

Marketing creativity orientation and marketing profitability: an empirical study of software businesses in Thailand

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Keywords

Marketing Creativity Orientation, Production Innovation, NPD, Marketing Profitability

Abstract

Many firms compete in exploiting and exploring substantial resources to build their marketing innovation in order to maintain a competitive advantage. The purpose of this study is to investigate the capability of the firm to compete through marketing creativity orientation and examine the influence of marketing creativity orientation through the consequential factors in order to achieve marketing profitability. Multiple regression analysis is employed to analyze the relationship between these variables. The samples from this study are 83 software businesses in Thailand. The results reveal that product originality, and marketing flexibility had significant positive impacts on product innovation and new product development. Furthermore, the research finds that product innovation (PI) and new product development (NPD) have significant positive impacts on marketing profitability (MP). This study is based on managerial implications of chief executive officers, marketing managers, or business owners, revealing crucial information that supports the decisions to allocate the resources of the firm.

1. Introduction

An intense competitive business environment has an impact on the market by reducing the life cycle of the products. Several businesses usually seek a new and excellent approach for performing their businesses due to a growing globalized and complicated market. Executive challenges comprise extending their production base overseas or exporting, which leads to a more competitive advantage. Therefore, there are many new products from a market's opening. Creativity and innovation are important factors in generating and keeping a competitive advantage for survival of the companies (Iqbal, 2011). Numerous businesses employ creativity and innovation to develop a marketing strategy, because these tactics create different strategies and provide superior competition as new ideas are helpful in solving problems or improving application implementation (Matthew man, Rose, and Hetherington, 2009; Franken, 2007; Amabile, 1996).

The association is growing and developing smoothly, one essential thing that is promoting the organization encourages creativity. It aims to constantly develop creative ideas to create a new form of goods and services. Sometimes creativity can be close to such a change to the existing products and can be better compared to the old things that could be looked at in terms of product renewal for longer product life cycle, including improvement and innovation. Furthermore, marketing environments have rapidly changed and developed in a global market, mainly in an open economy with rapid change in innovation, globally verbose bases of origination, innovation, manufacturing capability (Teece, 2007).

Thailand benefits from a geographical advantage, as it is a hub in the AEC market, which has an impact on dynamic trade. Thailand is currently facing rapid change both internally and externally. These changes pose opportunities and challenges as they cause significant risk for the development and adaptation in order to keep pace with the dynamics of the environment. Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI) the survey found that Thailand's software market and software services in 2013, with production value only 45,652 million baht, representing a growth rate of 9.9 percent by the year 2012, classified as a production value of software 10,661 million baht.

The main research questions of this study are as follows: How the dimension of marketing creativity orientation competes through marketing profitability? How the consequence factors influence marketing creativity orientation in order to achieve marketing profitability? The first aim of this study is to investigate the capability of the firm to compete through marketing creativity orientation. The second aim is to examine the influence of marketing creativity orientation through the consequential factors in order to achieve marketing profitability.

This study begins by reviewing the relevant theoretical foundation on the importance of research to define the marketing creativity orientation and marketing profitability and research proposal. Moreover, this

study investigates the context of software businesses in Thailand with the aim to guide future studies research design and contribution to managerial operation.

2. Literature review and hypotheses developments

Theoretical Foundation

The research model of this study is shown in figure 1 and indicates the premise of the effects on three dimensions of marketing creativity orientation. The consequences are: new product development, product innovation, and marketing profitability. Linkages of these constructs are indicated in figure 1.

Resource Based Theory

This theory was developed in 1995 from the comparative advantage theory of competition (Hunt and Morgan, 1995). Later, it was revealed in numerous articles to yield the resource-advantage theory (R-A theory). Hunt and Morgan (1997) defined the resource based theory as a procedure theory of competitive organizational behavior that highlights the significance of market segments and resources. Competitive dynamics are disequilibrium-provoking, with endogenous innovation. Therefore, there are continuous fights among firms which attempt to compare their resource advantages with competitors. It eventually allows a market position of competitive advantage in order to gain superior financial performance. Firms learn through competitive behavior resulting from feedback from relative financial performance to signal relative market position and relative resources. The resources refer to tangible and intangible existence of the firm, supporting the firm to produce and to offer value for the market segment. The market segment refers to identifiable consumer groups whose tastes and preferences in the consumer group are significantly homogeneous, but they are heterogeneous across the consumers groups (Hunt and Morgan 1997). In terms of resources, the market position is measured by comparative advantage, as well as parity and comparative disadvantage. The resource-based theory emphasizes that a source of competitive advantage leads to sustainable performance. Particularly, firm resources are inimitable, precious, non-substitutable and rare.

In this research, the resource-based theory is applied to that strategic marketing creativity orientation, as a resource, encouraging a business firm to outperform their competitors and gain better position in the market. In regards to elements of competitive advantage, there are three variables: new product development, product innovation, and marketing profitability response success, sustainable marketing advantage.

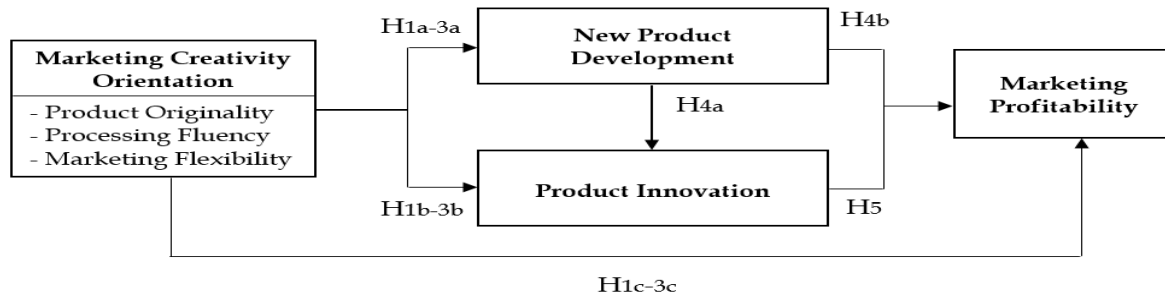


Figure 1. Relationship of Marketing Creativity Orientation and Marketing Profitability

Marketing creativity is defined as a dimension of organizational creativity comprising creative process, creative product, creative person, and creative situation. Each of these components interacts with one another (Brown, 1989; Harrington, 1990). Some academics indicate that by involving many other marketing activities which are implemented for innovative solutions can enhance a firm's capability to adapt itself to the changes in its environment and the unstable demand of its customers (Oldham and Cummings, 1996). This suggests three levels of creativity: connectivity of individuals, the group of people relevant to the organization, and society (Amabile, 1988; King & Anderson, 1990). Consequently, scholarly works show that creativity is like a useful or suitable idea to solve a problem. (Franken, 2007). Furthermore, creativity is different from innovation in that creativity comes first, like thinking of a fresh appropriate idea following an improvement of innovative products (Amabile, 1996; Franken, 2007). However, marketing program creativity refers to overall product development of activities achieving the performance goal by providing unique and meaningful products and services to the customer. This study attempts to extend content of marketing creativity with new dimensions in the perspective of creativity organization and marketing orientation.

Thus, this study extends previous researches of marketing creativity orientation comprising three dimensions namely product originality, processing fluency and marketing flexibility. Linking these three dimensions to product innovation and new product development would result in marketing profitability.

Product Originality

Product Originality is the first dimension of marketing creativity orientation. It focuses on detection of the changes in the market's needs, so that firms may develop this ability in order to successfully introduce new products to the market (Leonidou, Palihawadana, Chari, and Leonidou, 2011). This indicates that the firm should perform product originality in order to gain more opportunities in business, as well as supporting marketing innovation and new product development. Similarly, previous researches indicate that the impact of different innovative capability is returned by product innovation performance (Pekovic and Galia, 2009). In this study, product originality is viewed as first mover that can generate new product development. Therefore, the research relationship is hypothesized below.

Hypothesis 1: Product originality has a positive influence on (a) new product development and (b) product innovation (c) marketing profitability.

Processing Fluency

Fluency, relation comfort or difficulty associated with processing a stimulus, is an influential cue in a wide collection of cognitive processes (e.g., physical perception, memory retrieval, etc.). Fluency is characterized by processing being faster and more precise, while demanding fewer cognitive resources. Fluency refers to production of large quantity that exceeds the general average produced by an individual within a specified period of time. Fluency may be verbal, intellectual, or expressive. Processing fluency is not a process per se but is rather described by how easy a process feels (Oppenheimer, 2008). In this study, processing fluency is viewed as the process of new ideas, in which the business has to think and act fast, with a focus on database marketing, and orientation on approach or new techniques.

Hypothesis 2: Processing fluency has a positive influence on (a) new product development and (b) product innovation (c) marketing profitability.

Marketing Flexibility

Marketing flexibility refers to the firm's capability which supports the earning of more benefits under a flexible and fluctuating situation where firms have to adapt to production factors and customer satisfaction (Tang and Tikoo, 1999). This flexibility constructs a bridge of cooperation between the research and development of products (Du and Ai, 2008). Similarly, Tang and Tikoo (1999) state that operational marketing flexibility positively affects market value. Therefore, the research relationship is hypothesized below. In this study, marketing flexibility is viewed as the business to focus on participation of opinions and the way to propose means of working together, focusing on the exchange of information between departments.

Hypothesis 3: Marketing flexibility has a positive influence on (a) new product development and (b) product innovation (c) marketing profitability.

New Product Development

New product development refers to the firm's capability to improve products and launch new products of high quality into the market, with attention also paid to cost and time. Similarly, academics mention that quality and prices are factors affecting customers' decisions (Racela and Thourungrroje, 2010; Hult et al., 2004). Furthermore, scholars argue that new product development is a main driver of company performance and organizational survival (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1995). New product development (NPD) refers to the practice of inventing, creating and presenting a new product or service to the market for the accomplishment of the firm (Charpavang and Ussahawanitchakit, 2011; Nakata and Siva Kumar, 1996). This indicates that a new product can increase marketing performance. Therefore, the research relationship is hypothesized below.

Hypothesis 4: New product development has a positive influence on (a) product innovation and (b) marketing profitability.

Product Innovation

Product innovation is defined as the company's capability to implement marketing, which is first and unique for marketing activity. Academics define innovation as a process leading to a competitive advantage (Branzei and Vertinsky, 2006). Particularly, product innovation will enhance developing products and services differently (Naidoo, 2010). Moreover, previous researches indicate that the result of product innovation is a

strong indicator of financial performance under the modern production and value creation (Goedhuys and Veugelers, 2011). Therefore, the research relationships are hypothesized as follows.

Hypotheses 5: Product innovation has a positive influence on marketing profitability.

Marketing Profitability

Marketing profitability is explained as more successful marketing practices in gaining a competitive advantage over competitors. Likewise, business achieves efficient marketing activity, cost reduction, and product quality. This leads firms to higher marketing performance such as perception of customer behaviors in terms of increasing sales to existing customers, sales growth, market share growth and increasing profitability (Hultman, Katsikeas, and Robson, 2011; Reimann et al., 2010). Similarly, Stuart-Kregor (2006) indicates that marketing profitability is the driving force of a business to succeed in marketing performance. Administrators should monitor information such as increase in new customers, sales growth, market share, profitability, revenue growth, and return on investment in order to assess strategic planning and management competency, leading to the achievement of a sustainable competitive advantage from resources and capabilities (Barney, 1991; Conner and Prahalad, 1996)

3. Research methods

Sample Selection and Data Collection Procedure

The unstable environments have quickly changed and impacted the global market, particularly in an open economy with rapid changes in innovation causing more complications. Marketing creativity orientation is essential for the company due to creativity and innovation capabilities which are important factors generating and sustaining a competitive advantage (Iqbal, 2011). Software businesses were selected for this study in order to observe how this business enhances marketing performance under a dynamic environment. The source for the sample was taken from The Association of Thai Software Industry (ATSI), which provided 231 firms (<http://www.atsi.or.th/> December 2013). With regards to the survey distribution, 16 firms were already out of business; therefore, there were 215 firms remaining as the sample population.

Data collection was conducted by mail survey. The questionnaire was sent to 215 firms, of which key informants were marketing directors or marketing managers. The researcher received 83 respondents. The effective response rate was approximately 38.60%. The response rate for a mail survey with an appropriate follow-up procedure, if greater than 20%, is considered acceptable (Aaker, Kumar and Day, 2001). Furthermore, a non-response bias and to detect and consider possible problems with non-response errors, the assessment and investigation of non-response-bias are tested with the first and second wave data as recommended by Armstrong and Overton (1977). The mean of demographic variables of the two waves is tested by t-test whether the means are different. The result showed no significant differences. Thus, a non-response bias is not a problem in this study.

Variables and Measurements

This research employs a questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. All constructs in the model include multiple-item scales. Each of these variables is measured by a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The details of each variable are presented in the following sections.

Dependent Variables

In this research, marketing profitability is the dependent variable. It is the operational outcomes by linking it to both inside and outside factors which enhance marketing creativity orientation. A five-item scale was developed to measure how firms explicitly achieve an operational outcome by focusing on sales growth, revenue, market share, customer acceptance, achievement of the marketing goals, and market leaders (Hooley, Geenly, Cadogan, and Fahy, 2005; Slater, Hult and Olson, 2010)

Independent Variables

Marketing Creativity Orientation is the focal construct of this research. It comprises three dimensions: namely, product originality, processing fluency, and marketing flexibility. All independent variables are proposed as follows:

Product Originality (PO) is measured by a five-item scale. This ability of thinking facilitates the detection of the changes in the market's needs so firms may develop this ability in order to successfully introduce new products to the market (Leonidou, Palihawadana, Chari, 2011).

Processing Fluency (PF) is measured by a five-item scale. This ability is not a process per se but is rather described by how easy a process feels (Oppenheimer, 2008). In this study, processing fluency is viewed as the process of new ideas, in which the business has to think and act fast, with a focus on database marketing, and

orientation on approach or new techniques. It is the result of a metacognitive mechanism that signals the ease with which information is processed (Schwarz, 2004; Schwarz et al., 1991).

Marketing Flexibility (MF) is assessed by a five-item scale, and it is defined as the firm's which supports the earning of more benefits under a flexible and fluctuating situation where firms have to adapt to production factors and customer satisfaction (Tang and Tikoo, 1999). Similarly, academics define good teamwork as nature of integration, which include flexibility, participation, information exchange, comments and coordination among different divisions within the firm. These are shown in inter-functional climate (Moenaert et al., 1994).

New Product Development (NPD) is measured by a five-item scale pertaining to the process of originating, establishing, and introducing a new product/service to the market for achieving the goals of the firm (Charpavang and Ussahawanitchakit, 2011; Nonaka and Sivakumar, 1996). New product development cooperation intensity is obtaining knowledge combination of cross-functional for creating, developing, and problem-solving collaboration of new product development.

Product Innovation (PI) is assessed by a five-item scale, and is defined as the firm's capability to execute marketing, which is first and unique for marketing activity. It leads to sustaining a competitive advantage (Spacapan and Bastic, 2007). Particularly, product innovation will enhance developing products and services differently (Naidoo, 2010).

Control Variables

The control variable of business capital is measured from the amount of employees or assets on investment. Similarly, Leiblein (2003) finds that large firms may have more power in the market and more positional advantage than their smaller rivals. Thus, amount of business employees is represented by dummy variables including 0 (less than 50 people) and 1 (more than 50 people). The other control variable is age of the firm, which is evaluated by number of years the firm has been operating as software business (Kotabe, Jiang, and Murray, 2011). In the questionnaire, the numbers of the operational years are divided into four groups: less than 5 years, 5-10 years, 11-15 years, and more than 15 years. Firm age is represented by dummy variables including 0 (less than 15 years), and 1 (more than 15 years).

Reliability and Validity

Factor analysis was used to assess the underlying relationships of a large number of items and to decide whether they can be reduced to a smaller set of factors. The factor analysis was conducted separately on each set of the items representing a particular scale due to limited observations. With respect to confirmatory factory analysis, this analysis has a high potential to inflate the component loadings. Thus, a higher rule-of-thumb, a cut-off value of 0.40 was adopted (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). All factor loadings are greater than the 0.40 cut-off and are statistically significant. The reliability of the measurements was evaluated by Cronbach alpha coefficients. In the scale's reliability, Cronbach alpha coefficients are greater than 0.70 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). The scales of all measures appear to produce internally consistent results; thus, these measures are deemed appropriate for further analysis because they express an accepted validity and reliability in this study. Table 1. presents the results for both factor loadings and Cronbach alpha coefficients for multiple-item scales used in this study.

Table 1. Results of Measure Validation

Items	Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha
Product Originality (PO)	0.468-0.923	0.841
Processing Fluency (PF)	0.653-0.910	0.878
Marketing Flexibility (MF)	0.669-0.859	0.860
New Product Development (NPD)	0.709-0.882	0.835
Product Innovation (PI)	0.776-0.904	0.882
Marketing Profitability (MP)	0.732-0.893	0.885

Statistical Techniques

The multiple regression analysis (MRA) is used to test and evaluate all hypotheses following the conceptual model. Then, the aforementioned variables play significant roles in explaining the research relationships. Because the dependent variables, independent variables, moderating variable, and the control variables in this study were neither nominal data nor categorical data, MRA is an appropriate method for examining the hypothesized relationships (Hair, et. al., 2010). To clarify, the research model of these relationships is depicted as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Equation 1:} \quad \text{NPD} &= \beta_{01} + \beta_1 \text{PO} + \beta_2 \text{PF} + \beta_3 \text{MF} + \beta_4 \text{FSI} + \beta_5 \text{FAG} + \varepsilon_1 \\
 \text{Equation 2:} \quad \text{PI} &= \beta_{02} + \beta_6 \text{PO} + \beta_7 \text{PF} + \beta_8 \text{MF} + \beta_9 \text{FSI} + \beta_{10} \text{FAG} + \varepsilon_2 \\
 \text{Equation 3:} \quad \text{PI} &= \beta_{03} + \beta_{11} \text{NPD} + \beta_{12} \text{FSI} + \beta_{13} \text{FAG} + \varepsilon_3 \\
 \text{Equation 4:} \quad \text{MP} &= \beta_{04} + \beta_{14} \text{NPD} + \beta_{15} \text{PI} + \beta_{16} \text{FSI} + \beta_{17} \text{FAG} + \varepsilon_4 \\
 \text{Equation 5:} \quad \text{MP} &= \beta_{05} + \beta_{18} \text{PO} + \beta_{19} \text{PF} + \beta_{20} \text{MF} + \beta_{21} \text{FSI} + \beta_{22} \text{FAG} + \varepsilon_5
 \end{aligned}$$

4. Result and discussion

Table 2.presents the descriptive statistics and correlation matrix for all variables. With regards to potential problems relating to multicollinearity, variance inflation factors (VIFs) were used to provide information on the extent to which non-orthogonality among independent variables inflates standard errors. The VIFs range from 1.142 to 3.733, which is well below the cut-off value of 10 recommended by Neter, Wasserman, and Kutner (1985), meaning that the independent variables are not correlated with each other. Therefore, there are no substantial multicollinearity problems encountered in this study.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix

Variables	PO	PF	MF	NPD	PI	MP	FAG	FSI
Mean	4.440	4.424	4.395	4.300	4.321	4.284		
S.D.	0.508	0.584	0.506	0.494	0.592	0.590		
PO	1							
PF	0.686**	1						
MF	0.577**	0.759**	1					
NPD	0.718**	0.658**	0.759**	1				
PI	0.634**	0.793**	0.795**	0.843**	1			
MP	0.634**	0.765**	0.784**	0.766**	0.742**	1		
FAG	-0.355**	-0.336**	-0.276**	-0.368**	-0.289**	-0.227**	1	
FSI	0.433**	0.393**	0.365**	0.327**	0.415**	0.344**	0.002**	1

**p<0.01, *p<0.05,

Table 3.presents the results of multiple regression analysis of the relationships among the three dimensions of marketing creativity orientation, new product development, product innovation, and marketing profitability.

Moreover, this table also presents the results of testing three dimensions of marketing creativity orientation, new product development, product innovation, and marketing profitability. Marketing creativity orientation includes product originality, processing fluency, and marketing flexibility.

Test hypotheses 1a -3a, the results indicate that firms with higher product originality and marketing flexibility will have a significant positive impact on new product development ($\beta_1 = 0.434, p < 0.01; \beta_5 = 0.556, p < 0.01$). Thus, *Hypotheses 1a and 3a are supported*. Thus, test hypotheses 1b -3b, the results indicate that the processing fluency and marketing flexibility have a significant positive impact on product innovation ($\beta_7 = 0.365, p < 0.01; \beta_8 = 0.431, p < 0.01$). Congruence with the study of Gumusluoglu and Arzu (2009) who reveal that creativity are positive to organizational innovation. These results indicate that firms with higher processing fluency and marketing flexibility will have greater product innovation. Thus, *hypotheses 2b and 3b are supported*. Test hypotheses 1c -3c, the results indicate that the product originality, processing fluency and marketing flexibility have a significant positive impact on marketing profitability ($\beta_1 = 0.185, p < 0.10; \beta_{22} = 0.324, p < 0.01; \beta_{23} = 0.464, p < 0.01$). Thus, *hypotheses 1c, 2c and 3c are supported*. Congruence with firms may develop this ability in order to successfully introduce new products to the market (Leonidou, Palihawadana, Chari, 2011). Likewise, scholars describe about good teamwork created by nature of integration, which include flexibility, participation, information exchange, comments and coordination among units within the firm for achieving the goals (Moenaert et al., 1994).

Test hypotheses 4a -4b, the results indicate that the new product development have a significant positive impact on product innovation and marketing profitability ($\beta_{14} = 0.793, p < 0.01; \beta_{17} = 0.510, p < 0.01$). Thus, *hypotheses 4c and 4b are supported*. Congruence with new product development, the firm’s capability to improve products and launch new products of high quality into the market, with attention also paid to cost and time. Similarly, academics mention that quality and prices are factors affecting customs’ decisions (Racela and Thoumrungroje, 2010: Hult et al., 2004). Moreover, scholars argue that new product development is a main driver of company performance and organizational survival (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1995). Test hypotheses 5, the results indicate that the product innovation has a significant positive impact on marketing profitability (β_{18}

= 0.305, $p < 0.05$). Thus, *Hypotheses 5 are supported*. Consistent with scholars describe product innovation that is the strong indicator of financial performance under the modern production and value creation (Goedhuys and Veugelers, 2011). Likewise, Brown and Eisenhardt (1995) indicate that new product development is a main driver of firm performance and organizational survival. Therefore, firms should develop new product development and product innovation which will have greater marketing profitability. Noteworthy, product innovation is the partial mediators between marketing creativity orientation and marketing profitability.

Table 3. Result of Regression Analysis^a

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables				
	MODEL1 NPD	MODEL2 PI	MODEL3 PI	MODEL4 MP	MODEL5 MP
PO	0.434*** (0.097)	0.101 (0.092)			0.185* (0.097)
PF	-0.077 (0.116)	0.365*** (0.111)			0.324*** (0.116)
MF	0.556*** (0.103)	0.431*** (0.098)			0.464*** (0.103)
NPD			0.793*** (0.071)	0.510*** (0.142)	
PI				0.305** (0.143)	
FAG	-0.188 (0.159)	-0.024 (0.152)	0.007 (0.146)	0.106 (0.174)	0.165 (0.159)
FIS	-0.069 (0.157)	0.145 (0.150)	0.320** (0.136)	0.106 (0.169)	-0.067 (0.158)
Adjusted R ²	0.681	0.709	0.721	0.601	0.678
Maximum VIF	3.067	3.067	1.321	3.733	3.067

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ ^a Beta coefficients with standard errors in parenthesis.

5. Contributions and directions for future research

Theoretical Contributions

This study provided insight into marketing creativity orientation that has a significant relationship with new product development, product innovation, and marketing profitability. Particularly, the three dimensions of marketing creativity orientation are based on software businesses in Thailand through these relationships. Most importantly, this study provides the new dimension of marketing creativity orientation with software businesses in Thailand under dynamic environments.

Managerial Contributions and Directions for Future Research

This study focuses on two major managerial implications of chief executive officers, marketing managers, or business owners. This study reveals crucial information that supports the decisions to allocate the resources of the firm, leading to long-term competitive advantage. Executives should pay attention to product originality, processing fluency, and marketing flexibility. This will provide marketing creativity orientation that positively relate to new product development, product innovation, and marketing profitability.

Despite this study's usefulness, there are some limitations to it. First, due to limited time and budgets, the data collected for the study may not have been sufficient to cover the overall picture of the software business in Thailand. Second, the data used in this study was limited to only software business. Further research may collect data from other business for validation and generalizability. Finally, the findings are examined only from the single business point of view. Thus, further studies should examine the multiple business viewpoints as well.

6. Conclusion

Dynamic environments have great impact on the internal factors of the firm. New product development and product innovation are significant factors of marketing profitability. Therefore, the objective of this study is to examine the influences of marketing creativity orientation on marketing profitability of 83 software businesses in Thailand, along with the independent variables of the study on each dimension of marketing creativity orientation, new product development, product innovation, and marketing profitability. The results indicate that product originality and marketing flexibility have a significant positive impact on new product development and product innovation. Furthermore, it is found that new product development and product innovation have a significant positive impact on marketing profitability.

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