

**WestminsterResearch**

<http://www.westminster.ac.uk/westminsterresearch>

**Digital Technology and Marketing Management Capability:  
Achieving Growth in SMEs**

**Foroudi, P., Gupta, S., Nazarian, A. and Duda, M.**

This article is © Emerald and permission has been granted for this version to appear here: <http://westminsterresearch.westminster.ac.uk/>

Emerald does not grant permission for this article to be further copied/distributed or hosted elsewhere without the express permission from Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

The final, published version in Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal, 20 (2), pp. 230-246, 2017 is available at:

<https://dx.doi.org/10.1108/QMR-01-2017-0014>

The WestminsterResearch online digital archive at the University of Westminster aims to make the research output of the University available to a wider audience. Copyright and Moral Rights remain with the authors and/or copyright owners.



**Digital Technology and Marketing Management Capability:  
Achieving Growth in SMEs**

Journal:	<i>Qualitative Market Research</i>
Manuscript ID	QMR-01-2017-0014.R1
Manuscript Type:	Research Paper
Keywords:	Digital Technology, Information Quality, Design Innovation, Marketing Capabilities, Competencies

SCHOLARONE™  
Manuscripts

## Digital Technology and Marketing Management Capability: Achieving Growth in SMEs

### Abstract

**Purpose** – The intention of this study is to evaluate the relationships between digital technology, tangible/intangible assets and marketing capabilities in order to gain more insight into the factors related to SMEs' growth in the UK. Based on resource-advantage theory, this research addresses the question *“to what extent does digital technology influence marketing capability which leads to companies' growth?”*

**Design/methodology/approach** – The data was gathered through 21 in-depth interviews with managers from different multinational organizations and 6 focus groups with employees.

**Findings** – The study identifies the two key components of digital technology as information quality and service convenience. In addition, the relationships between digital technology, tangible/intangible assets, and marketing capabilities perform the significant role of facilitator of a company's growth.

**Research limitations/implications** – The focus on UK SMEs limits the generalisability of the results. Further study should be collected in other sectors and country settings in order to examine the associations identified in the current study.

**Originality/value** – This study identifies the main impacts of digital technology on intellectual/physical assets. While managers and employees have specified that marketing capability is significant for organizations, there are a few other areas of concern with regard to consequences related to a company's growth, competence, and core competence, particularly in a SME's setting.

**Keywords** – Digital Technology, Information Quality, Service Convenience, Design Innovation, Marketing Capabilities, Growth, Competencies, SMEs

## Introduction

Core competence has been a useful tool for organizational strategists since it first appeared in the 1960s. It was defined by Andrews (1971) as “what the company can do particularly well” (p. 46) and an earlier paper by Ansoff (1965) called it a ‘common thread’ (p.105). Ansoff (1965) described business competencies as “a relationship between present and future product markets which would enable outsiders to perceive where the firm is heading, and the inside management to give it guidance” (p.105). A significant study of core competence was carried out by Prahalad and Hamel (1990) who characterized it as the core system that “provides nourishment, sustenance, and stability” (p.82).

The experiential study of marketing capabilities is also being given increased attention in the academic literature (Blesa and Ripolles, 2008; Ribeiro et al., 2009; Tsai and Shih, 2004; Vorhies and Morgan, 2005; Weerawardena, 2003). Marketing capabilities employ a substantial and optimistic view of customers' satisfaction, which eventually indicates a superior organizational performance in terms of sales, profit and competence (Santos-Vijande et al., 2012).

The aim of this paper is greater understanding of digital technology and its influence on design innovation management capability which leads to a company's growth. Moreover, this study highlights how information quality and its antecedents (information about integrated promotion, product pricing and transactions) in co-operation with service convenience and its antecedents (integrated information access, order fulfilment, customer service) provide greater understanding of the influence of digital technology on design and innovation. Resource-advantage theory will be adopted to examine the relationship between information quality, service convenience, digital technology, tangible/intangible assets, marketing capability, and core competencies. This research evaluates the relationships between these constructs in order to gain more insight and clarification of the factors related to core competence.

This article contributes to the growing literature on digital technology and devices which provide insight into innovation. As claimed by Dewett (2003), technologies provide workers with access to original information by permitting them to link up with peer repositories and

1  
2  
3 with information experts. Digital technology contributes to innovation and management  
4 capability which leads to the growth of SMEs.

5  
6 The literature of technology adoption delivers an understanding of how informed government  
7 policies could help small and medium size enterprises to achieve both growth and innovation  
8 (Blackburn et al., 2008). The SME's ability to learn and acquire knowledge prepares it for  
9 further steps of growth, which ultimately determines whether the SME is able to progress to  
10 the next stage of development (Blackburn et al., 2008). In particular, this learning aptitude  
11 links to knowledge of management capabilities and technology. According to Fruhling and  
12 Siau (2007) the human capital accessible within the organization is likely to be a fundamental  
13 factor in effective innovation. Consequently, management strengths should be focused on  
14 nurturing and exploiting these strategic resources (Wernerfelt, 1984).  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22

23 This paper is structured as follows. The current study outlines the theoretical background of  
24 information quality, service convenience, digital technology, tangible/ intangible assets,  
25 marketing capability and core competence and its relationship between the dynamics.  
26 Afterwards, the author clarifies research methods. Next, the method is outlined and the results  
27 from our analysis are presented. Finally, the research contributions and limitations are  
28 summarized along with suggestions for future research.  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33

### 34 **Literature review**

#### 35 *Digital technology*

36 Digital technology is progressively implemented by the firms in order to respond positively  
37 to customer needs and, at the same time, improve customer-side operations. It supports the  
38 interests of consumers and businesses and, at the same time, helps drive sales and increases  
39 efficiencies by reducing costs. Information quality can be transferred through digital  
40 technology (Watson et al., 2006). Organizations are strongly focused on the use of digital  
41 technology to enhance the quality of information provided to their customers (Foroudi et al.,  
42 2016). In general, technological innovation can be understood as the employment of a  
43 product with enhanced performance appearances so as to distribute new or enhanced services  
44 to the customer (Oh and Teo, 2010; Gorla et al., 2010). High quality information transmitted  
45 in an appropriate way has a huge impact on customer behavior and marketing (Oh and Teo,  
46 2010). Information quality consists of integrated promotion which includes consistency in  
47 branding to support customers; integrated product and pricing information that guarantees  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 reliability in product images and prices through retail channels; integrated information  
4 transaction which is the collection of a customer's on-line transactions held by retailers in  
5 order to provide personalized information and services (Oh and Teo, 2010).  
6  
7

8  
9  
10 Service convenience refers to consumers' interest in conserving time and effort. Bin and Teo  
11 (2010) state that "processes of integrated information access, integrated order fulfilment, and  
12 integrated customer service" (p.42) play an essential part in achieving service convenience.  
13 Integrated information access in on-line stores allows the customer to obtain information  
14 related to the product, its availability and locations (Ray et al., 2005; Tallon, 2010).  
15 Integrated order fulfillment allows seamless order fulfillment to the customers, by providing  
16 product availability, easy and quick purchase, and prompt delivery (Porter, 1980). Integrated  
17 customer service provides excellent customer service and support also products purchased  
18 on-line can be exchanged or returned to the stores (Banker et al., 2006).  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

26 Digital technologies play a significant part in almost every organization (Setia et al., 2013)  
27 and have enabled co-operation among firms, information storage and analysis and improved  
28 customer service performance (Ray et al., 2005). They have had an enormous impact on  
29 customer service performance (Ray et al., 2005) and have enhanced the ability to accomplish  
30 service convenience (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000; Pavlou and El Sawy, 2006; Teece et al.,  
31 1997).  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37

### 38 *Tangible/intangible assets and marketing capability*

39  
40 Marketing capability requires the use of digital technology (Teece, 2007), as digital  
41 technology determines the organizational capability to research customers, competitors, and  
42 the broader market environment (Day, 1994). Marketing capability can be implemented by  
43 utilising a variety of processes, including sustaining relationships with customers and  
44 suppliers as well as participating in professional associations and using best practices. These  
45 processes require a high level of use of the tangible/intangible assets of a firm. The assets of a  
46 firm itself are defined with a wide variety of meanings. Grant states that "assets are inputs  
47 into the production process - they are the basic unit of analysis", where a capability is  
48 identified as the capacity for a team of resources to perform some task or activity (Hafeez, et  
49 al., 2006). Marketing capability processes generate inputs for the requirements of  
50 reconfigured operational capabilities (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000).  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

### Method and analysis

This paper employs qualitative data collection and analysis to uncover patterns, themes, and categories in order to make judgments about “what is really significant and meaningful in the data” (Patton, 2001, p.406). This study conducted 21 in-depth interviews with top managers in the UK from different SMEs and 6 focus groups with a total of 35 people (21 male and 14 female) (see Table 1). This data helped the author to generate a deeper understanding about the research (Palmer and Gallagher, 2007; Yin, 1984), discover new evidence, reveal new dimensions of the problem and to secure vivid, accurate inclusive accounts that are based on personal experience (Foroudi et al., 2016). A conducive and comfortable environment was provided for each interview (Malhotra and Birks, 2000). On average, an interview lasted one hour and half and all the interviews were recorded by two recorders and transcribed verbatim, which ensured the reliability of the data (Andriopoulos and Lewis, 2009).

The research aim was to understand to what extent digital technology influences marketing capability which leads to development of core competence and the SME’s growth. This study followed Foroudi et al.’s (2014, 2016) recommendation to conduct in-depth interviews using a semi-structured technique by developing a qualitative protocol and designing direct questions to discover essential motivation, beliefs, attitudes and feelings about the topic. The interviews were conducted face-to-face between October 2015 and September 2016.

<<<Table 1 Here>>>

To assess the qualitative results and improve the validity and reliability of the study, triangulation was used in two stages based on Creswell and Miller’s (2000) suggestions. We developed codes by addressing the problem areas, research questions, and key constructs (Palmer and Gallagher, 2007). Then, we used QSR NVivo software for data administration, data storage, and retrieval. NVivo is appropriate software to assist in the interpretation of the text and inter-relationships between codes. In addition, the data was examined to derive the nodes, which influence the inter-relationships of the thematic ideas, the nodes (themes) were reviewed for consistency, and an iterative process was followed throughout the data analysis. Subsequently, the transcripts of the interviews were analyzed. Significant statements which were directly associated with the research question were identified. By identifying a

1  
2  
3 significant word, the results obtained by means of the open questions were scanned and  
4 linked directly to the research question in order to develop a theory.  
5  
6

### 7 8 **Results and discussion**

9  
10 The literature review revealed that concepts of core competence and its dynamics are not  
11 clearly defined. In order to address the gap, a conceptual framework was developed that  
12 includes the key research constructs (Figure 1) based on the literature and qualitative study.  
13 Generating an employee's-level conceptual framework developed from resource advantage  
14 theory demonstrates that: (1) there are relationships between information quality, service  
15 convenience, digital technology, tangible/ intangible assets, marketing capability, and  
16 company growth; and that (2) there are connections between other theoretically  
17 acknowledged variables. One research question is addressed "to what extent does digital  
18 technology influence marketing capability which leads to a company's growth?"  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24

25  
26  
27 The findings, from the study suggest that tangible/intangible assets and digital technology  
28 influenced marketing capabilities, and that marketing capabilities influenced the SMEs'  
29 growth and development of their core competencies. Every entrepreneur had a unique  
30 perception but the majority claimed that the SME was an increasingly important  
31 phenomenon. Innovations and knowledge may lead to the utilisation of new or improved  
32 products or processes. The managers of these SMEs have confirmed that to be successful in  
33 meeting adversity one should possess a good knowledge of all the business functions. The  
34 manager who masters these elements can be successful in future developments.  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39

40  
41  
42 This paper evaluates the relationships between the constructs in order to gain more insight  
43 and clarification of the factors related to core competence in UK SMEs. Nevertheless, this  
44 study is one of the first to empirically confirm the assumption made by researchers (Mahoney  
45 and Pandian, 1992) that it is an understanding of digital technology, tangible/intangible assets  
46 and its influence on marketing capability which leads to core competence. This would result  
47 in insights that might make a substantial addition to present knowledge and support to future  
48 research in this field (Hafeez et al., 2016). To identify the core competencies of a firm, it is  
49 essential to examine the features of its components (Dierickx and Cool, 1989).  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54

55  
56  
57 Moreover, this paper highlights how information quality and its antecedents (information  
58  
59  
60



1  
2  
3 concerning integrated promotion and product pricing and transactions) in conjunction with  
4 service convenience and its antecedents (integrated information access, order fulfilment,  
5 customer service) provides greater understanding of digital technology which influences  
6 tangible/intangible assets, marketing capability and competence. Employing data from  
7 interviews in UK SMEs, this paper attempts to scrutinise the relationship between  
8 information quality, service convenience, tangible/intangible assets, digital technology,  
9 marketing capability, competence and core competencies.  
10  
11  
12  
13

14  
15  
16 Business concept was defined by interviewees as a perception of how to manage and carry  
17 out an economic activity; it involves assumptions and behavioural rules. A business concept  
18 innovation reconceives or breaks with widely accepted ideas and behaviors about how a  
19 business should be, changing the perception of how to run the business. To answer the  
20 question 'how did you action your business concept into reality?' the following comments  
21 illustrate the managers' assessments:  
22  
23  
24  
25

26 *There it was the X on gum tree. I made some notes at home about*  
27 *what I will be discussing and then I straight away talk to owner of*  
28 *business, and I manage to complete deal but the business concept*  
29 *did not finish there.*  
30

31  
32 *I was working in catering industry for 10 years. After gaining so*  
33 *much experience and being passionate about the products and*  
34 *customer service I have decide to open my own business. I put all my*  
35 *heart into it and always give 100%. My customers are my guests and*  
36 *I treat everyone as a special.*  
37  
38

39 Innovation gives rise to a new or significantly improved mental model relating to a business,  
40 which leads to substantial modifications in a firm's methods and general knowledge. This, in  
41 turn, makes it possible for catering companies, for example, to develop their own innovations  
42 where knowledge and technologies are applied in a new way. Moreover, business concepts  
43 help SMEs to achieve competitiveness. Likewise, service and product characteristics will  
44 differ among firms with different business concepts. The managers should try to invent a new  
45 business concept which will help them devise ways to grow their company.  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50

51  
52 Competitive advantage is fulfilling an unmet consumer need in a market segment  
53 (Hinterhuber, 2013). Burns (2011) believes that innovation and opportunity are key to  
54 gaining competitive advantage. A business needs to innovate with its products and services in  
55 order to gain competitive advantage in the market. Innovation can maintain and improve  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 competitive advantage and also extend the business's life. Managers must first identify their  
4 competencies that give them competitive advantage over other similar companies in the same  
5 market place. Moreover, managers stated that sources of advantage were *quality good*  
6 *product and high quality product and the best customer service.*  
7  
8  
9

10  
11 If a company does not develop new technologies or new scientific knowledge, then where  
12 can their innovations come from? The answer to this question requires recognising the  
13 existence of non-technological knowledge. In SMEs this knowledge is specific to the  
14 company. In other words, it is knowledge accumulated from the learning process of each  
15 business process. Every firm, in every industry, gains specific knowledge from its activities  
16 (Aldebert et al., 2011), which comes from the firm's market, organization, production and  
17 delivery process and so on. Such innovation changes dramatically as business and products  
18 are conceived, creating a pattern about how and what knowledge, or other firm resources,  
19 must be used (Gupta et al., 2016). For example, a catering SME could introduce a side-line of  
20 delivery options for local businesses and organizations. Furthermore, these catering SMEs  
21 could host a small special event in their premises such as art days or cultural music nights.  
22 Bringing cultural themes into their businesses could be good way to attract new customers  
23 given that they have small marketing budgets.  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33

34 Digital marketing leveraging social media channels provides SMEs with a new innovative  
35 way to interact with customers, providing an alternative, cost effective, and attractive  
36 proposition. The competitive environment reflects how businesses compete and function  
37 within an environment. In a place where there is a demand for a particular product, it is likely  
38 there will be more sellers with similar products. Interviews included the question, 'do you  
39 think your products are competitive taking the current demand into consideration?' The  
40 following quotations reflect the answers:  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45

46 *Maybe some people will be attracted. But if it's different, and you*  
47 *don't want that sort of customer really, in general, who get attracted*  
48 *with the price. That is foolish doing that anyway.*  
49

50  
51 *My customers are mainly local people. They love the products and the*  
52 *atmosphere in the place. Also we adapt our menu to customer's needs*  
53 *related to allergies, special products intolerance and level of spices.*  
54 *In my culture we tend to eat very spice, but of course not everyone can*  
55 *take it the same level, so we have to take this also into our*  
56 *considerations.*  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 SMEs have direct and indirect competitors. They are surrounded by many competitors who  
4 sell similar products at lower prices. In turn, they offer different kinds of benefits to their  
5 customers. For example, a restaurant offers discounts to students while another does not  
6 charge corkage so their customers can bring their own alcohol without incurring an extra  
7 charge. Indirect competitors like local supermarkets offer a substitute by selling ready meals.  
8 However, the food is the best quality since it is not only tasty but also healthy and their meals  
9 are unique. In order to gain new customers and keep existing customers happy, one of the  
10 shops offers on-line take-out ordering through its website. Because of the locations the  
11 demand for their product is always very high. The owners should concentrate on an  
12 individual product to ensure they are being competitive all the time and improve growth.  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19

20  
21 Growth and development can be summarised as business owners wanting to increase their  
22 market share by expanding the business. This can be in the form of increasing floor space,  
23 marketing initiatives, and employing further employees to build on current successes and  
24 exploit opportunities. To understand the entrepreneurs' growth and development to date,  
25 interviewees stated:  
26  
27  
28

29  
30 *I invested fifteen thousand pounds into my business, I broke even at*  
31 *the end of my 6 months.*  
32

33  
34 *I opened my retail outlet 24 years ago, due to my hard work and my*  
35 *passion my business is making more money every year.*  
36

37  
38 Currently one of the business owners is an example of an entrepreneur bringing his idea  
39 forward and implementing it which resulted in employment opportunities for local residents.  
40 Although the business has been running for only 6-8 months it is estimated to be worth four  
41 times more than its purchase price. Taking into consideration such a short period of time and  
42 current value of the business it can be assumed that the value of this business by the end of its  
43 financial year will increase, even though they face so many challenges in managing the  
44 business.  
45  
46  
47  
48

49  
50 According to Daft and Marcic (2004) challenge management reflects difficulties and  
51 problems managers and owners can face in running and managing their business on a daily  
52 basis. SME owners face many challenges in globalized markets. However, the greatest  
53 problem is how to effectively manage the all encompassing functions of a business without  
54 causing conflicts within these functions. One question was, 'what do you consider to be the  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 most challenging aspect about being a manager in business today?' which elicited responses  
4  
5 such as:

6  
7 *I believe losing interest in business, would be a challenge. So, I have*  
8 *to keep working very hard and then doing lots of money and success.*  
9 *So that might keep me focused. If I lost money, you've got to focus. If*  
10 *you did not, you lost interest. You just think you are just wasting your*  
11 *time or just. That's dangerous.*

12  
13 *I have to keep control on staff at all the times, they are very important*  
14 *part of my business but I have to ensure that they work as hard as I*  
15 *do, so finding the right people it is very difficult.*

16  
17  
18 Owners of small businesses confront many challenges in managing their business. These  
19 involve understanding financial responsibilities, creating products which suit customers, and  
20 recruiting employees with the appropriate skills set. However, the biggest challenge that they  
21 face is business regulations and taxes. Therefore, they need to understand the content of  
22 regulation for the industry, and how it impacts their businesses. They need to develop the  
23 skills necessary to deal with it. In our sample, two companies also experienced difficulty in  
24 finding appropriate staff who understood and supported their business objectives. For small  
25 businesses, it is personalities and skills which matter. To be successful in meeting adversity,  
26 the owners of SMEs should possess a conceptual knowledge of all business functions by  
27 designing strategies for future growth and development.  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35

36 Strategies for future growth and development involve developing a structural model, which  
37 contains all the required tools. This model prepares a business to grow and develop. Strategy  
38 contains elements such as product, timing, methods, economic and business case and  
39 differentiation. Strategic planning is the process of guidance for development. Strategy must  
40 be consistent, measurable and flexible. Strategic objectives are the key for future growth and  
41 development for SMEs. However, in order to achieve success the owners must be committed  
42 to the business, value employees, promote the business, have plans to expand and be skilled  
43 in all the aspects of the organization. This study was concerned with what the business owner  
44 can do which will make a difference to the future growth and development of the business.  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51 This can be explained by the comment of managers:

52  
53 *Lisa is my employee. But I consider her as my colleague. We must*  
54 *concentrate there, and as long as the business is getting bigger and*  
55 *bigger. She needs to be into it and then, looking forward to do it for a*  
56 *long time. If she just stood there, I say, no, she's wasting her time.*  
57 *You know, she's getting some profit. But whenever she's ready, we*  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 *can open another coffee shop for her. For example, we are moving*  
4 *across the road which is three times bigger when this is settled down.*  
5 *Yeah, after Christmas, we will just operate it from there.*  
6

7  
8 *It is nothing more than hard work, you have to stay focused and be*  
9 *passionate about what you do. I am very happy with my current size of*  
10 *the business and I am not planning to expand it, but I have only one*  
11 *wish, I would like to keep this in my family and I am hoping that my*  
12 *daughter will be able to take over the business.*  
13

14  
15 There are different strategies which can lead to the growth and development of a business.  
16 The owners have strategies to expand the business and ensure long term success. They  
17 understand and value their employees, as they believe they are key for future growth and  
18 development. After all, they possess great understanding of all business functions but they are  
19 not focused on expanding the business. The majority of interviewees were satisfied with the  
20 current size of the business. Their strategy was based on hard work in order to keep their  
21 customers happy so they will be repeat customers. They focus on their products and services  
22 to provide the highest standard at all times. The majority have a lot of experience in their  
23 industry which helps them to build effective strategy. Three owners are planning to move  
24 their businesses nearby to premises which are three times bigger than the present ones.  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31

### 32 33 *Antecedents of digital technology* 34

35 This study supports the assertion that information quality and service convenience are linked  
36 to digital technology. In relation to information quality, interviewees observe that information  
37 quality including integrated promotion information, integrated product and pricing  
38 information and integrated information transaction are linked to digital technology. In  
39 addition, the data analysis suggest that service convenience, including integrated information  
40 access, integrated order fulfillment, and integrated customer service are linked to digital  
41 technology. A director of one of the SME accountancy firms explained that:  
42  
43  
44  
45

46  
47 *Digital technology is a key enabler in the way our firm interacts with*  
48 *clients and communicates about competitive advantage. Technology*  
49 *aspects have been embedded in the work environment in order to*  
50 *enhance the internal quality and methodology. For example, the firm*  
51 *uses an integrated global ERP system to manage and support a*  
52 *paperless working environment, with analytical capability which*  
53 *provides visualization of big data, using the volume of financial*  
54 *information gathered during projects. All this integrates seamlessly, to*  
55 *enhance the overall quality of service provided to our clients.*  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the UK, can be defined in terms of  
4 employment, asset value and sales (Rostamkalaei and Freel, 2016). However, Jasra et al.'s  
5 (2011) definition of SMEs is made more specific by determining what they represent in terms  
6 of numbers of employees, and their capability.  
7  
8

9  
10  
11 *Digital technology and marketing capability*

12 In relation to digital technology, this study found that the use of digital technology was  
13 positively related to tangible/intangible assets and their results show that the frequent  
14 engagement of tangible/intangible assets is positively linked to customer-relationship  
15 capabilities. Furthermore, the relationship between tangible/intangible assets and corporate  
16 brand identity capabilities shows that frequent engagement of tangible/intangible assets is  
17 positively linked to corporate brand identity capabilities which support the hypotheses. In  
18 addition, frequent engagement of tangible/intangible assets is positively linked to customer-  
19 relationship capabilities as well as to social media/communication capabilities. The results  
20 indicate a strong relationship between marketing capabilities and competence from the  
21 employees' viewpoint of an organization's core competence. The data demonstrate that the  
22 employee's view of information quality, service convenience, digital technology and  
23 tangible/ intangible assets and marketing capabilities facilitates the relationship between  
24 competence and organizational core competence. Accordingly, the relationship between the  
25 employee's view of information quality and digital technology; service convenience and  
26 digital technology; digital technology and tangible/intangible assets; tangible/intangible  
27 assets and marketing capabilities were related.  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40

41 The outcomes suggest that all dynamics including information quality, service convenience,  
42 digital technology, tangible/intangible assets, marketing capabilities perform a significant  
43 role as facilitator between the competence and core competence. This illustrates the concept  
44 of employees-based core competence, defined as as organizational routines manifested in  
45 business activities and processes that bring assets together and enable them to be deployed  
46 advantageously (Hamel and Parahalad, 1990; Drejer, 2000).  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51

52  
53 Irrespective of the nature of the business they are in, or the competition they face,  
54 management should consistently observe the efficiency and appropriateness of the  
55 competence in respect to the organizational core competence. A global firms' core  
56 competence was conceptualized as consisting of both internal and competitive dimensions.  
57  
58  
59  
60



1  
2  
3 The competences perceived by the employees are encouragingly linked to organizational core  
4 competences.  
5  
6

7  
8 Constructed upon the examination of the gap acknowledged by academics and practitioners  
9 (Hafeez et al., 2002) this study has conducted a systematic investigation of the factors which  
10 influence organizational core competence. The results show that core competence in relation  
11 to the research model comprises six factors: information quality, service convenience, digital  
12 technology, tangible/intangible assets, marketing capabilities and competence. Information  
13 quality is abstracted in relation to its dynamics involving integrated promotion information,  
14 integrated product and pricing information and integrated information transaction which  
15 deliver stability in branding to support customers and distinguish the firm from its  
16 competitors (Oh and Teo, 2010). Service convenience including its components “processes of  
17 integrated information access, integrated order fulfilment, and integrated customer service”  
18 (Oh and Teo, 2010 p. 42) compose consumer perceptions of the services offered by the  
19 organization and its benefits.  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28

29  
30 Digital technology adopted by the organization enhances the ability to respond positively to  
31 customer needs and, at the same time, improves customer-side operations. Digital technology  
32 focuses on the consumers and businesses and, at the same time, helps drive sales and  
33 increases efficiencies by reducing costs. Assets are resource endowments that a firm has  
34 accrued over time, and that can be deployed for forming a competitive advantage (Amit and  
35 Schoemaker, 1993; Day, 1994; Fahy, 2000; Grant, 1991). Marketing capabilities successfully  
36 deployed build greater customer value and enhance the ability to deliver a competitive  
37 advantage (Fahy, 2000; Kay, 1993; Williams, 1992).  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44

45 Digital technology enhances learning and it is one of the most critical elements of design  
46 innovation. Innovation design focuses on developing new products and market segments, it  
47 plays an important role in the marketing department where constant interaction and exchange  
48 of information with customers is fed back to the design department. In the product design  
49 department management capability strongly focuses on developing new products and market  
50 segments, by monitoring market trends and seeking market opportunities (Foroudi et al.,  
51 2016).  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 According to scholars (Gupta and Wilemon, 1990; Foroudi et al., 2016), the effective  
4 relationships amongst design activities and marketing can generate product innovation. In  
5 addition, innovation is of crucial importance for fast growing SMEs (Coad and Rao, 2008).  
6 SMEs that carry out product innovations will achieve greater growth rates than those that do  
7 not (Gupta et al., 2016). Firms with better internal management capability will be able to  
8 innovate, relative to firms with lesser internal capability.  
9  
10  
11  
12

### 13 14 15 *Marketing capability, company's growth, and competencies*

16 This study also reveals certain characteristics of the core competence by showing how the  
17 organizational core competence is developed, measured and managed. Strategies to construct  
18 organizational core competence are reviewed in relation to both company tangible/intangible  
19 assets and marketing capabilities. The view of organizational core competence of employees-  
20 based outlooks is reviewed by demonstrating the effects of a digital technology on marketing  
21 capabilities and tangible/intangible assets with the aim of building organizational core  
22 competence.  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28

29 The results show mediation and direct effect between the firm's tangible/ intangible assets  
30 and its marketing capabilities. An optimistic approach toward market-sensing, corporate  
31 brand identity, customer relationship and social media/ communication capabilities are  
32 evidence of earlier proficiencies and notes from the consultancy firm about organizational  
33 core competence facilitate the relationship between tangible/ intangible assets and marketing  
34 capabilities. The findings indicate that the four dynamics (market-sensing, corporate brand  
35 identity, customer relationship and social media / communication capabilities) can be driven  
36 by the tangible/ intangible assets. One consultancy, accountancy based firm that underscores  
37 the significance of marketing capabilities adapted by tangible/ intangible assets in developing  
38 the competence which leads to core competence stated that:  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45

46 *With the rapid advancement in technology, the firm's capabilities to*  
47 *promote its services have significantly changed. In addition, to use*  
48 *the tradition marketing methods such as personal brochures, articles,*  
49 *we now use a variety of on-line methods to promote thought*  
50 *leadership, new innovative ideas and concepts. For example, the*  
51 *social media in the form of tweets, blogging is used frequently to*  
52 *promote the recent trends in the market. The firm is using apps to*  
53 *target specific customers, engaging and collating valuable*  
54 *information, which provides valuable information in developing our*  
55 *future marketing capabilities.*  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60



1  
2  
3 In addition, one participant added:  
4

5 *The of customer relationship management (CRM) technology helps*  
6 *us gather and share all data relating to customer services, product,*  
7 *offerings and pricing. The global database is accessed by all*  
8 *professionals across the network firm; this provides detailed*  
9 *analysis and information on customer behaviors, key relationships*  
10 *and sale management process.*  
11

12  
13 This quotation demonstrates the effect on employees' outlooks of core competence and its  
14 dynamic marketing capabilities and company tangible/intangible assets which mark an  
15 enormous impact on organizational core competence. Furthermore, Hunt and Morgan (1995)  
16 emphasize that “a comparative advantage in assets can transform into a competitive  
17 advantage in the marketplace and superior financial performance...” (p.7). These statements  
18 indicate that throughout the development and leveraging of firm assets the firm determines a  
19 set of capabilities including marketing capabilities that allow the organization to accomplish  
20 greater levels of firm performance. An effective marketing capability positively influences  
21 firm performance consistently across functional environments (Hunt and Morgan, 1995). It is  
22 generally accepted that firms utilise their marketing capabilities through their assets to  
23 communicate on behalf of the firm and boost the firm’s performance and competence.  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32

33 Design innovation can be defined as an implementation of new ideas or behavior within an  
34 organization (Helfat et al., 2007). Design innovation in association with management  
35 capabilities enables SMEs to grow. Management capabilities highlight the importance of the  
36 learning process that are an essential part of innovation (Pittaway and Rose, 2006). Specific  
37 managerial activities or skills optimize the design process. The growth of SMEs has attracted  
38 notable attention from organizations and entrepreneurship research. This attention is essential  
39 in entrepreneurship studies as well as managers and policy makers. Growth is vital to small  
40 and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). When deciding their growth strategy, SMEs face big  
41 decisions on how to expand and improve their product markets through innovation.  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48

49 Interviewees defined corporate brand identity as ‘the set of meanings by which a company  
50 allows itself to be known and through which it allows people to describe, remember and  
51 relate to it’ which is consistent with the views by previous studies (Topalian, 1984; Olins,  
52 1989; Markwick and Fill, 1997). Corporate brand identity encompasses several qualities of a  
53 company such as business strategy, corporate culture, behavior and corporate design, all of  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 which cooperate with each other and result in differentiating one firm from another.  
4 Corporate brand identity allows assets to be more equitably valued and facilitates the  
5 company's access to capital markets (Beatty and Ritter, 1986).  
6  
7

8  
9 In addition, customer-relationship capabilities were highlighted by participants as a  
10 significant element in order to attain superior performance. Bowersox et al. (1999) defined  
11 customer-relationship capability as "the competency of building lasting distinctiveness with  
12 customers of choice" (p.42) which includes "identifying the long-term requirements,  
13 expectations, and preferences of current and/or potential customers and markets, and focusing  
14 on creating customer value" (p.31). Four capabilities must occur in order to accomplish  
15 customer relationship capabilities: segmental focus, relevancy, responsiveness, and flexibility  
16 (Bowersox et al., 1999).  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23

24 Marketing capabilities should influence competence. Equally, the greater number of  
25 respondents in this sample suggested that marketing capabilities deliver enormous effect on a  
26 company's competence which leads to organizational core competence. In line with Hunt and  
27 Morgan (1995), marketing capabilities are a resultant from the assets a firm possesses and are  
28 a dominant driver of firm performance and competence. Consequently, marketing capabilities  
29 assist as a facilitator between tangible/intangible assets and firm performance and assets will  
30 also influence directly firm performance or competence. Therefore, marketing capabilities  
31 fully facilitate the impact of assets on firm performance and competence. The entire sample  
32 agreed that information quality and service convenience influenced digital technology, that  
33 digital technology is positively linked to tangible/ intangible assets and that marketing  
34 capabilities in association with the firm's assets influenced competence. This result suggests  
35 that effectively utilised digital technology influences the marketing capabilities which, in  
36 turn, influence competence. Likewise, digital technology has an enormous impact on  
37 marketing capabilities which lead to core competence. This assessment is clarified by the  
38 following statement from a Director of a Consultancy and Accountancy Firm:  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48

49 *Every aspect of a marketing campaign within the firm is used to*  
50 *collate valuable information about our customer's issues, challenges*  
51 *etc. These campaigns act as useful tools to inform the leadership of*  
52 *the gaps in the core competency within the firm and areas which*  
53 *require more investment. For example, over the last 10 years the firm*  
54 *has significantly invested in developing the cyber capabilities, this is*  
55 *as a direct result of market trends, challenges/issues faced by our*  
56 *clients, the need for which was established through various marketing*  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 *campaign, research etc.*  
4  
5  
6  
7

## 8 **Conclusion**

9  
10 The aim of this research is to address the gaps in previous studies regarding (1) the  
11 relationships between information quality, service convenience, digital technology, tangible/  
12 intangible assets, marketing capability, competence and core competences; and (2) the  
13 relationships between other theoretically acknowledged variables. The results demonstrated  
14 a strong relationship between the variables. Digital technology has an enormous impact on  
15 marketing capabilities which leads to the development of core competences in UK firms.  
16 Moreover, it suggests further avenues of theoretical and managerial research to boost the  
17 understanding and supervision of core competences in UK firms.  
18  
19

20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25 The advantages of innovation in terms of growth have been recognised for SMEs.  
26 Information quality combined with service convenience is related to improved performance.  
27 Digital technology is an effective way to transform information in order to innovate. Greater  
28 management capabilities and technological developments offer opportunities to SMEs in  
29 order to achieve growth and innovation which can be delivered through greater resources and  
30 help SMEs to attract and retain more customers (Gupta et al., 2016).  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35

36  
37 Innovation policies in a developed country, such as the UK, promote the adoption of  
38 technologies and good practices by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Although  
39 policy makers should try to increase innovation performance in SMEs by providing relevant  
40 training in the use of technology and better access to higher education, which enables  
41 entrepreneurs to gain knowledge of design innovation. Such informed policies could lead to  
42 the growth of SMEs given that this kind of firm represents a big part of the economy.  
43  
44

45  
46 Based on the review of the related literature and qualitative analysis, the research framework  
47 is presented in Figure 1.  
48  
49

50  
51  
52 <<<Figure 1>>>

## 53 54 55 *Research implications*

56 The current commentary builds on the growing body of research on the subject of core  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 competence. With deeper engagement in competence issues, firms exploit digital technology  
4 more frequently by utilising company assets and enhancing the ability to attain core  
5 competence. The authors suggest a combined conceptualization that combines digital  
6 technology and marketing capability at the center of the firm's strategy to generate  
7 competence and core competence.  
8  
9

10  
11  
12 The greatest contribution of the present research is to increase comprehension by  
13 investigating employees' valuations of the impact of digital technology and marketing  
14 capabilities on firms' financial competence. Numerous academics indicate that digital  
15 technology, tangible/ intangible assets and marketing capabilities are associated with core  
16 competence; however they have not investigated this correlation. Nevertheless, the present  
17 study offers a corroborated framework which shows the relationships among the dynamics of  
18 a core competence. It discusses the gaps in current knowledge and answers earlier demands  
19 for research from the viewpoint of marketers (Foroudi et al., 2014). The creation of a unique  
20 model for core competence is a fundamental requirement of the current investigation. The  
21 major task is, in this view, the conduct of (multi-disciplinary) studies into interactions, which  
22 can be transformed into outcomes with practical applicability (Palmer and Bejou, 2006). This  
23 study aims to clarify, with a more holistic method, the relationships between information  
24 quality, service convenience, digital technology, tangible/intangible assets, marketing  
25 capabilities, competence and core competence in the judgement of employees within the  
26 financial sector.  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38

39 The results of this study deliver assistance for strategic 'decision-makers' who demand to  
40 comprehend the broad connections between a core competence and features of its  
41 components (i.e., information quality, service convenience, digital technology,  
42 tangible/intangible assets, marketing capabilities, competence) from the employee's  
43 perspective, and its effect on an organizational competence.  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48

49 Additional potential contributions can be discerned since this investigation related to the  
50 managers' and decision-makers' approaches (Sedera and Gable, 2010). A firm requires  
51 lifecycle-wide knowledge for devising strategy. The innovative uses made of firms'  
52 tangible/intangible assets have naturally sought to increase the exploration of digital  
53 technology and exploitation of marketing capabilities (Levinthal and March, 1993). The  
54 present study establishes the significance of all the dynamics of competence with each  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 component delivering a distinct and significant contribution to organizational core  
4 competence. It is hoped that this research will aid managers to successfully and efficiently  
5 develop their organizational related competence, thus improving levels of competitive  
6 advantage and firm success (Sedera and Gable, 2010).  
7  
8

9  
10  
11 We propose that, to attain a competitive advantage, firms must possess a full understanding  
12 of what establishes a core competence, which is influenced by three central features,  
13 specifically: digital technology, tangible/intangible assets and marketing capabilities. These  
14 findings acknowledge the relative weighting of the dynamic hypotheses that influence core  
15 competence. Consequently, the present study has substantial implications for managers and  
16 strategic decision-makers when forming or adjusting core competence.  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21

### 22 *Limitations and future research directions*

23  
24 The present analysis amounts to a preliminary analysis of the concept of core competence,  
25 addressed to the problems of creating competitive advantage and firms' success. Nonetheless,  
26 these outcomes must be interpreted in the light of this study's limitations associated with the  
27 method of sampling/analysis used, as well as its measurement (Foroudi et al., 2014). The  
28 present study was undertaken in a particular background and location while in another  
29 location and another industry segment, the outcomes could have been different. Though, the  
30 authors have based their findings on qualitative research and earlier studies of different  
31 samples, the individual characteristics of core competence that we have identified might  
32 prove to be different. Hence, it is suggested that a further study is conducted to confirm these  
33 findings in different sectors so as to assess the generalizability of the result.  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41

42  
43 Additional limitations of the present study includes the number and type of employees and  
44 using a larger sample would improve the reliability of the results (Churchill, 1999). Future  
45 studies must repeat this investigation with more sectors and a larger number of employees.  
46 Furthermore, in relation to the exploration strategy, the qualitative investigation was aimed at  
47 managers as well as academics, though managers' and academic' outlooks are not identical.  
48  
49  
50  
51

52  
53 This study examined the relationships between information quality, service convenience,  
54 digital technology, tangible/intangible assets, marketing capabilities, competence and core  
55 competence, as observed by employees. Possibly a future analysis might generate dissimilar  
56 outcomes from the similar research scales and hypotheses. Though this research engaged  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 mixed methods, a wider investigation could expand our knowledge of the implications of the  
4 competence.  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

Qualitative Market Research



## References

- Aldebert, B., Dang, R. J., and Longhi, C. (2011). Innovation in the tourism industry: The case of Tourism. *Tourism management*, 32(5), 1204-1213.
- Amit, R., and Schoemaker, P. J. (1993). Strategic assets and organizational rent. *Strategic management journal*, 14(1), 33-46.
- Andrews, K. R. (1971). The concept of corporate strategy, Richard D. Irwin, Homewood, IL.
- Andriopoulos, C., and Lewis, M. W. (2009). Exploitation-exploration tensions and organizational ambidexterity: Managing paradoxes of innovation. *Organization Science*, 20(4), 696-717.
- Ansoff, H. I. (1965). *Corporate strategy: An analytic approach to business policy for growth and expansion*. McGraw-Hill Companies.
- Ansoff, H. I. *Corporate Strategy*, McGraw Hill, New York. 1965.
- Banker, R. D., Bardhan, I. R., Chang, H., and Lin, S. (2006). Plant information systems, manufacturing capabilities, and plant performance. *MIS quarterly*, 30(2), 315-337.
- Beatty, R. P., and Ritter, J. R. (1986). Investment banking, reputation, and the underpricing of initial public offerings. *Journal of financial economics*, 15(1), 213-232.
- Blackburn, R. A. (2016). *Government, SMEs and entrepreneurship development: Policy, practice and challenges*. Routledge.
- Blesa, A., and Ripolles, M. (2008). The influence of marketing capabilities on economic international performance. *International Marketing Review*, 25(6), 651-673.
- Burns, P. (2011) *Entrepreneurship and small business*. Ed. 3rd. Palgrave Macmillan. Basingstoke.
- Churchill, G.A. (1999) *Marketing Research: Methodological Foundations*, The Dryden Press, IL.
- Coad, A., and Rao, R. (2008). Innovation and firm growth in high-tech sectors: A quantile regression approach. *Research policy*, 37(4), 633-648.
- Creswell, J. W., and Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into practice*, 39(3), 124-130.
- Daft, R. L., and Marcic, D. (2004). Understanding management Mason. *OH: South-Western*.
- Day, G. S. (1994). The capabilities of market-driven organizations. *The Journal of Marketing*, 58(4), 37-52.
- Dewett, T. (2003). Understanding the relationship between information technology and creativity in organizations. *Creativity Research Journal*, 15(2-3), 167-182.
- Dierickx, I., and Cool, K. (1989). Asset stock accumulation and sustainability of competitive advantage. *Management science*, 35(12), 1504-1511.
- Drejer, A. (2000). Organisational learning and competence development. *The learning organization*, 7(4), 206-220.
- Eisenhardt, K. M., and Martin, J. A. (2000). Dynamic capabilities: what are they?. *Strategic management journal*, 21(10-11), 1105-1121.
- Fahy, J. (2000). The resource-based view of the firm: some stumbling-blocks on the road to understanding sustainable competitive advantage. *Journal of European industrial training*, 24(2/3/4), 94-104.
- Foroudi, P., Jin, Z., Gupta, S., Melewar, T. C., & Foroudi, M. M. (2016). Influence of innovation capability and customer experience on reputation and loyalty. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(11), 4882-4889.
- Foroudi, P., Melewar, T. C., and Gupta, S. (2014). Linking corporate logo, corporate image, and reputation: An examination of consumer perceptions in the financial setting. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(11), 2269-2281.

- 1  
2  
3 Fruhling, A. L., and Siau, K. (2007). Assessing organizational innovation capability and its  
4 effect on e-commerce initiatives. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 48(1), 133-  
5 145.
- 6 Gorla, N., Somers, T. M., and Wong, B. (2010). Organizational impact of system quality,  
7 information quality, and service quality. *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems*,  
8 19(3), 207-228.
- 9 Grant, R. M. (1991). The resource-based theory of competitive advantage: implications for  
10 strategy formulation. *California management review*, 33(3), 114-135.
- 11 Gupta, A. K., and Wilemon, D. (1990). Improving RandD/marketing relations: RandD's  
12 perspective. *R&D Management*, 20(4), 277-290.
- 13 Gupta, S., Malhotra, N. K., Czinkota, M., & Foroudi, P. (2016). Marketing innovation: A  
14 consequence of competitiveness. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(12), 5671-5681.
- 15 Hafeez, K., Foroudi, P., Dinnie, K., Nguyen, B., & Parahoo, S. K. (2016). The role of place  
16 branding and image in the development of sectoral clusters: The case of Dubai. *Journal*  
17 *of Brand Management*, 23(4), 383-402.
- 18 Hafeez, K., Hooi Keoy, K., and Hanneman, R. (2006). E-business capabilities model:  
19 Validation and comparison between adopter and non-adopter of e-business companies  
20 in UK. *Journal of Manufacturing Technology Management*, 17(6), 806-828.
- 21 Hafeez, K., Zhang, Y., and Malak, N. (2002). Identifying core competence. *Potentials, IEEE*,  
22 21(2), 2-8.
- 23 Hamel, G., and Prahalad, C. K. (1990). Corporate imagination and expeditionary marketing.  
24 *Harvard business review*, 69(4), 81-92.
- 25 Helfat, C. E., Finkelstein, S., Mitchell, W., Peteraf, M., Singh, H., Teece, D., and Winter, S.  
26 G. (2009). *Dynamic capabilities: Understanding strategic change in organizations*.  
27 John Wiley and Sons.
- 28 Hinterhuber, A. (2013). Can competitive advantage be predicted? Towards a predictive  
29 definition of competitive advantage in the resource-based view of the firm.  
30 *Management Decision*, 51(4), 795-812.
- 31 Hunt, S. D., and Morgan, R. M. (1995). The comparative advantage theory of competition.  
32 *The Journal of Marketing*, 4(4), 1-15.
- 33 Jasra, J. M., Hunjra, A. I., Rehman, A. U., Azam, R. I., and Khan, M. A. (2011).  
34 Determinants of business success of small and medium enterprises. *International*  
35 *Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2(20), 274-280.
- 36 Kay, J. (1993). The structure of strategy. *Business strategy review*, 4(2), 17-37.
- 37 Levinthal, D. A., and March, J. G. (1993). The myopia of learning. *Strategic management*  
38 *journal*, 14(S2), 95-112.
- 39 Mahoney, J. T., and Pandian, J. R. (1992). The resource-based view within the conversation  
40 of strategic management. *Strategic management journal*, 13(5), 363-380.
- 41 Malhotra, N. K., Birks, D. F., & Experian Information Solutions Inc. (2000). *Marketing*  
42 *research: An applied approach*. Harlow: Financial Times, Prentice Hall.
- 43 Markwick, N., and Fill, C. (1997). Towards a framework for managing corporate identity.  
44 *European Journal of marketing*, 31(5/6), 396-409.
- 45 Oh, L. B., and Teo, H. H. (2010). Consumer value co-creation in a hybrid commerce service-  
46 delivery system. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 14(3), 35-62.
- 47 Olins, W. (1989), *Corporate identity*, Thames and Hudson, London
- 48 Palmer, A., and Bejou, D. (2006). The future of relationship marketing. *Journal of*  
49 *Relationship Marketing*, 4(3-4), 1-10.
- 50 Palmer, A., and Gallagher, D. (2007). Religiosity, relationships and consumption: a study of  
51 church going in Ireland. *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 10(1), 31-49.
- 52 Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. SAGE Publications, Inc.



- 1  
2  
3 Pavlou, P. A., and El Sawy, O. A. (2006). From IT leveraging competence to competitive  
4 advantage in turbulent environments: The case of new product development.  
5 *Information Systems Research*, 17(3), 198-227.
- 6 Pittaway, L., and Rose, M. (2006). Learning and relationships in small firms introduction to  
7 the special issue. *International Small Business Journal*, 24(3), 227-231.
- 8 Prahalad, C. K., and Hamel, G. (1990). The core competence of the corporation. *Harvard*  
9 *business review*, 68(3), 79-91.
- 10 Ray, G., Muhanna, W. A., and Barney, J. B. (2005). Information technology and the  
11 performance of the customer service process: A resource-based analysis. *MIS quarterly*,  
12 29(4), 625-652.
- 13 Ribeiro, H. P. A., Brashear, T. G., Rafael Reis Monteiro, R. R. P., and Damázio, F. L. (2009).  
14 Marketing relationships in Brazil: trends in value strategies and capabilities. *Journal of*  
15 *Business and Industrial Marketing*, 24(5/6), 449-459.
- 16 Rostamkalaei, A., and Freel, M. (2016). The cost of growth: small firms and the pricing of  
17 bank loans. *Small Business Economics*, 46(2), 255-272.
- 18 Santos-Vijande, M. L., López-Sánchez, J. Á., and Trespalacios, J. A. (2012). How  
19 organizational learning affects a firm's flexibility, competitive strategy, and  
20 performance. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(8), 1079-1089.
- 21 Sedera, D., and Gable, G. G. (2010). Knowledge management competence for enterprise  
22 system success. *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 19(4), 296-306.
- 23 Setia, P., Venkatesh, V., and Joglekar, S. (2013). Leveraging Digital Technologies: How  
24 Information Quality Leads to Localized Capabilities and Customer Service  
25 Performance. *Mis Quarterly*, 37(2), 565-590.
- 26 Tallon, P. P. (2010). A service science perspective on strategic choice, IT, and performance  
27 in US banking. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 26(4), 219-252.
- 28 Teece, D. J., Pisano, G., and Shuen, A. (1997). Dynamic capabilities and strategic  
29 management. *Strategic management journal*, 18(7), 509-533.
- 30 Topalian, A. (1984). Corporate identity: beyond the visual overstatements. *International*  
31 *Journal of Advertising*, 3(1), 55-62.
- 32 Tsai, M. T., and Shih, C. M. (2004). The impact of marketing knowledge among managers on  
33 marketing capabilities and business performance. *International journal of management*,  
34 21(4), 524-530.
- 35 Vorhies, D. W., and Morgan, N. A. (2005). Benchmarking marketing capabilities for  
36 sustainable competitive advantage. *Journal of marketing*, 69(1), 80-94.
- 37 Watson, D. (2006). Understanding the relationship between ICT and education means  
38 exploring innovation and change. *Education and Information Technologies*, 11(3-4),  
39 199-216.
- 40 Weerawardena, J. (2003). The role of marketing capability in innovation-based competitive  
41 strategy. *Journal of strategic marketing*, 11(1), 15-35.
- 42 Wernerfelt, B. (1984). A resource-based view of the firm. *Strategic management journal*,  
43 5(2), 171-180.
- 44 Williams, J. R. (1992). How sustainable is your competitive advantage? *California*  
45 *management review*, 34(3), 29-51.
- 46 Yin, R. (1984). case study research. Beverly Hills.
- 47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

**Table 1: In-depth interviews with managers**

Interview date	Interview position	Interview approx. length
12.10.2015	Top Executive	54 min
15.10.2015		38 min
22.01.2016		96 min
30.08.2016		26 min
01.09.2016		64 min
08.08.2016		32 min
15.03.2016		48 min
12.10.2015	Communication and Design Manager	121 min
08.08.2016		54 min
22.08.2016		75 min
15.03.2016	Managing Director	45 min
14.12.2015		35 min
15.10.2015	Design Strategy Manager	75 min
15.10.2015	Marketing Manager	26 min
02.07.2016		47 min
26.05.2016	Risk Assurance Director	55 min
27.05.2016	Senior Business Advisor	40 min
31.05.2016	Senior Manager	30 min
08.08.2016		64 min
22.08.2016		24 min
30.08.2016		65 min
<b>Topics discussed:</b>		
-The understanding of core competence		
-The factors that influence core competence		
-Their experience of what they understand the tangible/ intangible assets and its influence on core competence		
-Discussion of digital technology and whether it influences on competence		
-Discussion of marketing capability and the main perceived impacts on core competence		

Source: The Researcher

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

Figure 1: Framework of digital technology, tangible/intangible assets, marketing capability, and competencies

