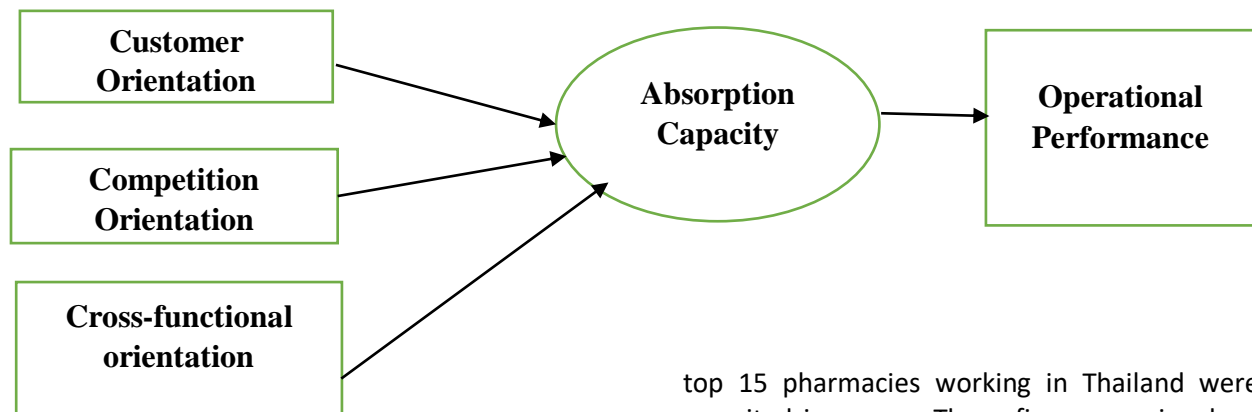
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2.4 Mediating Role of Absorption Capability between Cross-functional Orientation and Operational Performance

In 2018, a research was conducted by Bending with others, where they critically evaluate the feature of the cross feature orientation based marketing campaign which motivates the management to upgrade its operational performance level (Bendig, Enke, Thieme, & Brettel, 2018). According to the researchers, this approach helps the management and its employees to cross check their productivity and diversity factor with the external environmental factors, and then make an efficient strategies in the marketing campaign. In 2019 researches, the major aim of the researcher is to critically evaluate the importance of the absorption capability in the enhancement of the cross-functional activities of an organization and developing organizational performance (Ghahroudi, Hoshino, & Ahmadpoury, 2019; Hausberg & Leeflang, 2019).

2.5 Theoretical Framework



3 Methodology

3.1 Sample and Data:

This study is carried out to explore the impact of purposed variables on operational performance, in Thailand's Pharmaceutical sector that is largest market of Thailand and expected to grow double in 2020. Firms engaged in making drugs face highly innovative environment so they need the knowledge about new technologies formulas and process. On the basis of purposive sampling, 410 workers from

According to the researchers, such a cross-functional marketing approach helps the management to invest in some entrepreneurial projects in the competitive and customer market. This approach will give the confidence level to the customers to remain loyal with the company products and services (Jugend, Araujo, Pimenta, Gobbo Jr, & Hilletoth, 2018). This factor enhances the reputation of the company in the market and helps the management to adjust their operating activities with the changing and diverse nature based external environment (Denford & Ferriss, 2018). They stated that most of the time, the shareholders create a major pressure to innovate new products (Lii & Kuo, 2016). So, the above-mentioned studies proposed the following hypothesis;

H4: Absorption Capability plays a significant moderating role between Cross-functional Orientation and Operational Performance.

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top 15 pharmacies working in Thailand were recruited in survey. Those firms were involved in survey that were highly recognizable, innovative and have high revenues. Research method was online survey and data collection tool was self-administrative questionnaire. Questionnaire was distributed through google forms so maximum subjects can participate in survey in less time and less cost. Five hundred questionnaires were filled online by pharmacies workers. 35 questionnaires were automatically rejected because they were filled in less 90

seconds, and 55 questionnaires have insufficient data, 410 questionnaires were valid and usable for further analysis. The details such as email addresses and contact information was obtained from pharmaceutical association of Thailand.

Measurements

Variables of purposed model for this research are measured by altered scales adopted from previous literature. All variables were quantified in 5 Point-scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree.

Customer orientation is measured by new items adapted from a scale developed and confirmed by Martin and Javalgi (2016). Three items measured the market orientation, including an item 'Our business objectives are driven primarily by customer satisfaction' which indicated a value $\alpha = 0.926$ for reliability which designates very low composite reliability. Measures of competition orientation were adopted from Jogaratnam (2017) framework, 3 items were used "Our competitive advantage is derived from our understanding of customer needs" to gauge a firms orientation toward completion. Responses were recorded on 5 Point- Likert scale yielding $\alpha = 0.829$.

Items to validate Cross-functional coordination were adopted from Jogaratnam (2017), three items were used one sample item is " We survey our customers at least once per year to assess the quality of our services" to measure cross functional ability of firms and Cronbach's alpha for this construct was 0.909. Respondents were asked to rate their responses on 5 Likert- point scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree. Absorptive capacity has two dimensions Exploratory learning, Exploitative learning and Transformative learning, it was evaluated by incorporating a scale developed by Lane (2006). Ten items were adapted from this scale to measure firm ability to recognize valuable knowledge for example; We actively collect external information/knowledge".

Responses were recorded on 5 Likert- point scale and results showed 0.925 Cronbach Alpha for this construct. Items for operational performance were derived from (Inman, Sale, Green Jr, & Whitten, 2011) scale to evaluate overall firm performance. One of the 4 items of this scale is "Innovation brings significant profits for the company" responses were recorded on 5-point scale with $\alpha = 0.929$.

4 Results and Analysis

4.1 Demographics

This empirical research was taken place in Thailand pharmaceutical sector to explore the relationship between marketing orientation and operational performances with mediating role of absorptive capacity, data was assimilated from a purposive sample of 410 respondents. As per the statistical analysis 235 workers were male, and closely 175 were female that's indicate male dominancy, 29.8 % were less than 25 years of age, majority of respondents 46.3 % has age of 25 years to 35 years, 20 % aged between 35 years to 45 years old and 3.9 % aged more than 45 years. 185 respondents have worked for at least 2 to 5 years in this industry however, only 36 workers have 8 years of experience.

4.2 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics present the summary of data set characteristics, so in table 1 descriptive statistic are quantified. N in the table is total number of observation in our case it is 410, Minimum value is 1 and maximum value is 5 so no outliers are found in the data. The mean of nominated constructs such as Customer orientation, competition orientation, Cross-functional coordination, Absorptive capacity and operational performance is 3.1154, 3.2382, 3.4203, 3.3476 and 3.3809 respectively for each construct, which is nearest to 3.3 representing neutral and agreed responses. To test the normality of data skewness values are considered, here these values are in range of -1+1 confirming normal distribution.

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Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

		CustOri	CompOri	CresOri	AbsoCap	OpPerf
N	Valid	410	410	410	410	410
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.1154	3.2382	3.4203	3.3476	3.3809
Std. Error of Mean		.05700	.05207	.05989	.05866	.05678
Median		3.0000	3.3333	4.0000	3.8000	3.8000
Skewness		-.144	-.197	-.385	-.530	-.418
Std. Error of Skewness		.121	.121	.121	.121	.121
Kurtosis		-1.090	-.916	-1.047	-.833	-.864
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.240	.240	.240	.240	.240
Minimum		1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum		5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

4.3 KMO and Bartlett's test

Table 2 presents the suitability of sampling size relevant to research by using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. This came up with .932 as measure of adequacy that is between threshold values of 0.8 to 1 which indorses that selected sample adequacy. In Bartlett's Test of Sphericity The approximate of Chi-square is 10209.361 and 253 degree of freedom.

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Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.932
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	10209.361
	df	253
	Sig.	.000

4.4 Rotated Component Matrix

In table 3 Factor loading for all constructs and items that is calculated by Confirmatory factor analysis is demonstrated (Hassan, Hameed, Basheer, & Ali, 2020; Iqbal & Hameed, 2020). Rotated Component Matrix basically indicates data accuracy and validity of content. It is obvious that all the item's factor loading is > 0.7 with no cross loading bias which make these constructs valid.

Table 3: Rotated Component Matrix

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
CU1			.827		
CU2			.864		
CU3			.850		
CO1					.748
CO2					.835
CO3					.797
CF1				.817	
CF2				.852	
CF3				.848	
AC1	.790				
AC2	.815				
AC3	.826				
AC4	.864				



AC5	.915
AC6	.879
AC7	.930
AC8	.900
AC9	.927
AC10	.925
OP1	.842
OP2	.866
OP3	.890
OP4	.877

Convergent and Discriminant Validity

Furthermore, Table 3 incorporates Convergent validity and Discriminant Validity to check relatedness and un-relatedness of constructs by finding composite reliability Average, Variance Extracted and discriminant validity of separate variable. The operation performance has highest composite reliability and competition orientation devours the lowest composite

reliability. Besides this, customer orientation possess highest AVE 0.807 and contrary competition orientation has lowest AVE as 0.620. Since CR and AVE values for all variables are > 0.7 and >0.5, ensuring convergent validity. The values plotted in diagonal form are indicating discriminating validity as value for each construct is greater than previous value.

Table 4: Convergent and Discriminant Validity

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	AC	CU	CO	CE	OP
AC	0.925	0.795	0.244	0.984	0.892				
CU	0.926	0.807	0.370	0.987	0.402	0.898			
CO	0.829	0.620	0.370	0.988	0.379	0.608	0.788		
CE	0.909	0.770	0.270	0.990	0.494	0.520	0.461	0.877	
OP	0.929	0.766	0.253	0.991	0.282	0.450	0.503	0.433	0.875

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4.5 Model fitness

Model fitness measure the fit of model with hypothesis, observed values are illustrated in table 5. It can be determined by seeing the results that observed values are compliant with threshold values so overall model is fit.

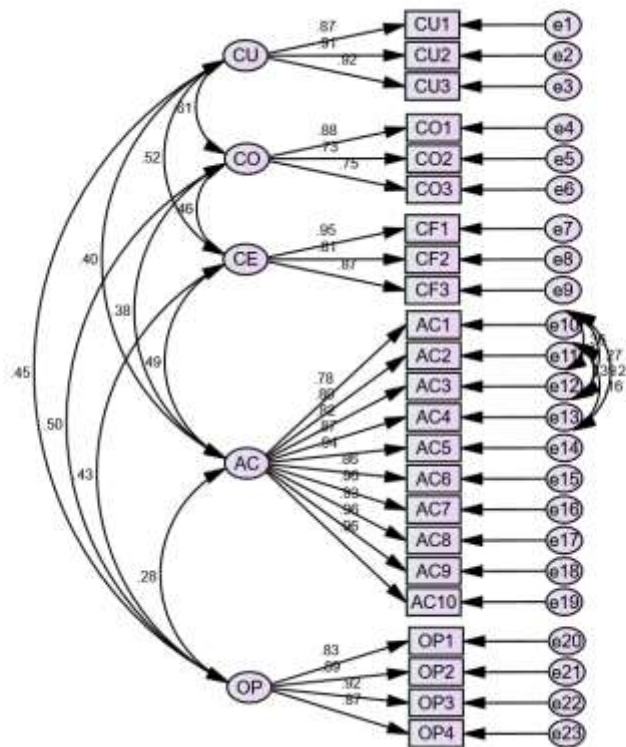
Table 5: Model Fit Indices for Overall Model

Model Fit Indicators	CMIN/DF	GFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Threshold Value	≤ 3	≥ 0.80	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≤ 0.08
Observed Value	2.590	0.896	0.967	0.967	0.966	0.062

Note: GFI = Good Fit Index, IFI = Incremental Fit Index, TLI = Tucker Lewis Index, CFI = Comparative Fit Index, and RMSEA = Root Mean Square of Error Approximation.



Figure 1: CFA



4.6 Structural Equation Modeling

In order to test structural relationship between hypothetical model, SEM was administrated on SPSS to draw results regarding relationship of the variables. It was depicted that unit increase in cross-functional orientation will directly increase 34.9 percent in absorptive capacity because relationship is significant so this hypothesis is accepted. The single unit change

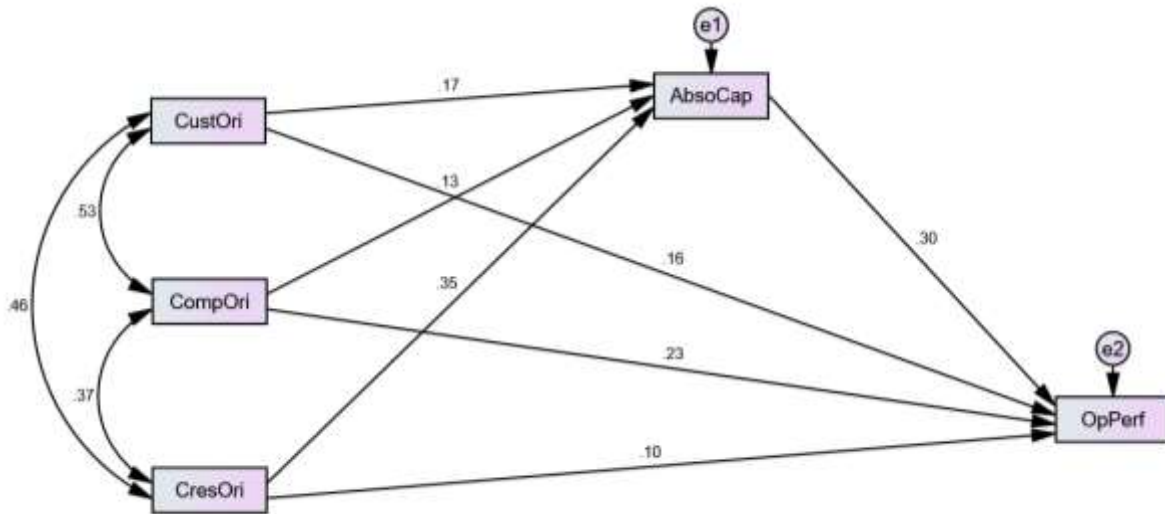
in competition orientation generates 23.3 percent increase in operational performance which direct and significant impact. The mediation of absorptive capacity provokes operational performance 29 percent through customer orientation, competition orientation and cross-functional orientation. All hypotheses have significant relationship and are accepted.

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Table 6: Structural Equation Modeling

Total Effect	CresOri	CompOri	CustOri	AbsoCap
AbsoCap	.349***	.127**	.173**	.000
OpPerf	.203**	.272**	.209**	.299**
Direct Effect	CresOri	CompOri	CustOri	AbsoCap
AbsoCap	.349***	.127**	.173**	.000
OpPerf	.099	.234**	.157**	.299**
Indirect effect	CresOri	CompOri	CustOri	AbsoCap
AbsoCap	.000	.000	.000	.000
OpPerf	.104**	.038*	.052**	.000

Figure 2: SEM



5 Discussion

The role of marketing orientation dimensions like customer, competition and cross-functional orientations is very important in accelerating the operational as well as the financial performance of any particular sector. A recent study by Chong, Man, and Kim (2018) discussed that marketing orientation dimensions provide significant opportunities for the sector to enhance as well as accelerate operational performance. The results of the study manifest that the mediating impact of absorptive capacity has significant on the relationship between customer orientations and the operational performance of the sector. Absorptive capacity play a crucial role in developing a system with knowledge and also promoting the organizational learning process and this directly influences the operational performance of the sector (García-Sánchez, García-Morales, & Martín-Rojas, 2018). Thus, the hypothesis regarding the mediating impact of absorptive capacity on the relationship between customer orientation and the OP has been accepted.

Measurements of the results also indicate that the mediating impact of AC on the relationship between competition orientation and the OP has been significant, the reason for this, AC can

develop and well manage alliances between firms and sectors which has a positive impact on CO and operational performance of the sector.

6 Conclusion

The research mainly focuses on accelerating the operational as well as the financial performance of Pharmacy firms of Thailand mainly through the dimensions of market orientation. The mediating role of absorptive capacity has also been identified in the study to accelerate the operational performance of the sector. The study collected information mainly from 410 employees from the top 15 pharmaceutical companies in Thailand. The techniques and methods like CFA, KMO and descriptive statistics are also being used to compute the results of the study.

6.1 Implications and Limitations

The positive outcomes and verdicts of the given research study will apply to the pharmacies firms of Thailand and also help them to understand the relationship between market orientation dimensions which mainly includes customer orientation, cross-functional orientation, and competition orientation. The results of the study will also help the Pharmacy firms of Thailand in managing the operational performance of the sector mainly through the

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mediating role of absorptive capacity. The study also aids future analysts to gain insights into the aspects of market orientation and its dimensions to enhance the operational performance of the sector.

The study also has some limitations such as the results of the study is limited to the Pharmacies companies of Thailand, along with the use of just one mediating variable. Hence, fellow analysts and researchers proposed to carry out a study that focuses on other sectors of Thailand to gain useful information related to study variables. Fellow researchers should also incorporate other important methods and tests in the study to make it more effective and generate better results.

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